

“AN ORGY OF CANT.”

BY THE EDITOR.

AMONG the British critics of the government of Great Britain there is one who has shown himself universally ingenious as a poet as well as enthusiastic on various occult subjects. People interested in occultism may remember the first volume of his *Equinox*, a stately volume with artistic illustrations acquainting the reader with a charming ritual and containing many mysterious articles. We refer to Aleister Crowley who has made himself *persona non grata* to the English government and may be compared with his well-known countryman, Bernard Shaw. Both are poets, both are masters of sarcastic wit, both are Irish patriots and both possess the manliness to speak out boldly and point out the inconsistencies in English politics of to-day.

Early last year Mr. Crowley gave expression to his view of the war in a short circular entitled “The Orgy of Cant” which he sent out pretty widely in letter form among his friends. It was reprinted in *The Continental Times*, an American paper published in Europe.

The English claim, as a matter of course, that God and right are on their side. The huge Teuton armies are crushed by the small forces of Englishmen. Mr. Crowley says:

“We are in for one of our periodical orgies of Cant. Right (and God, of course, thank God!) struggles gallantly in its tiny way against Armed Might, Tyranny, Barbarism; the Allies pit their puny force against the hordes of Huns. Parsons preach on David and Goliath, publicists invoke Jack the Giant-Killer. The odds are always ten to one. Fortunately, one Englishman is a match for $18\frac{1}{3}$ Germans, as statistics prove.

“Englishmen, even educated Englishmen, even traveled Englishmen, manage to hypnotize themselves into believing this.

“My own view is simpler. We have waited for a long while

to smash Germany and steal her goods. We have taken a first-class opportunity, and we shall never regret it.

"In point of fact, gallant little Germany is against a world in arms. Austria has been torn for many years by internal divisions; only a part of her population is of German stock. But against Germany and this one friend are arrayed Russia, France, England, Servia, Montenegro and Japan; and every one of these nations is throwing its whole diplomatic weight into the task of getting Roumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Holland, Denmark and the United States of America to join in. We are only about 6 to 1 at present and feel insecure.

"Algerians, not only of Arab but of negroid and even negro stock, have been hurled into the line; India has gushed out a venomous river of black troops—the desperate Ghoorka, whose *kukri* is thrust upward through the bowels; the Pathan, whose very women scavenge the battlefield to rob, murder and foully mutilate the dead, the fierce Sikh, the lithe Panjabi, the Bengali even, whose maximum of military achievement is the Black Hole of Calcutta!

"Against the Boers the English did not dare employ savage troops. Europe would have risen in arms at the abomination.

"To-day we do it, because all armed Europe is already either for us or against us. And with all that we use the Japanese! Can we complain if the German papers say that the Kaiser is fighting for culture, for civilization, when the flower of the allied troops are black, brown, and yellow 'heathens,' the very folks whom we have stopped from hook-swinging, suttee, child-murder, human sacrifice and cannibal feast? From Senegambia, Morocco, the Sudan, Afghanistan, every wild band of robber clans, come fighting men to slay the compatriots of Kant, Hegel, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Beethoven, Wagner, Mozart, Dürer, Helmholtz, Hertz, Haeckel, and a million others perhaps obscurer, no less noble, men of the Fatherland of music, of philosophy, of science and of medicine, the land where education is a reality and not a farce, the land of Luther and Melancthon, the land whose life blood washed out the ecclesiastical tyranny of the dark ages.

"The Huns!

"We thank God that we are not as other men. There are no stained glass windows bright enough for us. Our haloes are top heavy."

Here follow Mr. Crowley's comments on the English view concerning the Kaiser:

"Indignation has led me from the point of my paragraph. It

was my purpose to expose the infamous pretence—which, however, is not too inane to dupe even clear-sighted Englishmen in their hysteric hour—the pretence that the Kaiser is a ‘mad dog,’ a homicidal maniac, a man like Nebuchadnezzar in the Hebrew fable, or like Attila the Scourge of God, or Tamerlane.

