

**THE WORLD ON FIRE
OR
ENGLAND'S OWN INFERNO**

**By An
American Anglo-Saxon**

**American Printing Company
Birmingham, Alabama**

**1915
(pages 29-35)**

**Another Englisher, Aleister Crowley,
the Poet, Outs With It.**

**[A Reprint of Crowley's "Honesty is
the Best Policy" from *The Fatherland*.]**

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 six to one at present, and feel insecure.

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.

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.

We have quite forgotten that the Belgian is the most cruel, mean, and cowardly cur in Europe, that we have demonstrated till all are 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 etymologists began to derive Belgium

from Belial and Belphegor and other leading Lucifuges of the hierarchy of the Pit. King Cléopolde, 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.

We have received and fêted the would-be assassins of their Tsar; we have imagined Red Sunday in St. Petersburg, and fulminated against pogroms, and preached against vodka and brutal Cossacks till anyone who has even been to Russia wants to go away quietly and die

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

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 Mont Marte, schwears the Frensch are jolly good shportsch, bigod, and lo! The Angel of the Entente Cordiale.

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 gentle-folk; 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 today, 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. Today in Tokio 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? Kaio-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!

The English are ever on the look-out 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.

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 Straus and Wagner! In the meantime he will refrain from the wicked and unpatriotic luxury of Vienna steak! And since Kant thought two and two make 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 German, 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 Hox-

ton. 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.

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 upwards 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 we Englishmen 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 the that 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? . . .

It is a lie. The Kaiser has always been, and is today, 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 Tsar 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.

Surely the Russo-Japanese war and the Boer war showed plainly—if any fool there were who could not see it *à priori*—that the greatest, widest, best, and only impregnable military base is the sea. Today we can bring Russian troops from Vladivostock or Archangel and land them at Ostend, a million at a time, and Germany must be well-served indeed by spies if she knows of the operation in time to guard against it. Is it then so treacherous and aggressive if Germany, threatened by an alliance (hypocritically described as an entente) of powers outnumbering her by six to one, sought to keep open a path to raid that universal base of operations?

Even the stolid Teuton nature must tire of the perpetual squeeze of Russia, the spurs of the French chanticleer struck even and anon in his hide.

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?

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 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 he could never beat; France, with her three years' law, was proposing to increase her army by fifty per cent at a stroke; Russia was turning flank, pushing on through the Balkans subtly and surely.

And the Kaiser answered, "I am the servant of God; I stand for peace. The Crown Prince is for war; I banish him from the Court. When I am dead let him be master; but while I live I am for peace. And let him that draws the sword perish by the sword!"

And the Triple Entente gathered closer and chuckled: Aha! he dare not fight. Let us frighten the garotte!

So Serbia plots and executes the crime of Sarajevo. Austria, its aged Emperor smitten yet again and most foully, demands imperatively the disclosure of the accomplices of the assassins. Serbia 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 Tsar as to any other ruler—replies by mobilizing

Sir Edward Grey spoke for peace, spoke of neutrality, in the House of Commons at a moment when thousands of British troops were already in Belgian waters, 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, halfway 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.

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 starve 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.