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“WE LEARN IF WE LIVE LONG ENOUGH.”

Only part of the case for the defence had been heard when a submission was made to the jury that they had probably heard sufficient.

It was an appalling reflection, remarked Mr. Martin O'Connor, that in this enlightened age the Court should be called upon to investigate arch humbug called magic, practised by arch rogues to rob weak-minded people. "I hope," he added, "that this action will end for ever the activities of a hypocritical rascal."

Listening carefully to the legal position as outlined by the judge, the jury accepted the submission of counsel and found a verdict for the defendants in the action with costs. Leave to appeal was refused.

Meanwhile the judge had made the observations reported above, and added, "I thought that everything which was wicked and bad had been produced at some time or another before me, but I know from this case that we can always learn something more if we live long enough."

In their words of condemnation both Mr. Justice Swift and Mr. O'Connor were referring to Mr. Edward Alexander (Aleister) Crowley, an author of *Carlos-place, Grosvenor-square, W.*

He sued for alleged libel, contained in a book called "Laughing Torso."

Miss Nina Hamnett, its authoress, and joined the publishers Messrs. Constable, and also the printers.

Mr. Crowley, explained Mr. J. P. Eddy, K.C., who appeared for him, had always been interested in magic. He opposed and fought black magic, but believing in white magic, founded a little community in a villa in Cefalu, Sicily, in 1920, for the study of the cult.

A BABY AND A GOAT.

A passage in "Laughing Torso" stated:

One day a baby was said to have disappeared mysteriously. There was also a goat there.

This all pointed to black magic, so the people said, and the inhabitants of the village were frightened of him.

Mr. Crowley denied the suggestion that he supplied the information to Miss Hamnett who at one time was a pupil of his.

In his evidence in chief Mr. Crowley related that he was educated at Cambridge, inherited a fortune of £30,000 or £40,000 and met Miss Hamnett two or three years before the war.

Black magic to him was foul and abominable, and it was untrue to say that he ever practised it or that drugs were available to the inmates of his villa.

Mr. Eddy: Is it true that you ever advised Raoul Loveday to take drugs?—Mr. Crowley explained that Loveday stayed at the villa till his death in 1923. His constitution had been weakened by an accident at Oxford. He jumped from his college, became impaled on a spike, and hung there for over two hours before release. He lost a lot of blood and never regained his health. "Nor," added Mr. Crowley, "did the life he was leading in London before I rescued him do much to improve his physical self."

Mr. Eddy: Is it true that men shaved their heads leaving a symbolic curl in front, and that the women dyed their hair red for six months and then black for the rest of the year?—It is not correct.

Mr. Crowley denied that he told Miss Hamnett the things of which he complained in the book. No baby mysteriously disappeared, and the goat referred to was kept for milking.

DENIAL OF SACRIFICE.

Mr. Eddy put to Mr. Crowley a description in the defence of an alleged ceremony known as Pentagram involving the use of a brazier surrounded by sacrificial knives and swords and a magic circle, which concluded with Mr. Crowley executing ecstatic dances, lashing himself into a frenzy, brandishing his sword and leaping the magic circle.

Mr. Crowley denied that this was an accurate account. The Pentagram was a ceremony invoking God to afford the protection of his Archangel.

He denied that it was an obscene invocation or that animals were sacrificed and he invited people to drink their blood.

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C., for the printers and publishers of "Laughing Torso": For many years you have been publicly denounced as the worst man in the world?—Only by the lowest kind of newspaper.

Did any paper call you the Monster of Wickedness—I don't remember which paper.

Have you, from the time of your adolescence, openly defied all moral conventions?—No.

Mr. Crowley admitted, however, that he assumed the designations of "Beast 666" and "The Master Therion" (the Great Wild Beast).

"666 is the number of the Sun, and you can call me 'Little Sunshine,' " he explained.

Have you published material too indescribably filthy to be read in public?—No. I have contributed to pathological works, which were only for circulation among students.

