

**THE HUDDERSFIELD DAILY EXAMINER  
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**(page 8)**

**"BLACK MAGIC" LIBEL ACTION**

**WOMAN WITNESS'S STRIKING EVIDENCE**

**SACRIFICING A CAT**

**BLOOD SAID TO HAVE BEEN DRUNK**

The hearing was resumed by Mr. Justice Swift and a special jury in the King's Bench Division to-day of the "Black Magic" libel action brought by Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso."

Messrs. Constable and Company, Limited, publishers and Charles Whittingham & Briggs, printers, were joined as defendants.

Mr. Crowley complained that the book imputed that he had practiced "black magic" which he said was a libel upon him.

The defence was a plea of justification.

Mr. Crowley denied that he practiced "black magic" at a villa which he occupied at Cefalu, Sicily, and which was known as the "Abbey of Thelema." He admitted that he called himself "Beast 666" out of the Apocalypse.

Miss Hamnett was once a student of his, but he denied that he supplied to her the information on which her book was based.

Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, whose former husband, Raoul Loveday, died at the Cefalu villa in Sicily, stated yesterday that on one occasion a cat was sacrificed in the course of a magical ceremony. Her husband then drank a cup of the cat's blood.

Mr. Crowley in his evidence has declared that there never had been any sacrifice of any animal in the ceremony, or any drinking of blood.

Mr. J. P. Eddy (for Mr. Crowley), resuming his cross-examination of Mrs. Sedgwick to-day, asked: "Immediately before your marriage to Raoul Loveday would your life be fairly described as drinking, drugs and immorality?"

"No," replied Mrs. Sedgwick, who sad she had not drugged herself for years.

## A DENIAL

She denied she was living a very fast life in London. Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that on the day of her arrival in England from Sicily she supplied information to a Sunday newspaper.

"I am suggesting," remarked Mr. Eddy, "that you are the source of all these stories about 'the worst man in the world.' "

Asked if there was a word of truth in her evidence about the "terrible sacrifice of a cat," she replied, "Absolutely true—everything about the cat is true."

Mr. Eddy: Are many of the cats in Sicily wild and destructive animals?—I only knew two, and they were very charming cats.

Mr. Eddy suggested that the shooting of a wild cat by Mr. Crowley was the basis for her story.

Mrs. Sedgwick: No, no.

She was turned out of the Abbey a few days before her husband's death.

Mr. Eddy: What was he suffering from?—I have no idea. I thought it was laudanum poisoning.

Mr. Eddy pointed out that in her book Mrs. Sedgwick had said he was suffering from enteric.

"That is true," Mrs. Sedgwick explained. "After he drank the cat's book he was violently sick and Mr. Crowley gave him laudanum, a lot of it as medicine. I told Scotland Yard I thought it was laudanum poisoning at the time."

Mr. Eddy quoted from "Tiger Woman," (Mrs. Sedgwick's book) her fourth husband's mother as saying, "You foul, wicked woman; you are killing my son."

Mr. Eddy: Are you "Tiger Woman"?—Yes.

Why?—Because I am rather feline in looks. I thought perhaps it was rather a good name for me.

Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that she was known as "Bumbletoff," and had received letters signed "Poodlediff" from an old friend of hers.

## CONTENTS STOLEN

After questions about other letters, Mr. Eddy asked, "Did you ever authorize anyone to extract those letters from your case and give them to Mr. Crowley"?—No.

Mr. Justice Swift: Are these produced by Mr. Crowley?—Yes.

Do you know how Mr. Crowley got possession of your letters?—I can't imagine how he got them.

Mrs. Sedgwick declared that all the contents of her case were stolen.

Mr. Hilbery called on Mr. Eddy to produce a letter of February 24, 1933, from the defendant's solicitors to Mrs. Sedgwick.

Mr. Justice Swift: He clearly has no right to have it. Whoever has possession of those letters is in possession, according to this lady's evidence, of stolen property. They have no right to have it. Merely asking somebody whom you suspect of being in possession of stolen property to produce it doesn't give you the right to give secondary evidence of the document if that person doesn't produce it.

When some of the copies of the missing letters were produced and referred to, Mr. Justice Swift agreed with Mr. Hilbery that they should remain in the custody of the court. He instructed the associate of the court to keep them until the case was over. "Then remind me to discuss them again, please," he added.

Mr. Martin O'Connor (for Miss Hamnett), referring to Mr. Crowley's refusal to accept his challenges to try his magic in court, said it was appalling that, "In this enlightened age a court should be investigating magic which is arch-humbag practised by arch-roguers to rob weak-minded people.

"I hope this action," he added, "will end for all time the activities of this hypocritical rascal."

Later, seeing two jurymen talking together, Mr. Justice Swift stopped Mr. O'Connor in his address. One of them said, "The jury wish to know whether this is a correct time for us to intervene."

Mr. Justice Swift: You cannot stop the case as against the defendants. You may stop it against the plaintiff when Mr. Eddy has said everything he wants to say.

Mr. Eddy finally addressed the jury for Mr. Crowley.

### **JUDGE'S STRONG WORDS**

Mr. Justice Swift directing the jury, said: "Never have I heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous, abominable stuff as that produced by the man describing himself as the greatest living poet.

"I have been more than forty years engaged in the administration of the law in one capacity or another. I thought that I knew of every conceivable form of wickedness; I thought that

everything which was vicious and bad had been produced at one time or another before me.

"I have learnt in this case that we can always learn something if we live long enough."

He asked the jury if they were still of the same opinion as they had intimated earlier.

The foreman said that the jury were unanimous. They found a verdict for the defendants.

Judgment was entered for all the defendants with costs.

Mr. Justice Swift said that there was no reflection upon the solicitor for the publishers and printers.

When Mr. Eddy asked for a stay of execution and referred to the summing-up, Mr. Justice Swift remarked: "I thought I had followed the instructions of Lord Justice Scrutton. I still think that I did, but you can go and point out to him that I did not. Some day another jury will reinvestigate this matter."

The Judge refused a stay of execution. As to the documents in his custody, he told the defence "We will keep the letters in court, and we shall certainly have them in proper custody if you take them to another court.