

"WAR"

A SERIAL STORY BY

BARONESS BERTHA VON SUTTNER

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Continued from page 5 of 1st issue.

with the rest, there is now—there I had to turn the page—"poor Arno Dotzky."

I fell insensible to the floor.

CHAPTER VI

"It is all over now, Martha! Solferino is decisive. We have been beaten." With these words my father hurried to me one morning, as I was sitting under the linden trees in the garden.

I was back in the home of my girlhood with my little Rudolf. Eight days after the great battle which left me a widow, I returned to live with my family in Grumitz, our country place in Lower Austria. Just as it had been before my marriage, I was surrounded by the loved ones—father, aunt, two growing sisters, and my little brother. Their kindness and sympathy touched my grief-stricken heart. My sorrow seemed to have been consoling me in their eyes and raised me above the ordinary level.

Next to the blood poured out by the soldiers on the altar of their country, the tears of the bereft mothers, wives, and children are considered the holiest libations poured on the same altar. What was almost a feeling of pride and heroic dignity took possession of me, for to have sacrificed a beloved husband in battle conferred upon me the equivalent of military merit, which grew to be quite a comforting thought, and helped me to bear my sorrow. But then I was but one of many whose loved ones slept beneath the Italian sod.

No particulars were brought me of Arno's death, other than that he had been found dead, recognized, and buried. No doubt the baby and I were his last thought and consolation, and with his last breath he had groaned, "I have done my duty, more than my duty."

"Yes, we are beaten," sadly repeated my father as he sank on to the bench.

"So the victims were a needless sacrifice," I sighed.

"Indeed they are to be envied, for they know nothing of the disgrace which has come upon us. But we shall gather ourselves together soon though they say that peace must now be concluded."

"May God grant it!" I interrupted. "Though it is too late for my poor Arno, yet thousands of others will be spared."

"You seem to think only of your own sorrow, and that of private individuals. This is Austria's affair."

"But is not Austria made up of individuals?"

"But, my dear child, a state and empire has a longer and more important existence than an individual. Men disappear, from generation to generation, but the state goes on and on; it grows in power, fame, and greatness, or it crumbles, sinks, and is lost, if it allows itself to be surpassed or swallowed by other states. Therefore, it is the highest duty of every individual to sacrifice, suffer, and even die, that the existence, the power, and welfare of the state be perpetuated and increased."

These impressive words remained in my thought, and I noted them in my diary. They were curiously like the sentences in my old school books, whose strong, clear convictions had been quite dear from my mind of late, especially since Arno's death, by the confusion, fear, and pity I had experienced. I once more hugged them to my heart, and found consolation and encouragement in the thought that my darling had been sacrificed in a great cause, and that, in giving up my husband, I had done my share in the service of my country.

Aunt Marie had a different source of consolation ready, however. "Stop your crying, my dear," she would say when she found me crushed anew with my grief. "Is it not selfish to mourn for him who is now so happy? From up among the saints he is even now looking down and blessing you. The years will pass quickly when you will join him there. For the heroes of battle heaven prepares a special place of rest. Happy are those who are called from this earth while performing a sacred duty. Next in glory to the Christian martyr comes the dying soldier."

"Then I am to rejoice that Arno—"

"No, not rejoice, that would be asking too much. You must bear your loss and resign yourself. A Heaven sends this trial to purify and strengthen your faith."

"And in order that my heart be purified and my faith strengthened, my poor Arno had to—"

"Yes, so, but how dare you question the hidden will of Providence?"

The consolations which my aunt offered were rather confusing and distracting, but I allowed myself to accept the mystical tangle, and believe that my dear victim was now enjoying heaven as a reward for his agony of sacrifice, and that his memory would be glorified on earth with the halo of heroic martyrdom.

