

"WAR"

Our New Serial Story

THE MOST FAMOUS WAR NOVEL OF MODERN TIMES, SHOWING GERMANY'S RUTHLESS HAND IN FRANCE, AUSTRIA AND DENMARK



Under the title "Disarm" this novel won for its author, Baroness Bertha Von Suttner, the Nobel Peace Prize

The story contains some passages strangely prophetic of the present world struggle, although the final scene of the story is the Franco-Prussian War of 44 years ago. The hypocrisy of a nation adopting conscription and a policy of huge armaments and pretending to hope for peace is proven to the hilt.

IT IS A WOMAN'S PROTEST AGAINST WAR

START WITH THE FIRST INSTALMENT

"The people? Rulers and statesmen are opposed, but never the people—their love for peace is sincere, while the claim of the diplomats is always hypocritical. More and more the people cry for peace as the standing armies grow, for the halo of self-sacrifice will grow dim when every man must serve. Besides, who are the enthusiasts for the glories and dangers of war? Those who are safely outside them—the politicians, the professors, the stay-at-homes. When their safety is threatened they sing another song. Then more and more every one must look upon it with horror, and that sense will grow when poets, thinkers, lovers of humanity, timid people, when all these will, each from his own special point of view, curse the wretched trade they have been forced into."

"However, they will be very careful to keep silent and not pass as cowards, or fall out of favor with their superiors."

"Keep silent? Not always. I have kept silent for many years, but as I speak, soon many will break out. When convictions possess one's soul it speaks out. It took forty years for mine to find expression. It took decades to ripen in me; perhaps the masses may need as many generations—but the hour will come when they will at last speak out."

CHAPTER II.

New Year, '67! We celebrated it alone, my dearest Frederick and I, and as the clock struck twelve, I sighed: "Do you remember poor father's toast last year at this very hour? I dare not wish you a Happy New Year. Behind the future there often lies concealed so much that is terrible and which mortal wishes cannot see."

"Then let us to-night rather look back than toward the future. What you have endured, my poor brave wife! So many loved ones you have buried—and those days of horror on

the battlefields in Bohemia!"

"I shall never regret having seen those cruel sights. They make me able to sympathize with my whole soul in your efforts."

"We must educate our Rudolf to continue in these ideas. Perhaps in his lifetime these things may come to pass—hardly in ours. What a noise there is upon the streets! They greeted the last New Year with as much enthusiasm—and it brought such frightful suffering. How forgetful men are!"

"Do not scold them for forgetting. Some of our anguish is already passing into the shadows, and I am filled with the happiness of the present—what bliss to have you, my own love. We were not to speak of the future; but what lies before us looks so bright—we have love, unity, riches, and a life has to offer. We will travel, see

the world and all that is beautiful and wondrous in it. During times of peace the world is fair—and peace may last many, many years. Yet if war comes you are no longer in it, and Rudolf is safe, for he shall never be a soldier."

"But if, some day, every man is liable to serve?"

"Oh, nonsense! We shall travel, give Rudolf a pattern education—we will follow our ideals—in working for peace, and we—we will love each other."

The carnival of this year brought with it the usual balls and affairs, from which my mourning kept me. But society as a whole still kept up the mad round of pleasure, although almost every family had sustained its losses. The young people had plenty of opportunities to dance, even if some aristocratic houses did remain closed. Those who had returned safely from the battles were the favorites of the ladies, and all conversations were of the past war and the coming of the needle-guns and conscriptions with which to win the future victories.

Victories? When and over whom? No one had any idea, but revenge—even if only for a loss at cards—is the universal feeling.

With the coming of spring, once more the "black spot" appeared in the horizon—a "question," as they called it. This time the question was Luxembourg.

