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**DAMAGES CLAIM AGAINST AUTHORESS.**

**ASKED TO TRY MAGIC IN COURT.**

**AUTHOR DECLINES.**

**Counsel's Threat in Libel Action.**

When the "black magic" libel action was resumed in the King's Bench Division to-day, Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, who claims damages from Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso," the plaintiff was invited by Mr. O'Connor to display his magic in court.

"If you don't I shall pronounce you an imposter," said Mr. O'Connor, but Mr. Crowley declined the challenge; and Mr. Justice Swift refused to have the court turned into a temple.

Other defendants in the case are Constable and Company, Limited, publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, printers.

Mr. Crowley complained that the book imputed that he practised "black magic," and he said this was a libel on him.

The defence was a plea of justification.

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

In evidence he admitted that he called himself "Beast 666" and "The Master Therium"—the great wild beast—references from the Book of Revelation.

Miss Hamnett was once a student of his, but he denied that he supplied any of the information on which she based the statements in her book of which he complained. He also denied that a baby mysteriously disappeared, as the defence alleged, from the "Abbey of Thelema."

## **"TRY YOUR MAGIC NOW."**

Mr. Martin O'Connor (for Miss Hamnett), resuming his cross-examination to-day, invited Mr. Crowley to try his magic in court.

"You said yesterday," said Mr. O'Connor "that as the result of early experiments you invoked certain forces with the result that some people were attacked by unseen assailants. Try your magic now on my learned friend (pointing to Mr. Hilbery), I am sure he will not object."

"I would not attack anyone," replied Mr. Crowley, "I absolutely refuse."

Mr. Justice Swift: We cannot turn this court into a temple, Mr. O'Connor.

"On a later occasion"(continued Mr. O'Connor to the plaintiff, "you said you succeeded in rendering yourself invisible. Would you like to try that on now for, if you don't, I shall pronounce you an imposter?"

Mr. Crowley: You can ask me to do anything you like. It won't alter the truth.

Counsel then dealt with the ritual observed in the ceremonies at the villa at Cefalu. Mr. Crowley denied that a cat was killed in the ceremony and that part of the cat's blood was drunk by a person taking part.

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

## **Incident of Boyhood.**

Mr. J. P. Eddy (for plaintiff) asked Mr. Crowley about a passage in his "confessions"—concerning which he had been cross-examined—and said the passage referred to a village girl and showed that Mr. Crowley "went roaming with her amid the heather."

"How old were you," asked Mr. Eddy.

"I was a boy 15 or 16," replied Mr. Crowley. "Roaming the heather with anyone is a terrible offence in itself in the surroundings in which I was brought up," he added.

"Merely to look at a girl across the street was considered an offence and dealt with in the most severe way."

Mr. Crowley's family were Plymouth Brethren.

Mr. Crowley agreed that he had studied black magic, though only as a student.

"I was just coming out from years of abominable torture," he explained. "I wanted to find out what a church was like and I sneaked secretly into a church at the danger of incurring the severest penalty, because among the Plymouth Brethren even the idea of entering a church might have incurred damnation.

Mr. Eddy: Have you at any time practised black magic?—Mr. Crowley: No.

What is the object of the magic you believe in?—My particular branch is the raising of humanity to higher spiritual development.

Mr. Eddy asked Mr. Crowley why he indulged in German propaganda in America during the war.

Mr. Crowley: In order to destroy it. I reported my activities to the chief of our organization, Captain—later Commodore—Guy Gaunt, and was in communication with the Hon. Everard Fielding. I came back immediately after the war, and if I had been a traitor I should have been shot—and a good job too.

Carl Germer, a German merchant living in England, said that many people in Germany admired Mr. Crowley very highly. He had seen Mr. Crowley invoke the spirit of magnanimity.

Mr. Justice Swift: You are sure it was the spirit of magnanimity which came, and not the spirit of hospitality?—I believe so.

## **MR. CROWLEY EXPLAINS.**

### **Judge Asks for Definition of Magic.**

Mr. Justice Swift asked Mr. Crowley to tell the court the shortest and at the same time most comprehensive definition of magic which he knew.

Mr. Crowley: Magic is the science of the art of causing change to occur in conformity with the will. White magic is if the will is righteous, and black magic is if the will is perverse.

Mr. Justice Swift: Does that involve the invocation of spirits?—Mr. Crowley: It may do so. It does involve the invocation of the holy guardian angel who is appointed by Almighty God to watch over each of us.

Then it does involve invocation of the spirits?—Of one spirit. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The art of controlling spirits so as to affect the course of events was one small branch of magic. If the object of the control was good, then it was white magic, if the object of the con-

trol was bad it was black magic. One could not invoke evil spirits. One must evoke them and call them out.

The Judge: When the object is bad you evoke evil spirits?—Yes. You put yourself in their power. In that case it is possible to control evil spirits or blind spirits for a good purpose, as we might if we use the dangerous elements of fire and electricity for heating and lighting, etc.

### **Invoking a Spirit.**

The next witness, Carl Germer, a German merchant living in England, said he had known Mr. Crowley since 1925. Mr. Crowley was his guest at his house in Germany for several months.

Answering Mr. Constantine Gallop (who also appeared for Mr. Crowley), witness said he believed there was black magic. Black magic was sinister and tried to do harm to others. White magic would define people who worked for the benefit of others. Mr. Crowley had never practised or advocated black magic in his hearing.

Cross-examined, he said he had seen Mr. Crowley invoke the spirit of magnanimity.

Mr. Justice Swift: Can you point to any difference between the spirit of magnanimity and the spirit of hospitality?—I believe so. I think that is very easy.

### **Counsel's Joke.**

Mr. O'Connor: Where did the spirit come from?—It probably came from Heaven. I don't know.

How long did it stay?—I don't know. I did not have a stopwatch with me. I think you are joking.

Mr. O'Connor: I am.

Witness said he had also seen Mr. Crowley invoke the sun.

Mr. O'Connor: What was the result of the invocation?—None.

"Mr. Crowley did not get very far with the invocation business," was Mr. O'Connor's statement.

Witness said he did not know any black magicians in England who specialised in killing babies.

This concluded the plaintiff's case.