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CAT KILLED AS A SACRIFICE

Poet's Alleged Black Magic Temple

ASTOUNDING STORIES

(Special to "The Daily News")

LONDON. April 13.

"Never have I heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous, abominable stuff as that produced by a man describing himself as the greatest living poet," said Mr. Justice Swift, summing up in the King's Bench action in which Aleister Crowley sued the authoress, Nina Hamnett, for libeling him in a book entitled "Laughing Torso."

Mr. Justice Swift added: "I have been 40 years engaged in the administration of the law, and thought I knew of every conceivable form of wickedness, but now I know I can always learn something more."

Crowley alleged that Hamnett imputed that he practised black magic at the Temple of Cefalu, Sicily, where a baby was once reported to have mysteriously disappeared.

CHARGE DENIED

Crowley, formerly of the Cambridge University, denied the black magic charge and said he had fought it all his life because it was suicidal. He said he had travelled throughout the world studying religions. His temple was only decorated with frescoes, similar to religious paintings in the Notre Dame. He denied that he advised his associated to cut themselves with razors as punishment, and denied that he forced men to shave their heads, except for the symbolic curl. He also denied that he forced women to dye their heads red. He explained that he took the designation "The Beast 666," because it meant "Sunlight." He added, amid laughter, "You can call me Little Sunshine."

THE BLACK MASS

Crowley denied sacrificing animals and inviting people to drink the blood. He denied obscenely invoking Pan, and denied publishing filth and advocating unrestricted sexual freedom.

He said he contributed pathological works for circulation among students, but denied that magic, like poetry, involved eroticism. He added that when he wrote sonnets about the Black Mass he was denouncing it.

Counsel read from a book Crowley wrote, stating that a bloody sacrifice was the most efficacious way of practising magic, while human sacrifice was the best.

Crowley explained that it was a scientific theory. He denied that a baby had disappeared at Cefalu.

IMPROPER PAINTINGS

Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, authoress of "Tiger Women," formerly Mr. Jacob Epstein's model, gave evidence that the Temple of Cefalu had a magic circle on the floor and improper paintings on the walls. Crowley presided at the ceremonies, in which his "spiritual wife," also named "The Scarlet Woman," participated. Once, after a three hours' invocation, a cat was killed and her husband had to drink its blood.

Counsel for the defence said that Crowley had preyed on weak-minded people for years. He hoped that the present proceedings would end his hypocritical activities.

The jury brought in a verdict in favor of Hamnett.

Crowley says of the judgment: "The verdict is God's particular dealing with my soul. I am considering an appeal."