Mr. Hilbery then referred to passages in Mr. Crowley's book "The Confessions of Aleister Crowley."

You assert that you had the distinguishing marks of a Buddha at birth? Yes. I have got some of them now.

Is the gratification of your own sexual lusts one of your principal pursuits?—No.

Mr. Crowley agreed that he was the author of "White Stains."

Mr. Hilbery: Is that a book of indescribable filth?—This book is a serious study of the progress of a man to the abyss of madness, disease, and murder.

Mr. Crowley denied that in his published works he had advocated unrestricted sexual freedom. He had protested against the sexual oppression that existed in England.

TEMPLE IN A FLAT.

Mr. Crowley's Article Against His Country.

"Before America came into the war," continued Mr. Hilbery, "and when the affairs of the allies were in great jeopardy, did you contribute to a Chicago magazine?"

"I did," answered Mr. Crowley.

Counsel read an extract from an article in the magazine.

"Did you write that against your own country?" he asked.

"I did, and I am proud of it," replied Mr. Crowley. "I suggest that you could understand a little of the context and why I wrote it."

Mr. Hilbery: Was it part of the German propaganda in America?—Yes. What I wanted to do was to overbalance the sanity of German propaganda, which was being very well done, by turning it into absolute nonsense.

Mr. Hilbery, reading from a newspaper article written by Mr. Crowley: "They have accused me of doing everything from murdering women and throwing their bodies in the Seine." Is it true?—I hear a canard about me every week.

Did you say, "Horatio Bottomley branded me as a dirty, degenerate cannibal"?—Yes.

You never took any action against the people who wrote and published those things about you?—No.

Mr. Crowley agreed that, in his "Confessions," he had said that, once in Mexico he walked in the street in a scarlet robe and with a jewelled crown without anyone seeing him.

Mr. Hilbery: Was that because of your magic?—Yes.

Mr. Hilbery: As a part of your magic, you do believe in a practice of bloody sacrifice, do you?—I believe in its efficacy.

If you believe in its efficacy, you would believe in it being practised, and say it could be practised without impropriety?—I do not approve it at all.

You say (in his book on magic): "For nearly all purposes human sacrifice is best"?—Yes, it is.

Next Mr. Hilbery asked, "Did you keep hasheesh and other drugs at Cefalu?" and Mr. Crowley replied, "There was no hasheesh."—Opium?—Yes.—Strychnine?—Yes.

Are you skilled to administer hasheesh?—Yes, I can get the desired results in ten minutes.

With your approval, an inmate had a razor or knife, with which to cut himself it he stumbled into using a forbidden word?—They were not gashes, but minute cuts. You can see marks of them on my own arm.

MAGIC CIRCLE RITUAL.

Questioned about the ritual of his magic circle, Mr. Crowley said he spoke what might have been intoning words.

Mr. Hilbery: Did you use a dancing step?—No. It was a sort of three-fold step, which resembles the waltz. Mr. Crowley added that he went round at the pace of a tiger stalking a deer.

Did you sometimes perform a ceremony naked?—Never in the presence of another person.

Mr. Justice Swift: When you read in the Press, "It is hard to say with certainty whether Crowley is a man or beast," did you take any action?—It was asked of Shelley whether he was a man or someone sent from Hell.

Pressed for a definite answer, Mr. Crowley stated that he did not take any action with reference to the earlier articles be-

cause he was advised his action would last 14 days and that he would have to find 10,000 to fight it.

Judge: Now you can see how absurd was that advice.

Subsequently Mr. Crowley was cross-examined by Mr. Martin O'Connor, for Miss Hamnett, and agreed that he had stayed at a West-end hotel with a woman who passes as Mrs. Crowley.

Counsel asked numerous questions concerning the ritual of the ceremonies in the villa at Cefalu, and Mr. Crowley denied that a cat was killed and part of its blood was drunk by a person present.

"There was no cat, no animal, no blood, and no drinking," he declared.