“*It is a lie.* The Kaiser has always been, and is to-day, a man of peace. He has indeed lived up to the maxim *Si vis pacem, para bellum* and, loaded with the legacy of hate which the impolitic annexation of Alsace-Lorraine had thrust upon his shoulders, he could do no less without offering the breast of Germany to the ravisher. A lamb to the slaughter, indeed, with *La revanche* in every mouth! What would he do, with men yet alive who remembered Jena, and the ceaseless raids and ravages of Bonaparte?

“But in a hundred crises he kept his head; he kept the peace. He had plenty of chances to smash France forever; he did not take them. An ambitious prince might have put a relative on the throne of Louis XIV while France was torn by the Boulanger affair, the Panama scandal, the Dreyfus horror, when Diogenes might have gone through France with a modern searchlight for his lantern without finding a single man who was not a traitor to his country, or at least to the republic and the most trustworthy man of affairs was he who could be trusted to put the ‘double-cross’ on every one. The Kaiser never stirred.

“It would have been easy to destroy the Russian menace at the time when Japan was straining the sinews of the Tartar giant, or when the Moscow Revolution showed that the Czar could not trust his own soldiers, and the Imperial Guard, hastily summoned from St. Petersburg, shut up the garrison of Moscow in the Kremlin, trained their own guns upon them, and disarmed them. The Kaiser did nothing.

“And then came the Triple Entente.

“Germany was held like a deer in a lion’s jaws. Austria, her only friend, was being ruined by insidious politics even more surely than by open attacks. Barred in the Adriatic, barred in the Baltic, the Teuton had but one small strip of reasonably open coast. That the Kaiser made that coast the greatest naval base in the world was held to be a ‘menace.’

“Surely the Russo-Japanese war and the Boer war showed plainly—if any fool there were who could not see it *a priori*—that the greatest, widest, best, and only impregnable military base is the sea. To-day we can bring Russian troops from Vladivostock or Archangel and land them at Ostend, a million at a time, and Ger-

many must be well served indeed by spies if she knows of the operation in time to guard against it. Such a power is the supreme strategic advantage. Is it then so treacherous and aggressive if Germany, threatened by an alliance (hypocritically described as an *entente*) of powers outnumbering her six to one, sought to keep open a path to raid that universal base of operations? The English are the least military and the most warlike of all peoples, said some one; the converse is truer still of Germany.

"And since the Entente the ordeal of the Kaiser has been Promethean. Insult after insult he has had to swallow; injury upon injury he has had to endure. The Kiao-Chau adventure; harmless and rational, was balked, then sterilized, then counterpoised. The colonies did not prosper. England built like a maniac against his navy; Churchill deliberately pulled his nose by the impudent proposal for limitation of armaments.

"Agadir was a fresh humiliation; for a few acres of uninhabitable jungle on the Congo he had to surrender all interest in Morocco, a country he had nursed for years.

"It is still a diplomatic secret, and I must not betray it. But who financed Italy in her Tripolitan adventure, and why?

"The last straw was the Balkan war. Blotted was his one hope of escape to the east; his ewe-lamb, Turkey, was torn to pieces before his eyes, and he could not stir a finger to prevent it. Austria still blocked in the Adriatic, Italy alienated from the Triple Alliance, the Slav expanding everywhere, Constantinople itself threatened, Roumania (even) turning toward Russia, he must have felt like a victim of that maiden of armor and spears that once executed justice on the weak.

"And all this had been accomplished by England without sword drawn or cannon fired.

"Here then stood Wilhelm, dauntless but defeated. His diplomacy had failed; his one ally was handicapped by domestic unrest; he was isolated in Europe; England was increasing her navy at a pace which he could never beat; France, with her three years' law, was proposing to increase her army by 50 per cent at a stroke; Russia was turning the flank, pushing on through the Balkans subtly and surely.

