

GERMANY'S SUPERMAN AND OURS.

By ANTI-KULTUR.

We have heard a great deal during the first few months of the war about German "kultur." We have been shocked at its manifestations. We have compared it, much to its disadvantage, with our own ideas of "culture" a totally different thing. But it does not seem to have dawned upon anybody, except those who are acquainted with the works of the German metaphysicians, that the German "kultur," as expressed by the most modern of these philosophers, is a very strange, and, to the Christian mind, a very terrible and blasphemous, conception: a conception, however, with a definite, and, in some respects, even a rational, basis. True it is that the first organic expression of the "kultur," or system of ethics of Prussia, was the intellectual child of the philosopher who died, raving, in a lunatic asylum. Still, Frederick Nietzsche merely preached in deadly earnest what many normal men believe in a half-hearted fashion. His view was that there were two systems of ethics, one for the weak, one for the strong; one for the slave, one for the master, the superman, the "magnificent blond beast," without ruth and without hypocrisy. The ethics of the slave were those taught by Jesus of Galilee in "Blessed are the meek. Milk for babes!"—humility and resignation were the mere resorts of the beaten and cunning slave. The blond superman—one will observe that he is blond, or Teutonic—was to be above the petty subterfuge of pretending to kiss the rod which smite him. In fact, he was to be the smiter. Nothing must stand in his path, nor cringing slave-man, nor woman, nor babe. Soft words were not for him, nor love, nor reverence for the great mystery of being, for he was to be greater than the great mystery, the captain of his own mighty, fearless soul and of the souls of all weaker creatures. It is a beautiful picture, is it not? Beautiful or ugly, it is a picture limned for the Germans by the inspired idiot, Frederick Nietzsche, and it is a picture still admired by the uninspired persons who, unfortunately, wield the power in German affairs.

With Nietzsche's contempt for the meek one cannot quarrel wholeheartedly. The meek man is not the man who does the work of the world. Meekness in man is not a fascinating quality. Yet the strongest man, if he be a thinker, has some strain of meekness in him. He accepts the sorry business of human life with battle, with amusement, with interest, but at the back of his mind always with that resignation and humility which recognises the possible futility of all human effort, and even of the great marches of the universe. It is only the fool or the half-wise who sneers at resignation and who despises the best of women and all children because they are meek. Children are the most beautiful things, perhaps, in human life, and it is their very gentleness and helplessness which make them so. Women at their best combine strength with tenderness, they have a great deal of the child

their best combine strength with tenderness, they have a great deal of the child left in them, for they are the first and most important teachers of the child—the gates and guardians of the future of the race. What does Nietzsche say of them, "You go to women, forget not your whip!" One begins to understand the atrocities in Belgium. Schopenhauer, in his essay on women, cannot understand the "insipid veneration for women, which has become the choicest blossom of Germano-Christian stupidity." In venerating women men venerate the race itself, for what the race is that woman makes it. The very intellectual traits upon which man prides himself are inherited, Schopenhauer himself declares, from his mother. But Schopenhauer's essay on women, from which later the youthful degenerate Weininger drew his inspiration, and Nietzsche's remark in "also sprach Zarathustra," quoted above, allow us a glimpse into the German idea of her. Many brutal and ill-informed minds in all countries hold the same idea, but it is left to the Germans to translate this concept into a working theory.

We see now why all the world is in arms against Germany. It is because the leaders of the German nation, swollen with megalomania, regard the Teutonic stock as the cradle of the all-conquering superman. The other races have their ideas of superman—and these ideas are diametrically opposed to those of the German philosophers. Humanity hates the German superman. Our superman should be, if stronger than ourselves, something more than a large, hairy-chested burglar, filled with scorn and contempt for the weak and helpless, and justifying his outrages by the Nietzschean cry that might is right. Our superman, as he is stronger than mere man, will be more just, more merciful, with more of pity in him than contempt, and the will to build rather than to destroy, and to save rather than to kill.