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Black Magic Alleged In Case

LONDON, April 14.

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

Allegations were made that Crowley practised black magic in a temple in Sicily, which had improper pictures on the walls and a magic circle on the floor. Mr. Justice Swift added: "I have been forty years engaged in the administration of law. I thought I knew of every conceivable form of wickedness, but I now know I can always learn something more."

Crowley alleged that Hamnett imputed that he practised black magic at a temple at Cefalu, Sicily, where a baby was once reported to have mysteriously disappeared. Crowley was formerly at Cambridge University.

He denied that he practised black magic. His temple was decorated only with frescoes similar to the religious paintings of Notre Dame.

He denied that he had forced men to shave their heads, except for a symbolic curl.

Crowley denied obscenely invoking Pan, and denied publishing filth advocating unrestricted sexual freedom.

He said he had contributed pathological works for circulation among students. He denied that his magic, like poetry, involved eroticism.

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

Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, authoress of "The Tiger Woman" and formerly Epstein's model, gave evidence that the temple at Cefalu had a magic circle on the floor and improper paintings on the walls. The jury returned a verdict for the defendant.