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'BID TO MAKE SKELETON LIVE'

Judges Told of Black and White Magic

Libel Suit Appeal of Mr. Aleister Crowley

Amazing stories of an attempt to bring a skeleton in a London flat back to life on a meal of animals, and of "magic" in Scotland, which made the sturdy natives afraid to go along the road, were told in the Appeal Court yesterday.

They were narrated during the hearing of the appeal by Mr. Edward Alexander Crowley (Aleister Crowley, the author), against the verdict and judgment given against him in the action tried by Mr. Justice Swift, in which he claimed damages in respect of an alleged libel in the book "Laughing Torso," by Miss Nina Hamnett.

The original action was brought against Miss Hamnett and Messrs. Constable and Co., Ltd., printers and publishers of the book.

Mr. Crowley complained of the summing-up of Mr. Justice Swift.

"Laughing Torso," he said, imputed that he had practised black magic in Cefalu in Sicily. He denied that he had done so, and said black magic was for the most part criminal and foul. Mr. Crowley also took exception to a statement in the book that a baby disappeared mysteriously in Cefalu.

Lord Justice Roche asked Mr. J. P. Eddy (for Mr. Crowley): Why is an imputation of black magic defamatory?

Mr. Eddy: Some people practise what is called white magic. Some practise what is alleged to be black magic.

"NONSENSE"

What the plaintiff said was, "There is a vital difference between the two. It is common knowledge what black magic is. It has been known for centuries as something foul, something criminal." He said the object of white magic was to raise humanity to a higher spirituality.

Lord Justice Greer: I don't know that. No ordinary persons know the difference between white and black magic. I should have thought they were both nonsense.

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C., for Messrs. Constable and Company, submitted that there could not be an order for a new trial without a tragic miscarriage of justice. Mr. Hilbery continued:—

"On his own confessions Mr. Crowley had, throughout his works, stood for the negation of what every decent and right-minded person has ever held to be either decent or sacred."

SKELETON IN FLAT

"From his earliest days he had written poems of every possible sexual perversion that human beings had ever been guilty of.

"It appeared that Crowley had kept a skeleton in a 'temple' he had in a flat in Chancery-lane. He had endeavoured to give life to the skeleton and fed it on little animals, but all he had succeeded in doing was to get it covered with an unpleasant slime.

"When he had a house in Scotland he worked on his magic so hard that, in broad sunlight, the thronging spirits made it completely dark to him and the place became so haunted that the sturdy natives would not go along the road."

Lord Justice Greer: It sounds very medieval.

Lord Justice Slesser: Was this place in Scotland near Loch Ness? (laughter.)

The hearing was adjourned till to-day.