"And the Kaiser answered: I am the servant of God; I stand for peace. And the Triple Entente gathered closer and chuckled: Aha! he dare not fight. Let us tighten the garrote!

"So Servia plots and executes the crime of Sarajewo. Austria, its aged emperor smitten yet again and most foully, demands im-

peratively the disclosure of the accomplices of the assassins. Servia replies in terms of evasion, evasion impudently cynical. Austria stirs. Russia—and there is no pretense possible, the murder of the archduke was either instigated by Panslavism or was a threat equally to the Czar as to any other ruler—replies by mobilizing. Before Austria has moved a man or a gun, Russia mobilizes.

“And what was the position of the German emperor? He must strike now or never.

“He looked about him. The weakness of the British government and its supposed preoccupation with the Ulster folly and the suffragettes encouraged him to hope. He saw France, mere rottenness, its bandages torn off by the pistol-shot of Mme. Caillaux. All things conspired; he would make one final effort for peace by threatening Russia.

“And then he suddenly knew that it was no good. Nothing was any good; nothing would ever be any good again. *Sir Edward Grey spoke for peace, spoke of neutrality, in the House of Commons at a moment when thousands of British troops were already on their way to Belgium, and the fleet, concentrated and ready for action, already held the North Sea.*

“France withdrew her troops from the frontier ‘so as to avoid any possibility of incidents which might be mistaken for aggression,’ while her Algerian and Senegambian troops were on the water, half-way to Marseilles.

“He knew that this time there was no hope of peace. Abdication itself would hardly have saved Germany from a long-prepared, carefully-planned war, a war whose avowed object, an object in the mouth of every man in the street, was the destruction of Austria, the dismemberment of Germany. They had got him.

“Even a worm will turn; even a Quaker will fight if he is cornered.

“Wilhelm struck.”

Some time ago Belgium was decried and pilloried in all English literature for “the crime of the Congo,” as it was called by Sir Conan Doyle. But all this is now forgotten. Mr. Crowley says:

“We have quite forgotten that the Belgian is the most cruel, mean, and cowardly cur in Europe, that we have demonstrated till all was blue against him as assassin, torturer, mutilator, and cannibal. We have dined in our thousands to acclaim his disgrace. We heard of nothing but ‘red rubber,’ of niggers with hands, and feet, and indeed all that was off-choppable, off-chopped; of rape, robbery, murder, anthropophagy, and so on, until even our sanest etymol-

ogists began to derive Belgium from Belial and Belphegor and other leading Lucifuges of the hierarchy of the Pit. King Cleopold, who was really a foolish kindly old gentleman with a taste in petticoats, the spit of a hundred *vieux marcheurs* in any Pall Mall club, was compared to all the Roman emperors from Caligula and Nero to Justinian and Diocletian. And now it is 'gallant little Belgium,' and '*les braves Belges*,' and enough about heroes and martyrs to make any decent man vomit!

"Anything the Belgians may have got they asked for. *Flagellum qui meruit ferat!*"

How different is the British view of France now from what it was before the war. Here is British opinion of France before and after the war:

"We thank God that we are not as other men. Humph! If the French are being beaten, they have only themselves to blame. Does one expect a Leonidas from France?"

"Outside the sacred Mount of Parnassus, where dwell Rodin and Anatole France and a few more, what names does one know but names of scandal? Eiffel, and Reinach, and Dreyfus, and Henry, and du Paty de Clam, and de Lesseps, and Meyer, and Mme. Humbert, and Mme. Steinheil, and Mme. Caillaux. Since 1870 the history of France is a history of mean and mostly unintelligible squabble, fringed with Jesuitry and pseudo-Mason intrigue, a viler, an obscurer money-grubbery than even that of Haussmann and the Second Empire. In all the labyrinth of French group-politics is there a name unsmirched by what in any other country would be felony?"

"What sort of an army is it whose officers conspire wholesale against the state and have to be bought over by a bourse-ridden republic whose chief magistrate can be smacked publicly in the face at a race-course and not dare to retaliate, the pretenders to whose throne can allow their conspirators to culminate and at the last moment fear to show themselves, so that all their followers are thrown into prison—when a single bold push would have set them on the throne?"

