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**BOOKS AND READING**

"Wilhelm II has always been to a certain extent conscious of himself as an incarnation of Lohengrin, Siegfried, Parsifal. . . . It was a great thing for Germany that she had an Emperor with the intelligence . . . to realize himself as the Messiah of whom the prophet Wagner spoke. . . . In truth, to his own soldiers he appears, flashing hither and thither, like St. Michael, to rally, to encourage, to lead forward in the charge. Where the fight is thickest, there is the Emperor, pale and stern, like Christ as he arose from Gethsemane and walked forth to meet Fate, and to find triumph and immortal glory. . . . He seems omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, the very angel of God, terrible and beautiful; sent to save the Fatherland from savage foes. Even if he perish, he will not perish as a man. He will acquire the radiance of Milton's Satan, and go down the ages as the hero of the great lost cause of humanity. None will know the place of his burial. Legends will grow up around him as they did for Christ, for Balder, for Adonis, for Arthur, for Mohammed, for Napoleon." These entertaining sentences are part of an article on "The New Parsifal," by Aleister Crowley in the August number of the *Open Court*. Their author points out that the magical quality of William II invests his eldest son, who "is killed a hundred times and rises to renew the combat, ever more glorious because more glittering as he breaks through the spider-web of myth whose gossamer shrouds over the silver armor of a knight of the Graal." Perhaps a clue to the puzzle of these passages is found in a less sonorous sentence in the article: "This is the age of fairy tales."