Mr. Crowley was re-examined on his alleged German propaganda in America, and told Mr. Eddy, "When I came back to England, immediately after the war, if I had been a traitor I should have been shot—and a good job too."

The only witness in support of plaintiff's case was a German merchant and author, Mr. Carl Germer, who declared that he had seen Mr. Crowley invoke the Spirit of Magnanimity.

TOOK COCAINE AT 18.

Witness Box Story Of "The Tiger Woman."

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

She and her husband, she said, went to Sicily at the end of 1922, and arrived at Mr. Crowley's villa after dark. When Mr. Crowley came to the door he exclaimed: 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 told him, 'I will not.' "

"Crowley then stated, 'You cannot come into the abbey unless you conform to the rules. This is the beginning; the first rule of the abbey.' I had eventually to make the reply. Then I was admitted."

Asked about ceremonies at the villa, Mrs. Sedgwick alleged that Mr. Crowley wore a bright robe. A scarlet woman took part in the ceremony. She was Mr. Crowley's spiritual wife, and had a magical name.

"There was a sort of hysterical business," went on Mrs. Sedgwick. "They called on gods. There was an invocation. There was an enormous painting too, in the room."

Mr. C. W. Lilley (also for the defence): What was it like?—It was terrible.

Do you mean it was indecent?—Most.

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. If he did, he was to cut himself, to remember.

Did you see any sacrifice?—I saw a very big sacrifice—a terrible sacrifice—the sacrifice of a cat.

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

"Everybody was excited because they were going to have the big sacrifice. Mr. Crowley had a knife with a long handle, but it was not very sharp.

"The cat was crying piteously in its bag. It was taken out, and my husband had to kill the cat. The knife was blunt, and the cat got out of the circle. That was bad for magical work, and they had to start all over again.

"Finally they killed the cat, and my young husband had to drink a cup of the cat's blood."

Mr. Eddy, cross-examined: I suggest you have given evidence which you know to be untrue?—No.

How many times have you been married?—I think four times.

How many times have you been divorced?—Three.

Are you here as a simple witness of truth, or to tell your evidence at a price?

Mr. Hilbery: Does that mean to be an imputation that we have bought this evidence, because, if so, I resent that.

Mr. Eddy: I shall not put any suggestion that cannot be supported by documents.

"NOT DRUGGED FOR YEARS."

Turning to Mrs. Sedgwick Mr. Eddy asked, "Immediately before your marriage to Raoul Loveday, would your life be fairly described as 'drink, drugs, and immorality'?"

"No," replied Mrs. Sedgwick, "I took cocaine when I was 18, but not after I was 25. I have not drugged for years."

After her marriage to Loveday she sat daily as a model to keep them both, and earned £1 a day.

"Did your husband," asked Mr. Eddy, "tell you that Mr. Crowley wanted to give you both a chance in Sicily, and to enable you to live a clean life there?"

"No," replied Mrs. Sedgwick.

This was not an attempt to rescue you and your husband from the life you were leading?—No.

When you married Raoul Loveday, was he in a poor state of health?—No. he had been very ill months before, but he got quite fit.

Did you try to embark him upon the life you were leading in London, whatever it was?—I was a model, and I sat to keep both of us. Until he went to Italy we were living together in a furnished back room.

Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that she was "The Tiger Woman" in her book of that title. "I am rather feline in looks," she explained, "and I thought perhaps it was rather a good name for me."

A REVOLVER INCIDENT.

In this book, according to extracts read by Mr. Eddy, Mrs. Sedgwick described an incident where Mr. Crowley, so she alleged, threatened her expulsion from the villa because she insisted on introducing English newspapers there.

"I seized a revolver," read one paragraph, "and fired it at the Mystic (Crowley). It went wide of the mark. He laughed harshly. Then I rushed at him, but I couldn't get a grip on his shaven head. He picked me up in his arms and flung me bodily outside through the front door."

"Is that little melodrama true?" asked Mr. Eddy.

"It is absolutely true," Mrs. Sedgwick replied.