"Calmette, the *Bel-ami* journalist, who by trickery and treason makes himself the greatest power in French journalism, threatens to expose the master blackmailer, to unmask the 'impregnable' frontier fortresses that are still armed with the guns of 1872; he is murdered by a woman who in England would be considered as a doubtful starter in any concourse of moderately respectable demi-

mondaines—and a jury is found to declare that she did not commit the act to which she openly confesses!

“England has spent about nine centuries in hating and despising France, in crying out on her for atheism and immorality and all the rest of it; Edward VII, one night upon Montmartre, swears the French are jolly good sportsh, bigod, and lo! the Angel of the Entente Cordiale, Mimi Tete-Beche is Sainte-Genevieve, and Jésus-la-Caille becomes the Saviour of Protestant England.

“Is it a nation in which abortion has become a national danger that will freely give her sons to the Republic?

“If so, only because the French people is not corrupted, even by their politicians.

“I love the French—I will not yield precedence to Edward VII, though I prefer Montparnasse to Montmartre, and pay for my own dinner at Lapérouse’s where he accepted £20,000 to dine at the Café Anglais—and I want to see them victorious and prosperous. But I shall not mistake France for Sparta.”

As to the Slavs we find a similar contrast between former British views concerning Russia and those of to-day.

“As to Russia, we have had nothing but whole-hearted abuse since 1850. Even their ridiculous fear of having their children stolen by Jews for the purposes of ritual murder—as they most fixedly believe—has been represented as religious bigotry, when it is at the worst but peasant ignorance like the belief in witchcraft.

“We have received and fêted the would-be assassins of their Czar; we have imagined Red Sunday in St. Petersburg, and fulminated against pogroms, and preached against vodka and brutal Cossacks till any one who has ever been to Russia wants to go away quietly and die; and the next thing is that we hold up our railways and smuggle 150,000 of the brutal Cossacks aforesaid to fling them on the flank of the German armies in Normandy and Picardy. Well, no! it was only a Secret Service lie. But how dearly we all wished it true!

“Have we not wept and yelled over Poland? And has not the Czar promised autonomy to Poland once and again, and tricked?

“My own view of Russia is that it is the freest country in the world; but it is a little sudden for our Nonconformists who have denounced her as a tyrant for the last sixty years, to hail her thus incontinently as the champion of European liberty.”

Mr. Crowley has but little to say on Servia and Montenegro:

“It is disgusting to have to foul clean paper with the name of Servia.

“These swineherds who murdered and mutilated their own king and queen; whose manners make their own pigs gentlefolk; these assassins who officially plot and execute the dastard murder of the Crown Prince of a nation with whom they are at peace; these ruffians so foul that even cynical England hesitates to send a minister to their court of murderers—these be thy gods to-day, O England!

“Heroic little Servia!”

“I have not a word to say against the Montenegrins. They are decent honest cutthroats.”

“And now we come to the treacherous monkeys of Japan, the thieves and pirates of the East. Who makes the shoddy imitations of European and American machinery, forges the names of famous firms, sticks at no meanness to steal trade? Who, under cover of alliance with England, fostered in China a boycott of all English goods?

“Only yesterday Japan was at the throat of Russia—or at least trod heavily on one big toe. To-day in Tokyo they sing the Russian national anthem, and cheer the ambassador whenever he appears.

“Why not? of course. It is natural, it is human; it is all in order. But it is fickleness and treachery; it is hypocrisy and humbug. Diplomacy is of necessity all this; but at least let us mitigate the crime by confession!

“Human nature is never so bad when it is not shackled by the morality of emasculate idealists.

