

WANTED — MODERATE MEN.

King Solomon said that he who ruleth his spirit is greater than he who taketh a city. Truly, indeed, it has been a giant's task in these days to avoid the contagion of hysteria, the spiritual rabies of the baser sections of the press.

But in the last week or so statesmen have taken to borrowing (often without acknowledgment) from the editorial matter of the *International*. There is no longer any pretence that the Germans are other than "men of like passions with ourselves," or that the Kaiser has dragged them into unwilling submissives.

Also, there is a general acceptance of the belief, highly unpopular in Bolshevik circles, that the organized hierarchy is the most stable structure of society, that a man is better than a mess, and a cathedral than a pile of stones.

The excuse given in private by the extremists for their bombast in public has been that it was necessary to spur the unwilling public into war. The situation would be Gilbertian were it not so devilish; but its usefulness is over. It is time that the voice of reasonable men should be heard in the land. It is probably hopeless to ask people to think for themselves. In the last week or so the *New York Times*, *Sun*, and even the *World*, have more or less turned upon the President to rend him. The public is becoming familiar with what must be to the man in the street quite inexplicable tergiversations. The extremists are now attacking Mr. Wilson as they attacked us a month or so ago. We can, therefore, appeal to rational thought and calm balance, and say to men and women of good will everywhere in the world, "Come forward, make yourselves heard, give your support to the people who are fighting the battles of good sense."

It is not for us, perhaps, but for other statesmen, to determine what can honorably be accepted by any given nation, but we can at least insist that those who speak for us shall speak with good faith and without rancor, with sympathy and understanding. We shall not fight with less courage and determination because we are chivalrous. The days of the cave-man, when crazy and unthinking rage could determine a victory, are past. A handful of British soldiers were able to defeat countless hordes of Madhists because this was understood. It was the Dervish who possessed the fanatical rage, the unthinking courage. The Briton opposed to him cool thought, armchair organization, careful aim. He did not hate his enemy. He simply shot him dead. Kipling expressed the feeling of the British soldier admirably in his famous poem:

"So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy Wuzzy, an' the missus an' the kid,
We 'ad orders for to smash you, so course we went and did."

That is the spirit in which should all of us be fighting. The observer will notice that, ever since Lord Lansdowne formulated the feeling of that silent element in England which determines her policy, statesmen have been making clear their war aims with much more elasticity than before. There is a feeling in the air that it is time to talk things over quietly. One cannot do this with a cannibal who is suffering from acute delirious mania; and, therefore, the theory that the enemy was this kind of a person had to be given up by all parties. In other words, the slogan of "Deutschland uber Alles" and its equivalents in other languages have had to be altered to our own little effort in motto making: "Humanity first."

I have no wish to rub it in with an "I told you so," to point out that my so-called pro-German-writings of last year are the same as the utterances of the President of the United States and of the Premier of England of this year. For, in truth, I am not conscious of victory, but of defeat. It has not been the spirit of humanity which has dictated the change of policy. That change has been forced upon the various governments by necessity. My work is yet to do. It is still necessary to prove to men that they are cutting their own throats by anger, greed and ambition. It is still necessary to appeal to self-interest. The planet has been taught an appalling lesson; but will men learn it? Will they really understand that even on the lowest ground the philosopher and the poet are their real friends, that the man of the world is really as much of a fool as he is a knave. Selfishness is the highest stupidity. I cannot hurt my brother without hurting myself. That is what some of us have been preaching for many a long day; and because we have preached it we have been called impractical; we have been called traitors. The event has proved only too terribly that we were the patriots and the sages. The time has come to put that lesson into practice. We must take away the power from the self-seeking scoundrels who have been boosting themselves as practical men; and, although the mechanical details of reconstruction must necessarily be left to people of experience in each branch, yet the theory must be left to people who understand truth in its deepest sense. We must entrust the supreme government to the supreme philosopher.

In the meantime our urgent necessity is to make place for the moderate man, to him who has shown by his detached attitude that he could see an inch or two beyond his nose. The President's "war aim" message is most significant in this connection. We do not want people with entirely new theories of government. This is no moment for revolutionary social measures. The world is one vast wound, and the business of the moment is to heal it so far as may be. For this purpose we need soothing applications such as universal charity, and we must complete the work of sterilizing the bacillus of hatred. There could never have been a war if the men in power had had the slightest realization of what it was going to be like. Yet these people were all excellent specimens of the type of man that has been in power for centuries. The moral is to get rid of the type. However, for the moment, the political issue is less radical in character. It will be enough if we sternly refuse a hearing to the bloodthirsty cries of those people who think that the People is but a mob of savages, and that the only way to obtain power over them is to appeal to their most senseless passions.

We want moderate men.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.