

THE "OPEN MIND" IN "THE OPEN COURT."

BY C. MARSH BEADNELL.

The only means of preventing surprise attacks from the civil population has been to interfere with unrelenting severity and to create examples which by their frightfulness would be a warning to the whole country. (The Kaiser.)

During the last ten months the Editor of *The Open Court* has vehemently protested that his attitude is not anti-British but, "in a sense, pro-British," in fact, that he "loves the English nation"; he has stated that he has investigated the conditions and motives which led to the war with sincere impartiality, that if refuted by good sound arguments or by real facts he will confess his errors openly and without reluctance. It will be interesting to place on record the manner in which Mr. Paul Carus gives expression to his pro-British sympathies, exhibits impartiality of judgment and fulfils his promises. In the very first number of *The Open Court* devoted to the war we find, out of some seventy odd pages, sixty-six avowedly anti-British, fifty of which are contributed by Mr. Carus himself. This fair-minded editor is also at great pains to reproduce, by means of two full-page illustrations, paintings by Verestchagin, one depicting Indians lashed to cannon and entitled by the artist "Blown from the Cannon's Mouth," the other, French grenadiers shooting Russian peasants inside a church. The connection between these bygone events and the present war is best known to the just and judicious mind of Mr. Carus. Let us assume, however, that his object in doing so was—of course I may be wronging him here—to put France and England in a bad light. and that his disinterment of these long defunct and now somewhat putrid corpses has been for the purpose of distracting attention from certain incidents much more pertinent and nearer home, then his argument amounts to this: In the past "A" and "B" did wrong to "C" and "D," therefore "G" is justified in now wronging "A"

and "B." Being so strictly impartial Mr. Carus will certainly require, for some future number of *The Open Court*, two more pictures to counterbalance those in the October one, let me therefore submit for his favorable consideration two of topical and current interest—there are others in stock should these not prove acceptable. To avoid any misunderstanding I purposely pass by the sinking of the *Lusitania* with her freight of passengers including women and children, for it is possible Mr. Carus may, like other Germans, regard that "incident" as one of the most glorious of the war. I therefore select, as my first scene, a burning farm at Weerde; close by a mother, writhing in mental agony, her two little children, three and four years old, have been murdered before her eyes and are being flung from the bayonets into the flames. Scene two discloses a cosy little farmstead at Haecht; to the door of the house is nailed by its tiny hands and feet, a two or three year old infant, and in the garden lies the body of a little girl shot through the forehead. These are two of hundreds of such scenes, some so shocking that they will not bear mention on paper; they are fully established by evidence taken by Lord Bryce's Committee. No doubt Mr. Carus will endeavor to extenuate such "incidents" by saying they merely prove the eruption of a certain amount of indiscipline among the troops which is inseparable from all warfare. Then listen to the words of the Bryce Committee: "Murder, lust and pillage prevailed. . . . on a scale unparalleled in any war between civilized nations during the last three centuries. It was to the discipline rather than to the want of discipline that these outrages were due. . . ."

The war must be conducted as ruthlessly as possible, since only then, in addition to the material danger, is the necessary terror spread.—General von Bernhardi.

We pass on to the November issue; in this Mr. Carus lifts wholesale a pro-German letter contributed to the *Vossische Zeitung* by an Englishman. This gentleman's Englishry may be gauged from the following remarks: "There are English, to be sure, who prefer to go home, but nearly all those whom I know, prefer to remain here (Berlin) because they know they are living in a truly civilised country. . . . Every Britisher who knows Germany, her love of peace and her desire for justice, is indignant at England's quixotic policy." Two articles by Paul Carus also figure in this number; in "War on War" he deftly drags in more comments on "Blown from the Cannon's Mouth." In "Poor Belgium" he excuses Germany's burglarious onslaught by the totally unwarrantable and oft-refuted

statement that, prior to the burglary, Belgium had herself already committed a breach of neutrality. Then, as though fearing the transparency of such equivocation, he asks this silly riddle: "Why did the Belgian people show hostility to Germany when the Luxemburg people behaved like peaceful citizens?" And this from one who has written extensively on "the nature of thought" and "the mind of man"!

