

THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

12 APRIL 1934

TEMPLE BUILT IN FLAT

Libel Suit Admissions

Reference to "human sacrifice" was made in the High Court yesterday, when Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, was further cross-examined about his writings, during the resumed hearing of his action for alleged libel.

Defendants are Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso," Constable and Company, Limited, publishers, and Charles Whittingham and Briggs, printers. The defence is a plea of justification.

At the material time Mr. Crowley had a villa on the Mountainside at Cefalu, Sicily, which was known as the "Abbey of Thelema." He denied that he practised "black magic" there.

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C., in cross-examination, referred to a book entitled "Clouds Without Water."

Mr. Hilbery having read a poem from the book asked "Is the meaning of it filthy?" In my opinion it is of no importance in this matter. You have read out of its context as you do everything.

ALLEGED DISGUSTING WORDS

Mr. Hilbery: Do you still swear you were not known as the author of that book—not generally known?—I regret that my reputation is not much wider than it is.

Mr. Hilbery next quoted from a volume entitled "The Winged Beetle" and asked "Would it be true to say that that book like these others contain disgusting words?"

"It all depends upon your views," was they reply, "the ordinary reviewer, employed by important newspapers and magazines give very good reviews of these books."

MAGAZINE ARTICLE

Mr. Hilbery: Before America came into the war, when the affairs of the Allies were in great jeopardy, did you contribute to a Chicago magazine?—I did.

Counsel read an extract from an article in the magazine and asked:—"Did you write that against your own country?"

"I did and I am proud of it," replied Mr. Crowley.

Mr. Hilbery: Was it part of the German propaganda in America?—Yes.

And written as such?—I endeavoured successfully to have it accepted as such. 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.

Questioned about a newspaper article, Mr. Crowley admitted that he wrote: "I have been shot at with broad arrows. They have called me 'The worst man in the world.' "

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

TOOK NO ACTION

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

Mr. Hilbery: Did you have a flat in your early days in Chancery Lane?—Yes.

Did you have two temples in that flat?—Yes. But one wasn't really a temple. It was just a lobby which was not used.

Mr. Crowley agreed that in the article he referred to an occasion when he invoked the forced, with the result that some people there were attacked by unseen assailants.

Mr. Hilbery: Was the result of the spirits which your magic had brought to the place?—That is the theory of certain people.

DID NOT APPROVE

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.

Don't approve it? You say (in his book on magic) "For nearly all purposes human sacrifice is best"?—Yes, it is.

Mr. Justice Swift: Do you say that you don't approve it?—Yes.

Referring to the villa at Cefalu, Mr. Hilbery asked whether there was an altar there. Was it an altar for the purpose of the ceremonies?—If you like, yes.

Mr. Hilbery: For the purpose of ceremony did you require a knife?—No. There were no knives, magically speaking, but there was a dagger and a sword.

REFERENCE TO DRUGS

Mr. Hilbery: Did you keep hasheesh and other drugs at Cefalu?—There was no hasheesh.

Opium?—Yes.

Strychnine?—Yes.

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

I suggest that hasheesh was used for the inmates of your villa?—It was not.

Mr. Hilbery: Was there heron used at the villa?—It had been prescribed for me by a Harley street doctor for asthma.

Mr. Hilbery referred to articles in which Mr. Crowley was described as "The King of Depravity," "The Wickedest Man in the World," "The Man We would Like to Hang," "Another Traitor Trounced," and "The Notorious Aleister Crowley."

Mr. Justice Swift: It is said of you: "It is hard to say whether he is man or beast!"

Mr. Crowley: It was said of Shelley that he was sent from Hell.

JUDGE'S QUESTION

Mr. Justice Swift: When that was said in the public Press did you take any steps to clear your character?—I was 1,500 miles away, I was ill and I was penniless.

Mr. Justice Swift: The answer is that you took no steps to clear your character?—Yes.

Cross-examining on behalf of Miss Hamnett, Mr. Martin O'Connor suggested to Mr. Crowley. You are a "master magician?"—Yes, go on.

"And person with supernatural powers?" suggested counsel.

"No," replied Mr. Crowley, with some heat.

The hearing was adjourned until to-day.