“Does any person who knows the Far East believe even in an opium dream that Japan had any quarrel with Germany, or any care for her alliance with England? Kiao-Chau was an easy enough prey; well, then, snatch it, and chance the wrath of schoolmarm America and the egregious Wilson. But for God’s sake, and by the navel of Daibutsu, and the twelve banners of the twelve sects of Buddha, let us spew out the twaddle about honor, and justice, and oppressed China, and the sanctity of alliance!”

Now the English have their turn:

“And England! England the Home of Liberty, the Refuge of the Oppressed, the Star of Hope of the Little Nations. I suppose that any other nation about whom they sang

“‘They’re hanging men and women too—
For wearing of the green’

would suppress the song by yet more hanging. The English are cynical enough to sing it themselves.

"The English are ever on the lookout for atrocities. Bulgarian atrocities, Armenian atrocities, Tripolitan atrocities, Congo atrocities, and now German atrocities. One notices that the atrocity of the atrocitators varies with their political objectionability.

"The parable of the mote and the beam was made for England, surely.

"German atheism! from the compatriots of Shelley, Thomson, Bradlaugh, Morley, and John Burns.

"German sensuality! from the fellow-citizens of Swinburne, Rossetti, Keats, and a dozen others.

"German blasphemy! when the Kaiser invokes the God of Battles. As if the success of British arms were not prayed for daily in the churches, the name of God invoked in the addresses to the soldiers, and the very motto of England, *Dieu et mon droit!* It is true the Kaiser was first to make so emphatic an insistence that God was his ally; it seems that England has the old literary grievance against those *qui ante nos nostra dixerunt!*

"Indeed *sacvitia!*

"German militarism! A strange rebuke from a nation whose saner citizens at this hour are cursing themselves that they did not have conscription twenty years ago, from a nation which has by a sham Insurance Act riveted heavier fetters on their slave-class than were ever ball and chain.

"And it is England that can produce a firm of piano manufacturers to start a boycott of German pianos—their own pianos being all German but the cases!—and a boycott of German music. And it is England that can show a composer who writes to the papers that he will now "try harder than he ever tried before" to beat Bach and Beethoven and Brahms and Strauss and Wagner! In the meantime he will refrain from the wicked and unpatriotic luxury of Vienna steak! And since Kant thought two and two made four, for all true Englishmen they must make five in future.

"Have Englishmen forgotten their own Royal family?

"The very dogs in England's court
They bark and howl in German."

"Edward VII spoke English with an accent; and at the first hour of war with Germany we found the first Lord of the Admiralty a German prince!

"Until this year England has never been at war with Germany

in the course of history since the Conquest. Our very speech, half English, betrayeth us.

"All this is finished. The German is a Hun, and a Vandal, and a monster, and a woman-torturer, and a child-murderer, and runs away in his millions at the sight of a territorial from Hoxon. And the British army has won victory after victory against enormous odds, some sixtyfold, and some eightyfold, and some a hundredfold, and has retreated (for strategic purposes, luring the hosts of the Kaiser to their doom) nearly as fast as a frightened man can run, and exactly as fast as a victorious host can pursue them."

The government of Great Britain have succeeded in their scheme. The war is on. Germany is fighting against odds; and though there is some danger that she may not submit, the British Cabinet have mixed the cards well and have succeeded admirably in their diplomatic job. Mr. Crowley concludes thus:

"I write in English for those English who count, and this is the proper way to view the matter. Germany is a rich prize. We can capture German trade, German manufactures, German shipping, German colonies. We can exact an indemnity sufficient to cripple Germany for a dozen generations. We can split Germany into six kingdoms or republics, and weaken her beyond repair forever. We can double-cross Russia by insisting on the creation of a new Poland. We can destroy the German fleet, and economize on dreadnoughts. We can force our proletariat to accept conscription and stave off the social revolution. We can drown the Irish question in Lethe; we can fight a general election on the war, and keep the present gang of politicians in office.

"And, best of all! we can achieve all this in the name of Honor, and the Sanctity of Treaties, and the Cause of the Democracies, and we can ask the blessing of God upon our arms in the name of Liberty, and Civilization, and Prosperity, and Progress."