We proceed to the December number in which we find over 13 pages (excluding a full-page illustration) devoted to the inventor of those great gas bags whose principal role up to the present has been the slaughtering of women and babies in unfortified towns. Out of 62 pages, despite the repeated protest of "I am not anti-British," 52 contain attacks on the British. The remaining ten pages consist of an English view of Anglo-German relationship copied from a *Saturday Review* of nearly 20 years ago and a pro-English article to which latter the Editor, lest it should unduly impress any readers, is careful to add his own comments thereon together with a reproach addressed to its author. Of the 52 pro-German pages, 37 are contributed by the Editor and in these he makes the wildest accusations against the Serbs of officially practising assassination, insinuates that the Crown Prince of Servia was implicated in the assassination of the Arch Duke, accuses Russia of encouraging Servia to fight her enemies by means of assassinations, and states that he *knows* Germany had positive information that the French intended to advance into Germany through Belgium. Even were these accusations true, which they are not, they strike one as extremely pharisaical coming from an ex-officer of a Saxon artillery regiment who, it may be presumed, was and is conversant with the following frank expression of opinion in the German War Book: "International Law is by no means opposed to the exploitation of the crimes of third parties (assassination, incendiarism, robbery and the like) to the prejudice of the enemy."

In the January number for this year are two articles, embracing eight and a half pages pleading the cause of the allies, but a frantic effort is made in nine and a half pages of editorial anti-British comments to swamp any effect these articles might have on readers. In this number we have the sorry spectacle of the editor of a magazine devoted to the purification of religion making use of an argument like the following: "The famous German chant of hatred proves that whereas the German fight against France and Russia is a sportsmanlike affair—a shot for a shot and a blow for a blow—England is blamed as giving a shot in the back" (*sic*). Once

again he trots out the refuted statement that England did not intend to respect Belgian neutrality, and flings a conjoint accusation at these two countries of having desired to expunge Germany. An American sympathizer with Germany who, however, declines to allow his name to appear, contributes an article, and at the end of the magazine a Mr. Kampmeier—note the name—proves to his own, and doubtless the Editor's, satisfaction, the "Preconcerted Arrangements of the Allies." The very illustrations in this number display the bitterness of spirit with which Mr. Carus is obsessed and whereby he is blinded to all sense of fairness. There is a full-page illustration of General von Hindenburg followed by two half-page ones of German soldiers distributing food to the poor of Belgium, each, of course, accompanied by laudatory remarks. Then comes a half-page photograph of Lord Roberts inspecting recruits in Langley Park. Now our strictly impartial Editor might have made a few remarks in harmony with those pertaining to the German general and soldiers or he might have held his peace, but he did neither; instead he tells us that the appearance of the troops is not very favorable, they seem undersized and underfed, merely "food for powder." In the same number is the parrot-cry, "I am not anti-British. . . . I am in a sense pro-British."

The more unmerciful the conduct of war, the more merciful it is in reality, for the war is thereby sooner ended.—General von Hindenburg.

In the February issue Mr. Carus appears to be trying to adjust the disproportionate space hitherto accorded the philo-Germans, for he actually gives 30 pages of pro-British views to eleven of the opposite. In this number we see the same old statement concerning the state burglary and the same old excuses—they are getting as inevitable as the Derby dog; but harken to the manner of argument, he says, "I have maintained that, in view of the fact that she was threatened with an invasion through Belgium, Germany was justified in attempting a passage through this no longer neutral territory. . . . Since we know that England herself had intended to break into Germany through Belgium, Germany's action is perfectly justified." What superfine logic! A little further on Mr. Carus hugs himself with delight over the vaporings of a couple of anonymous German professors and selects some choice tit-bits for our delectation; these are so appropriate (!) to a magazine edited by a German, founded by a German, and devoted to the "establishment of religion and ethics on a scientific basis," that I will reproduce them. "We pity

the French and are sorry that the Belgians were so misguided; we regret that our men have to pit their lives against the Cossacks, but we feel a positive hostility towards the English." Presumably the Belgians so far have been experiencing what the Prussians—who never did have any sense of humor—would call "negative hostility." The other professor in this strain: "There is but one enemy, and that is England. She is not only our enemy, but the enemy of mankind. You have not the slightest idea of the hatred which moves all Germany. England is the instigator of the whole war and of all the unspeakable misery which has been brought not only upon innocent Germany but also upon the Belgians and French.... Every peasant knows this.... so that for centuries the deadliest hatred against England will remain the most sacred inheritance in every German family to be handed down from father to son.... All the ambition (of our armies) burns for a humiliation of England.... Nothing, is more apparent than the degeneration of that ruthless nation...." and so on *ad nauseam*.