Just before our departure from Vienna the great mourning ceremony had been celebrated in the cathedral of St. Stefan, and I attended. The "De Profundis" was sung for all our warriors fallen and buried on foreign soil. A catafalque had been erected in the centre of the church, lighted with a hundred candles and hung with flags, arms, and military emblems. The grand pathetic requiem came from the choir and flooded the congregation mostly women clothed in black and weeping aloud. And not for her own alone, but for the same sad fate of all, each woman wept for all these poor brave brothers who had given up their sweet young lives for us, for their country, the honor of their nation! And there in the background stood several regiments of living soldiers, listening to the ceremony—all waiting and ready to follow their fallen comrades without a murmur or fear. These clouds of incense, the swelling voice of the organ, the fervent petitions, the common woe poured out in tears and groans must surely have risen to a well-pleased heavenly ear, and the God of armies and battles must certainly shower down His blessing on those to whom this catafalque was raised.

These were the thoughts that came to me, and which I wrote in my journal when I described the mourning celebration.

Two weeks after the defeat of Solferino came the news of the peace of Villa Franca. My father gave himself no end of pains to explain to me how necessary for political reasons this peace had become. I assured him that it was very joyful news to me to know that there was an end to all this fighting and dying. But he continued at length to explain.



BARONESS VON SUTTNER
the Authoress

"You must not for one instant think," he said, "that even though in this peace we have made concessions, we have thereby sacrificed our dignity. We Austrians know perfectly what we are about. It is not the little check we got at Solferino which makes us give up the game. Far from it. We could easily have routed them with another army corps, and forced the enemy from Milan, but, dear Martha, there are other things involved—great principles and objects. We do not cease to push the war further, lest these Sardinian robbers and their French hangman ally should push into other portions of Italy—Modena and Tuscany—where dynasties are in power which are related to our imperial family; nay, they might advance even against Rome itself, and endanger the Holy Father—the Vandal! By giving up Lombardy we—oh, Venice, and can assure the Holy See and the southern Italian states of our support. Thus, my dear, you see, it is only for political reasons and for the sake of the balance of power in Europe."

"Oh, yes, father, I see it," I broke in. "It is a pity that they could not have planned it all before Magenta!" I sighed bitterly, and, to change the subject, I pointed to a package of books which had just arrived from Vienna.

"See, father, the bookseller has sent us several things on approval. Among the rest is the English naturalist Darwin's 'The Origin of Species.' He recommends it as an epoch-making book in modern thought."

"He need not bother me with it," replied my father. "In such stirring times, who can be interested in such rubbish? How can a stupid book about plants and animals and their origin make an epoch of any importance to us men? The formation of the Italian States, the forming of the German Bund, and the consolidation of Austria—such matters make epochs in history and mark the great strides in human advancement. These things will live in history long after that stupid English book is forgotten. Study my words."

I did mark them.

BOOK II. TIME OF PEACE CHAPTER I.

Four years passed quietly, and my sisters, now seventeen and eighteen years old, are to be presented at court. "Why should I not return to society?" I thought. Time had done its work and quieted my grief. Despair had mellowed into sorrow, sorrow into melancholy, then came listlessness, and finally I felt a renewing of my interest in life. I woke one fine morning with the realization that I was a woman to be envied—twenty-three, beautiful, nobly born, rich, the mother of a darling boy, and one of a devoted family. What had I still to ask to make life delightful?

Behind me like a sweet dream lay the short period of my married life. The shadowy past began to glow up the memory of my desperate love, my handsome Hussar, my married happiness, my terrible separation and grief. The duration of it had not been long enough to create a close sympathy. Our devotion had been too shortly cut off to have grown into the friendship and reverence which is often felt by those who have shared years of joy and sorrow. Could I have been indispensable to him when, for no cause, he rushed into the war and left his regiment, which was not called out? Yes, four years made me a different being. My mind had broadened, and knowledge and culture had come to me which, I felt, Arno would have had no sympathy with. If he could come back he would be a stranger to my present spiritual life.

How did it all come about? One year of widowhood passed in despair, deep mourning, and heart-breaking. Of society I would not hear. Rudolf's education should be my one thought. The "baby" turned into "my son," and became the centre of my hope, my pride, and my existence. To be able some day to be his guide and intellectual companion, I buried myself in the treasures of the chateau library. History, in which my interest had cooled, became my passion again, as well as my consolation, for the account of battles and heroes seemed to relate me to the grand historical processes, for which I, too, had lived. Not that I ever got back the old enthusiasm of girlish days for the Maid of Orleans. Many of the overwrought accounts now sounded hollow and mocking, when I thought of the horrors of war.

