

**THE LIVERPOOL POST AND MERCURY
LIVERPOOL, LANCASHIRE, ENGLAND**

8 NOVEMBER 1934

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BLACK MAGIC AND WHITE

JUDGE WANTS TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

MR. ALEISTER CROWLEY'S APPEAL

The "black magic" libel action was again before the Court of Appeal yesterday.

Mr. Aleister Crowley complains of the summing up of Mr. Justice Swift in the brought by him against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of "Laughing Torso," Messrs. Constable and Company, Limited, publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, the printers. "Laughing Torso," he states, imputes that he had practiced black magic. He denies that. He now asks for a new trial on the ground that the jury received no proper directions from Mr. Justice Swift.

"Both Nonsense"

Mr. J. P. Eddy (for Mr. Crowley) submitted that it was perfectly open to a properly directed jury to give a verdict for the plaintiff. "In fact, it was," he said, "the only course open to them."

Lord Justice Greer.—If a special meaning was to be put on the words "black magic" it ought to have been pleaded as an innuendo, and it was not. No ordinary person knows the difference between white and black magic. I should have thought they were both nonsense.

Mr. Eddy.—I am not suggesting otherwise.

Mr. Eddy argued that Mr. Justice Swift misdirected the jury by saying that the plaintiff had to prove damage to his reputation. The judge ought to have told the jury the plaintiff did not need to prove malice.

Mr. Crowley's Books

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C. (for Messrs. Constable and Co.) submitted that what Mr. Crowley complained of was the charge

of practicing black magic, and that charge the defendants justified.

"On his own confessions in the box," said counsel, "and his own confessions in writing, he had, throughout his works, stood for the negation of what has ever held to be either decent or sacred.

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

Mr. Justice Greer: It sounds very mediaeval.

Lord Justice Slessor.—Was this place in Scotland near Loch Ness? (Laughter).

It was said, proceeded counsel, that the distinction between white and black magic was that in the former the spirits came from the upper air, and in the latter they came from the nether regions.

The hearing was adjourned until to-day.