Of what great importance was Luxembourg to the world? I must take up my studies again as I had in the former war, and my investigations led me to the following:

Luxembourg belonged to the King of the Netherlands and at the same time to the German Bund. (This according to the treaties of 1814-16. Ah, these treaties are themselves the roots of quarrels.) Prussia was privileged to garrison the capital. Now as she (Prussia) had broken with the Bund in 1866, how could she keep this right? That was the "question." With the Peace of Prague the confederation was dissolved. Why did the Prussians maintain their right? An intricate affair, to be sure, and course the only sensible way to settle it would be to slaughter fresh hundreds of thousands. Every enlightened statesman would admit that. The Dutch never valued this possession and King William I. was planning to sell it to France for his own profit. Secret negotiations were on foot. Quite right, secrecy is the soul of diplomacy. The people need not know anything of such differences. If the matter comes to blows, it is time enough for them to shed their blood. The reason for shedding it is of no importance to them.

In March the Prussians were informed that the King had telegraphed his acceptance to France, and German public opinion was outraged. Who is this "public opinion"? Certain editorial writers, perhaps. The Reichstag discussed the question hotly, but Bismarck remained very cool—nevertheless he took occasion to make preparations for war with France, and the latter also prepared.

It was the old tune I recognized, and I feared a fresh outbreak in Europe, with so many leaders to poke the fire. One is amazed at such firebrands; have they no idea how great is their crime?

Years later I heard of a conversation between the Crown-Prince Frederick of Prussia with Professor Simon:

"If France and Holland have already made terms, that means war!"

The Crown-Prince answered with intense excitement and feeling:

"You have never seen war or you could not utter that word so carelessly. I have seen it, and let me tell you it is the supreme duty to avoid war if there is any possibility."

This time it was avoided. Luxembourg was declared, by a counsel in London, to be neutral, and Prussia withdrew. Friends of peace breathed again, but many were dissatisfied—not the French Emperor, he wished for peace, but the war party. Many Germans, too, considered the submissive policy wise. But why should not states as well as individuals accept a verdict submissively? Is it not more sensible to bow to the settlement of reason than force? What this London conference attained could always be secured by rulers if they wished to avoid war, and thus accomplish what Frederick III. declared to be their highest duty.

May found us in Paris, seeing the great exhibition. It was my first visit, and I was dazzled by its brilliancy. The empire was in its highest splendor. Many European rulers were visiting there, and it seemed almost like a great international capital—this French city which was in three short years to be bombarded by its eastern neighbor.

All the nations were assembled in this great peaceful and profitable pageant of industry—this productive, not destructive, strife of business. All the riches which art and manufacture contribute to use and beauty were here displayed, and one felt proud of the progressive times one lived in, and how natural it was to feel that never more should all this development be threatened by the brutal process of destruction. And I breathed easily when I realized that all these royal guests commingled in congratulatory festivities. Certainly they would never again exchange shots with their mutual entertainers and hosts. All this splendid public reception and congratulatory association seemed like a pledge that a world of unbroken peace and plenty would come. Never again would these civilized nations draw the sword—only barbarians and tartar hordes would be capable of that.

In the midst of it all it was a foreboding that the Emperor was seeking the earliest suitable opportunity to present his favorite idea to the Powers for

general disarmament. The information came from reliable sources.

What government could refuse such a suggestion without unmaking its desire for conquest? What nation would not revolt at such a refusal? The proposal must succeed.

Frederick was not so confident as I.

"First of all," he said, "I cannot believe Napoleon will ever propose it, since the war party is too strong. Occupants of thrones cannot govern public opinion; they are prevented by their closest advisers. In the second

place, one cannot command a great organic body to cease to exist as such. It would set itself in opposition."

"Of what great body are you speaking?"

"Of the army. As a body, it has life and has the power to sustain its existence. As an organism, it is today full grown, and if universal conscription is introduced it is on the point of enormous expansion."

"And yet you plan to oppose this thing!"

