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Story or Weird Ceremony at Temple.

CAT SACRIFICE ALLEGED.

WOMAN WITNESS AND HER INITIATION.

LIBEL ACTION.

MR. CROWLEY DENIES BLACK MAGIC.

In the King's Bench Division yesterday the case for Mr. Aleister Crowley, who claims damages for alleged libel in a book by Miss Nina Hamnett, was concluded.

The first witness for the defence, Mrs. Betty May Sedgwick, formerly the wife of Frederick Charles Loveday who had been referred to in the case as Raoul Loveday, said she was married to Mr. Loveday in 1922.

Shortly afterwards they met Mr. Crowley, and up to the end of 1922 Mr. Loveday saw Mr. Crowley from time to time.

At the end of 1922 she went to the temple in Sicily with her husband at the invitation of Mr. Crowley.

"Raoul," she said, "knocked at the door. Leah opened it. Crowley was just walking along. He came to the door and said: 'Do what thou wilt shall be the will of the law.'"

"Raoul answered: 'Love is the law, love under will.' Crowley said to me: 'Will you say it?' I said 'I will not!'"

"Crowley said 'You cannot come into the abbey unless you conform to the rules.' I had eventually to make the reply. Then I was admitted."

Describing one part of the villa Mrs. Sedgwick said there were five triangular boxes, painted in various colours, on the floor. On the floor also was a large red circle. In the centre of it was a pentagram. In the centre of the pentagram was an altar.

Improper Paintings.

"There were many figures on the walls. They were extremely improper paintings," continued Mrs. Sedgwick.

"I refused to sign a book. My husband did. I was ordered out of the abbey unless I signed the book. I had no money. Ultimately I had to sign."

Asked about ceremonies at the villa, Mrs. Sedgwick said: "About half-past five in the morning the household were aroused, and had to go out, and face the sun. It was called "adoration." Between four o'clock and half-past four every day the children had to stand and put their hands up to the sun.

"The evening ceremony was the great thing of the day. Crowley slept the whole day and lived at night. We had high tea. After tea, during the pentagram ceremony, the women sat on boxes in the circle."

"It is difficult to remember what happened," declared Mrs. Sedgwick. "Everything was grotesque and rather mad, and it really worries me to think about it."

Mr. Crowley, she said, wore a robe of bright colours. A scarlet woman took part. She was the spiritual wife of Mr. Crowley.

Describing the ritual, witness said: "There was a sort of hysterical business." They called on the gods. It was all done with due solemnity.

"There was an enormous painting, too, in the room. It was terrible—it was indecent."

Because it Scratched.

"There were places where you could see where to get various things in the way of drugs," she said; "they were all marked."

Counsel: Was there a rule about the use of any particular word?—Yes, the word "I." Raoul was told he was on no account to use the word "I." If he did he was to cut himself in order to remember.

"I saw a very big sacrifice—a terrible sacrifice—the sacrifice of a cat," she said.

Mrs. Sedgwick explained that the cat had scratched Mr. Crowley who declared it would be sacrificed within three days.

"Everybody was excited because they were going to have the big sacrifice," she said. "Mr. Crowley had a knife with a long handle. The cat was crying piteously in its bag. It was

taken out and my husband had to kill it. The knife was blunt and the cat got out of the circle. That was for magical work. They had to start all over again. Finally they killed the cat and my husband had to drink a cup of the cat's blood.

Mr. Eddy (cross-examining): How many times have you been married?—I think four times.

How many times have you been divorced?—Three.

Before you went to Cefalu were you a decent citizen or not?—I was, I think. Yes, of course I was, yes I was.

You have written a book called "Tiger Woman"; does it propose to be an autobiography of yourself?—Yes.

Is it true?—My whole early life and my latter life is very true, but there is one little thing that is untrue.

Are you here just to assist the course of justice?—Yes.

Are you here because you wanted to make money out of this case and to sell your evidence?—But I have been subpoenaed to come here.

The examination of Mrs. Sedgwick was not concluded when the hearing was adjourned until to-day.

Challenge by Counsel.

Earlier in the day Mr. Martin O'Connor (for Miss Hamnett) invited Mr. Crowley to try his magic in court. "You said yesterday," said Mr. O'Connor, "that as the result of early experiments you invoked certain forces with the result that some people were attacked by unseen assailants. Try your magic now on my learned friend (pointing to Mr. Hilbery). I am sure he will not object."

"I would not attack anyone," replied Mr. Crowley. "I absolutely refuse."

"On a later occasion," continued Mr. O'Connor to the plaintiff, "You said you succeeded in rendering yourself invisible. Would you like to try that on now, for if you don't I shall pronounce you an imposter?"—"You can ask me to do anything you like. It won't alter the truth."

Counsel then dealt with the ritual observed in the ceremony at the villa at Cefalu. Mr. Crowley denied that a cat was killed in the ceremony and that part of the cat's blood was drunk by a person taking part.

German Tribute.

Mr. Eddy (Mr. Crowley's counsel): What is the object of the magic you believe in?—My particular branch is the raising of humanity to higher spiritual development.

Carl Germer, a German merchant living in England, said many people in Germany admired Mr. Crowley very highly. He had seen Mr. Crowley invoke the spirit of magnanimity.

Mr. Crowley complains that the book imputes that he practised "Black Magic" and he says this is a libel upon him. The defence is a plea of justification.

At the material time Mr. Crowley had a villa on the mountainside at Cefalu, Sicily, which was known as the "Abbey of Thelema." He denied that he practised "Black Magic" there.

In evidence he admitted that he called himself "Beast 666" and "The Master Therium"—the Great Wild Beast—both out of the Apocalypse. Miss Hamnett was once a student of his, but he denied that he supplied any of the information on which she based the statements in the book of which he complained.

He also denied that a baby mysteriously disappeared as the defence alleged from the "Abbey of Thelema."