Can the priceless gem life be paid for with the tinsel coin of posthumous fame? But the history-shelf of my father's library was soon exhausted; I begged the bookseller to send me more. He wrote:

"I send you Thomas Buckle's 'History of Civilization in England.' The work is unfinished, but these two volumes form a complete whole, and have attracted great attention, not only in England but over the world. They say that the author is introducing a new conception of history."

New, indeed! Reading and re-reading it, I felt like a creature taken suddenly from the bottom of a narrow valley to the mountain tops and viewing the world for the first time, out, beyond and beyond, to the boundless ocean. Not that I, a superficial mind of twenty, could grasp the book—but, to keep to my picture, I saw that lofty monumental things lay before my astonished vision. I was dazzled, overcome, my horizon moved out into the immensities of life. Though the full understanding only came to me later, yet that one vision I caught even then, that the history of mankind itself was not formulated by wars, kings, statesmen, treaties, greed, cunning, but by the gradual development of the intellect. Court chronicles gave no explanation to underlying causes, nor a picture of the civilisation of the time. Buckle did not paint war and devastation with a glamor, but demonstrated that the respect for arms diminished as a people rose in culture and intelligence. The lower into barbarism you go, the more war and its romance will die out of our culture and cease to exist. Just as childhood's wrangling ceases, so must society outgrow its childishness.

How all this appealed to the convictions of my heart, which I had so often dismissed as "worthy and weak! I now felt these growing ideals in me, the echo of the spirit of the age, as that thinkers were losing their idolatry for war, and doubting its necessity. The book gave me the opposite of what I sought yet how it soothed me, enlightened, elevated, and pacified me. Once I tried to talk to my father about it but he would have none of it; he refused to follow me to the mountain top, that is, he refused to read the book, so it was useless to discuss it.

During the second year of my sorrow I studied with renewed ardor, and as the mind expanded the old unhappiness disappeared. Buckle had unconsciously given me a taste for the larger world again, and I satisfied my craving to follow out his idea in other authors. The passion for life renewed itself, and the melancholy disappeared. Then the third change was wrought in me. Books alone would not satisfy me.

When we are thus receiving my message were not being gratified—life's flowers were still for me to pluck if I only stretched out the hand. So in the winter of 1863 I entered the salons of Viennese society once more, to introduce my younger sisters there.

"Martha, Countess Dotzky, the rich young widow," thus spoken of, I took my part in the great comedy of the world again. The part suited me, and I was greeted, fêted, spoiled on all sides, much to my delight, after four years of social starving.

The entire family quietly presumed that I would remarry. My aunt no longer referred to my soldier saint above. The future promised meeting might not be so agreeable if a second husband stepped in. Every one except myself seemed to have forgotten his existence. My pain was gone, but his image could never be wiped out. Daily Rudolf's evening prayer closed with: "God keep me good and brave for love of my father, Arno."

We sisters enjoyed society in the extreme. It was really my first glimpse, too, for I had married so soon that I had missed the gaiety and attentions. My crowd of admirers, however, did not impress me much, for between us there lay a chasm. Brilliant young beings, chatting of ballroom, court, and theatre had not the faintest glimpse of the things which my life was beginning to depend upon. Though I had only begun to lap the language of the higher things of soul and science, yet that was far removed from these chatterboxes of Greek or even Patagonian. I had begun to think in the tongue with which men of science would some day debate, and finally solve the greatest riddles of the world.

It was quite certain that in such a circle I would scarcely find a congenial mate, and I carefully avoided all entangling rumors, devoted myself to my boy, plunged into study, kept in touch with the intellectual world, read and relished keenly all the latest things. This barred me from many of the frivolities, and yet I keenly enjoyed the gaiety, the company, and dancing. I longed to open my salon to a few of the upper world of scholarship, but my social position made that impossible. I dared not hope to mix the classes in Vienna. Since that day the exclusive spirit has changed, and fashion to-day finds it acceptable to open its doors to brains of the rarer sort. But at that time it would have been quite impossible to receive except such as were presentable at court—counting at least sixteen ancestors. Our own social set would not have been able to converse with the thinking class, and the latter class would have found it intolerably dull to mingle with a drawing-room full of sportsmen, club-bred girls, old generals, and canonesses. All the talk was a rapid recital of where the last ball had been and the next one was to be—perhaps at Schwartzberg's or Pallavicini's; who was the latest adorer of Baroness Pacher, and the latest rejected of the Countess Palfy; how many estates had Prince Croy; was Lady Amalay's title from her father's or mother's side? Could such drivel possibly have interested the intellectual set?

