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BOOKS OF TO-DAY.

MAGIC AND WAR.

MOONCHILD. By Aleister Crowley. (The Mandrake Press. 10s. 6d.)

We have an unusual measure of genius in the phrases born of the author's fancy, but the mystical in the pages of "Moonchild" appears to be overweight, if clever. Mr. Crowley's effort appears to be to work into the chapters a full, true and particular description of the magical operation by which the spirit of the moon was invoked into the being of an expectant mother, despite the machinations of the Black Lodge of rival magicians.

Plots and counter-plots are provided in abundance; there are many nationalities concerned, and a "certain Abbey" in Sicily is chosen for what the author calls the great experiment. "Moonchild" was written a dozen years ago, "during such leisure as my efforts to bring America into the war on our side allowed me." And, asks the author, "Need I add that, as the book itself demonstrates beyond all doubt, all persons and incidents are purely the figment of a disordered imagination?"

There is, the reviewer might add, the pen of a ready writer; the alert and spontaneous brain of the unbaiting thinker, and the action of a man who is accustomed to have thoughts translated into words and carried into deeds. Here are talks on marriage, on alcohol and one knows what besides, and scarcely upon what pegs the talk are hanging; these are quotations from Scripture and from Byron and Tolstoi, and even George Sand, Chopin, Maximilian, and that Salt lake City notoriety—Joseph Smith.

One Cyril Grey is an oft-recurring figure in the story. He is the King Charles head of the whole narrative. But Madame Blavatsky and Theosophy and Christian Science are worked into the fabric which runs out to a full fabric in which war is made up of the web and weft. Now we have two chapters in which

names are more familiar, some that are revered, some abhorred. We get an idea like this:

All Europe will be serene and stand for years to come. But the new generation will fear neither poverty nor death. They will fear weakness, they will fear dishonour. Foch. Von Kluck, Cripps, Joffre, and the then Crown Prince, come into the picture; there is some preaching of foreign affairs; some talk of espionage; some of promotions and of what the Crown Prince was expected to do; and a graphic picture of the retreat from Mons. But that is unmatched in history, says Crowley, and is known and has been read of all men.