

**SUNDAY TIMES
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
15 APRIL 1934**

BLACK MAGIC

LIBEL ACTION AGAINST AUTHORESS

Judge's Scathing Comments

LONDON, Saturday.

"Never have I heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous and abominable stuff as that produced by a man describing himself as the greatest living poet," said Mr. Justice Swift, summing up in a King's Bench action in which Aleister Crowley sued the authoress, Nina Hamnett, for allegedly libeling him in a book entitled "The Laughing Torso."

Mr. Justice Swift added: "I have been for forty years engaged in the administration of the law, and I thought I knew of every conceivable form of wickedness; but now I know that I can always learn something more."

Crowley alleged that Hamnett imputed that he practised "black magic" at the temple of Cefalu, in Sicily, where a baby once was reported to have mysteriously disappeared. Crowley, who was formerly at the Cambridge University, denied the imputation of black magic. He had fought it throughout his life, because it was suicidal. He had travelled throughout the world studying religions. His temple was only decorated with frescoes and similar religious paintings to those in Notre Dame.

DENIAL OF ALLEGATIONS.

He denied that he advised his associates to cut themselves with razors as punishment, and he denied having forced men to shave their heads except as symbolic of a curl. Also, he denied having forced women to dye their heads red. He explained that he took the designation "The Beast 666," because it means "sunlight," and added, amid laughter, "you can call me 'Little Sunshine.' "

Crowley denied sacrificing animals, and inviting people to drink their blood. He denied obscenely invoking the god, Pan,

and denied publishing filth advocating unrestricted sexual freedom. He said that he contributed to pathological works in circulation among students. He denied that magic, like poetry, involved ergoticism, and added, "when I wrote sonnets about the Black Mass, I was denouncing it."

EVIDENCE OF SACRIFICES.

Counsel read from a book in which Crowley wrote stating that a bloody sacrifice was the most efficacious way of practising magic, while a human sacrifice was the best. Crowley explained that this was a scientific theory. He denied that a baby had disappeared at Cefalu.

Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, the authoress of the "Tiger Woman," and formerly Jacob Epstein's model, gave evidence that the Temple of Cefalu had a magic circle on the floor, and improper paintings on the walls. Crowley presided over ceremonies in which his "spiritual wife" also named the "Scarlet Woman," participated. Once after three hours' invocation, a cat was killed, and her husband had to drink its blood.

Counsel for the defense said that Crowley had preyed on weak-minded people for years. He hoped that the proceedings would end his hypocritical activities.

The jury gave a verdict for Hamnett.

Crowley is considering an appeal.