Inexorability and seemingly hideous callousness are among the attributes necessary to him who would achieve great things in war.—General von der Goltz.

Concerning the March and April numbers there is little to say. An anti-British letter of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's to the *Continental Times* is reproduced in the latter and eulogized by the editor as being written by "one who knows whereof he speaks." An English view of the war by G. Sarton, capped, of course, by an editorial putting forth the German view, appears in the May number. The editor here complains that his opponents treat him as though his views were biased; "I am not anti-British" he indignantly protests. Unfortunately the July number has not yet arrived in this country, it will be interesting to see, when it does, whether Mr. Carus will be open-minded enough to acknowledge that the information he culled of Dr. Conybeare was mistaken, seeing that that gentleman has now made in the *Times* a public recantation of, and apology for, his attack on England's ministers.

With each succeeding number of *The Open Court* Mr. Carus falls more deeply under the spell of self-hypnotism. By the constant repetition of statements he would like to be true, he has come to believe they are true. And the futility of his mode of reasoning! Listen! "If the Germans had been assured that Belgium's neutrality would have been respected by the other powers they would have had the great advantage of having to protect only their short and

well-defended frontier. The neutrality of Belgium... would actually have been of great advantage to Germany. Why then did she not keep it, but instead break it deliberately and ruthlessly?" This baffles all comment. One can only say, "Oh! Belgium! Belgium! How could you do such a thing?"

Above all you must inflict on the inhabitants of invaded towns the maximum of suffering.... You must leave the people through whom you march nothing but their eyes to weep with.—Bismarck.

I think I have said enough to show that Mr. Carus has not exhibited impartiality nor fought his opponents with fairness. Indeed, he has not fought them at all; with infinite care and patience he has gone the round of the dustbins and collected together bits of rag and straw from which he has constructed effigies. Having stuck these about the stage he has worked himself into an orgy of fury, hurled himself at his dummies and knocked the stuffing out of them, and then, turning round to his audience has cried, "There! Look what I've done!" The whole of Mr. Carus's arguments can be boiled down to:

1. I, Paul Carus, am of the opinion that England intended to commit a dastardly act.
2. Therefore it is proved England intended to commit a dastardly act.
3. Therefore Germany is quite justified in having committed an act which it has been fully proved England had determined to perform.
4. Therefore this act which Germany was forced by England to commit becomes, in view of the serious disadvantage under which it has placed Germany, a righteous and self-denying one.

One of the original objects of *The Open Court* was to prove the existence of an all-just God and to purify religion, yet its very editor sullies its pages by commending to his readers German eulogies of hate. Personally I have no interest either in the Editor's intimacy with, or his patronization of, the Deity, but I should like to quote two of his arguments merely to show their invalidity. He says, "The men of England who have advocated the war... have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, that sin which can never be forgiven." In another place he argues thus: God is not neutral as a rule but is on the side of the stronger battalions, nevertheless

he sometimes sides with the weaker against the stronger. . . . "God favors the weaker side if it is led by intelligence and, as it were, promises to promote by its victory the cause of mankind. . . . God is neutral; but I am convinced that, being impartial, he will stand by Germany in spite of the odds that count against her." When an editor who poses as a philosopher and thinker can descend to a mode of reasoning such as the above, we cease to wonder that in *The Open Court* he upholds a German code of ethics which makes black white, twists a wrong into a right, heaps contempt on a principle which insists that written pledges and obligations should be kept inviolate until formally and openly disavowed, and lauds a principle that regards promises of any kind as so much piecrust.

The Germans have robbed the profession of arms of every vestige of humanity. They murdered peace, now they are murdering war. They have made out of it a monstrosity too evil to survive.—M. Anatole France.