

SWEET REASONABLENESS

By Aleister Crowley.

(Mr. Aleister Crowley was once a subject of Great Britain. He is a member of Cambridge University and is considered by the foremost English critics to be one of England's finest poets. He approaches the subject of world peace as a poet does, laying especial stress upon those great spiritual virtues which unfortunately for mankind are not always practical in this very early earth. Frankly, we do not agree with Mr. Crowley. Nevertheless, his paper deserves the deepest consideration and presents a notable point of view, which is neither British, German, French nor any nationality, but manifestly one of high humanity and sweet reasonableness.—Editor.)

"The state of hate doth not abate by hate in any line or clime,
"But hate will cease if love increase." So smoothly runs the
ancient rime.
—Dhammapada.

THE constant provocations and insults of Jimmie Hughes had at last driven little Willie Brown to retaliate. Tact had availed nothing, and protest had led only to fresh bullying. So little Willie Brown made up his mind to "bat him one."

"There stood the giant form of the cowardly aggressor, hulking, menacing, with a vile sneer upon his ugly face. Little Willie, a full foot shorter, stiffened all over. His jaw tightened; the lines of his face hardened, expressing resolution, courage and wrath righteous and just, but altogether great, neither fierce nor violent, being gripped in the iron grasp of the sternest moral control. This was no merely human quarrel, no fight between two angry boys. There was much of the nature of divine chastisement in the coming battle. It was a long-suffering God, slow to anger and full of mercy, moved at last to execute justice, sorrowfully and without passion, but with severity most equitably proportioned to the heinousness of the offence.

"So Little Willie Brown struck Jimmie Hughes. The blow caught him on the jaw, which snapped like a rotten twig. Jimmie's teeth flew out in all directions like an exploding firework. The blood gushed out like a geyser. The giant's body swayed once, like some great oak in the tornado, then crashed to earth and stirred no more. Jimmie was dead. Little Willie Brown retrieved from his pockets the broken knife which had been the cause of the dispute, and returned to Sunday School with the proud consciousness of One More Painful Duty Done."

THE shameful secret of the Universe must now be disclosed: the above is not a record of brutal materialistic fact; it is only the mental picture which Little Willie formulated when he made up his mind to "bat him one." It dazzled him, so much so, that after many repetitions, he was deluded into action. In this, as luck would have it, he was extremely successful. He caught Jimmie at a disadvantage, and the blow went home. But the bully's face was not very much damaged, and his own knuckles bled considerably. A regular fight developed, and by sheer gameness the little fellow beat the big one. But he had suffered a good deal; his eyes were blackened, his lip was cut, his clothes were torn; there would be a big reckoning with his mother by-and-by! And when Jimmie Hughes, pleading for peace, offered all in his power, it appeared that the broken knife had been lost in the struggle; and though they spent a long while looking for it together, it was never found.

II.

THIS is a pretty decent parable of nearly every war. The nation, taking its coat off, sees nothing but its own armed might, ably seconded by Jehovah or some other complacent and competent deity, striking its opponent to the earth. In six weeks it will be dictating peace in the other fellow's

capital; it will extract an indemnity large enough to make all its citizens rich for life, and acquire new territory sufficient to make them all landed proprietors with the conquered foemen for serfs and vassals.

When this theory comes to proof, and declares itself as but a rosy dream, the cry goes up, "We are betrayed." This is quite true; but the traitor is the imagination, the mental disturbance caused by anger which has created the hallucination. This fever of the mind is constantly inflamed by every new incident of the war; the cheerfulness and depression between which sane human beings fluctuate become mania and melancholia respectively, by reason of the removal of the inhibitory functions of the brain. To speak of reason, right, justice, or even to give sound practical advice with regard to the organization of victory, is then as perfectly useless as it is to argue with a lunatic; the sanest comment is taken up and used for fuel by the burning brain.

And so contagious is this malady that in any one nation it is rare to find as many as a dozen men who retain any grasp of fact, any power to perceive truth.

Of course, the bulk of humanity is totally ignorant of that most important of all psychological facts, that emotion is a veil of perception. The Buddhist makes it the cardinal fact of his philosophy. To him the ego-idea is so powerful a bias that it prejudices him hopelessly in the search for truth, and in the observation of nature and of his own mind; and therefore this "delusion of personality" must be rooted out and burnt with fire before one can even enter upon the Path of Wisdom. It follows that any inflammation of this disease creates delirium and the phantoms of delirium; and the whole body of the emotions, which "move out" and so heat the ego, is but an aggravation of the trouble. It needs Buddhist or some similar training, mute months of solitude and years of meditation, for the conquest of this evil dream, the ego. Only one who has done this is competent to observe the war.

SUPPOSE the mere outbreak destroy half his income, diminish the other half by two-thirds; let it also render his principal work impossible; he does not allow himself to be distressed. His friends are killed in battle; he is ill, starving, lonely in a great and heartless city; but he never feels the smallest thrill of indignation or excitement. He does not propose, with many of his esteemed contemporaries, to burn off one-half of the Kaiser's moustache, and exhibit him caged to the contempt of gaping peasants. He does not want to hang him, or shoot him, or send him to St. Helena. He does not believe that he personally directed the rape, torture, and mutilation of millions of aged Belgian heroines; he cannot imagine him dismissing his cook for serving him boiled baby at two consecutive breakfasts. Indeed, he thinks (to be frank at any cost) that the Kaiser is just as sane as he himself is, as coolly determined to save his country by force of arms as another might be to save his—and that might include Europe, Asia and Africa as well as Ireland—by force of thought; and feels perfectly sure that he knows that the only chance of success lies in keeping a cool head, and rather in concen-