Occasionally an able statesman, diplomat, or man of genius cropped up among us, but they always assumed the frivolous conversation of the rest. A quiet after-dinner chat with some of our parliamentarians or men of mark would have been made impossible almost, for hardly would the conversation turn on some political or scientific subject when it would be interrupted with, "Ah, dear Countess Dotzky, how charming you looked yesterday at the picnic! And are you going to the Russian embassy tomorrow?"

"Allow me, dear Martha," said my cousin Conrad Althaus, "to introduce Lieutenant-General Baron Tilling." I bowed and arose, thinking the introduction meant an invitation to dance. "Pardon me, Countess," he said, with a slight smile, showing a perfect row of teeth, "I do not dance."

"So much the better, for I would like a moment's rest," I said, resenting myself. "I was bold enough to ask for the introduction, for I had some information for you," he continued. I looked up at him in surprise. He was no longer young, somewhat grey, and with a serious countenance, but with a distinguished and sympathetic face.

"I will not intrude, Countess, but what I have to tell you is not suited to a ballroom chat. If you will fix the hour, I will come to you with it. I am at home on Saturdays between two and four."

"I would rather see you alone."

"Then come to-morrow at the same hour." The Baron bowed and left me. Later, Cousin Conrad passed; I called him to my side and questioned him concerning Tilling.

"Ah ha! Has he so impressed you that you are setting an investigation on foot? He is unmarried, but a distinguished princess of the reigning house has him entangled in her silken web, and therefore he does not wish to marry. His regiment has just been ordered here, but he is no friend of society. I meet him every day at the 'Noble Club,' where he always seems absorbed in the papers or a game of chess."

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"No; but do not imagine that it was your beauty that brought him down at long range, and therefore asked to know you. He merely questioned: 'Could you tell me whether a certain Countess Dotzky, formerly an Althaus, probably a relative of yours, is here to-day? I want to speak to her.' I pointed to you. 'There she sits in the blue dress.' 'Oh,' said he, 'that is she? Will you introduce me?' And I brought him over with no idea that I would disturb your peace of mind."

"Such nonsense, Conrad, as though my peace were so easily ruffled! Tilling! What family is that? The name is new to me."

"So you are interested? Perhaps he is the lucky fellow. I who have tried for three months to interest you in me must step aside for this cold-hearted lieutenant-colonel. Let me warn you, he is without feeling. The Tilling family, I believe, is of Hanoverian origin, although his father was an Austrian officer and his mother a Prussian. Did you note his North German accent?"

"He speaks beautiful German. You find everything about him beautiful, no doubt," Conrad rose. "I have heard enough. Let me leave you to dream—I can find plenty of beautiful ladies who—"

"Who will think you charming, Conrad. Indeed there are plenty."

I was uneasy and left the ball early. Surely not to be able to think uninterruptedly about the new friend, although I found myself doing it! At midnight I enriched the red book with the conversation given above, and added my unpleasant doubts that he might even then be sitting at the feet of the princess. I ended my sentence by envying her—not Tilling, oh no!—for being beloved by someone. My waking thought was once more—Tilling. Naturally; had he not made an appointment for that day? For some time nothing had excited me like this visit.

At ten minutes past two the Baron von Tilling was announced. "As you see, Countess, I am prompt," he said, kissing my hand.

"Luckily, for I am overwhelmed with curiosity to know your news."

"Then, without delay, I will tell you. It is this: I was in the battle of Magenta."

Continued on page 5

Wilhelmina Cargo Before Prize Court

Falmouth, Feb. 11, via London—The cargo of the American steamer Wilhelmina was seized by the British authorities here to-day in accordance with the decision of the Foreign Office. The cargo is to go to a prize court.

Some of the suspects are admittedly of German and Austrian birth, while others of various foreign nationalities are under suspicion of disloyal tendencies.