

THE STAR

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Book He Wrote When a Young Man. Appeal Judge Criticises Poem.

The appeal of Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, against the decision in his "Black Magic" libel action was dismissed with costs yesterday by the Court of Appeal.

Mr. Crowley appealed from the judgement of Mr. Justice Swift in the libel action he brought against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of "The Laughing Torso," Messrs. Constable and Company, publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, the printers.

The case, for the respondents was that on Mr. Crowley's admissions in the witness-box and on statements made in his published works, he had practised a form of magic which was the negation of what every decent and right-minded person had ever held to be either decent or sacred.

Lord Justice Greer, giving judgement, said that the court had come to the conclusion that, though there might be something to be said in favour of the view, that the summing up was not as full as it ought reasonably to have been, the only possible result in this case, having regards to the evidence and admissions of Mr. Crowley, was a verdict for the defendants.

For a long time Mr. Crowley had been cross-examined and he had made admissions in regard to his conduct which Mr. Justice Swift described as admissions of the grossest kind he had heard in forty years' experience at the Bar and on the Bench.

Mr. Crowley had written a book when he was a young man, and it was admitted to be obscene, though the author said it was only obscene "in a technical sense."

"It contains one poem," continued the Lord Justice, "which Mr. Crowley says he did not write, but which was of the most horrid description. It was published as part of the book.

"I think any jury, listening to the facts elicited in this case about the plaintiff and about what he did in connection with his "temple" at Cefalu, would inevitably come to the conclusion either that there was no libel or that, if the words were defamatory, the statements were justified.