"Yes, but not by stepping up and crying, 'Die, monster!' Such an attitude is worth hardly a second by stretching its hand at my command I will urge war against this monster by introducing another living thing, a fragile form, which as it enters will finally wipe the other out. It was you, Marina, who introduced me to the ideas of modern scientists. An inexorable law is changing and moving the world, and what is opposed to it must go. Politicians, rulers, and soldiers seem not to have the slightest notion of the truth. A few years ago I was just as blind to it."

We lived at the Hotel, but since I had not lost my mourning, we did not have acquaintances. Of course I defied with us, but he did not make long excursions with us, and he came for him to leave, and spent much of his time with a French tutor.

The tutor, who lived to us here was of a different kind. He had come together with us, in the corners, the rich, the famous, the I was fairly confused by the ball, the fêtes, the luxuries, and so enchanting and interesting, and longed for the quiet and peace of home as ardently as one wishes for the way world when entirely shut out from it.

We kept ourselves outside the hubbub and sought only the acquaintance of the prominent thinkers who could be of benefit not only to our mental life, but also who could help further Frederick in his new ideas. We were busy at home collecting what we called a "Peace Protocol," a sort of scrap-book on the history of the peace ideal as it had developed from the beginning. It soon grew into quite a volume. (Since I have carried it down to the present day it has grown into several.) But, as a whole, it is but a small drop compared to the oceans of war literature which flood our libraries. But when we reflect that in a single acorn is hidden the possibility of a whole oak forest we need not be discouraged when the history of a new movement can be chronicled in a few pages.

And now came the fulfillment of a cherished hope. A girl was born to us. We knew the joy of having a son, and now we should realize the promise of happiness a little daughter might bring to her parents, and of course our little Sylvia would unite in me a paragon of beauty, grace, and cleverness. Happiness makes us so selfish. Under the fair sky of our domestic heaven all else seemed to evaporate; even the terrors of the cholera faded into a cloud-like dream, and even Frederick slackened in the pursuit of his ideal. No doubt much discouragement as well as the reason for this, for everywhere his plans met with shrugs and doubts, and even pitying smiles and condemnations. The world seems to prefer to be swayed and kept wretched. Every proposed plan to wipe out misery and woe is dubbed "Utopian," and even put aside as childish.

However, Frederick never entirely lost sight of his aim. His studies led him into correspondence with learned men of every type. He planned to write a great book called War and Peace.

The winter after Sylvia's birth was quietly spent in Vienna, and the following spring we visited Italy. Our new programme, demanded that we should know other countries. Those were lovely days, and I am sorry I kept no note of them in my red book. The next winter found us again in Paris, and this time we plunged into the great whirl. We rented a small furnished house where we could entertain our friends, by whom in turn we were constantly invited. Our ambassador presented us at court and we were frequently the guests of the Empress. All the foreign embassies were open to us, as well as those of foreign notabilities. The literary stars of the times were all invited to our home except the greatest of all—Victor Hugo—who was in exile.

In all this fascinating whirl of amusement it is easy to drift into the heartless and thoughtless life, to forget the real problems which lie beyond it all, and even domestic shipwreck is apt to be the result. But we steadfastly kept our hold on the hearthstone, and neither did we forget our deep and universal interests. Every morning a few hours were devoted to the domestic side and to our study, and we succeeded in getting a great deal of real happiness even in the midst of all this round of pleasure.

As Austrians we found much sympathy expressed in Paris, even suggesting revenge upon the Prussians for our defeated army. But such consultations were all rejected, and we assured our sympathetic friends that

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We desired only peace, for revenge never made anything right. If old blows were wiped out by fresh ones, when would the dreadful business of war cease?

We assured our friends that we hoped the present peace would never be broken again, and we were given to understand that this was also the wish of Napoleon III. We were closely associated with many of his intimates, and they gave us the assurance that he actually desired to propose a general disarmament. But the populace was seething with discontent, and many of the imperialists considered it impossible to remove the antagonism against the French throne, except by diverting their attention by a foreign war, a sort of grand promenade against the Rhine. That the Luxembourg matter failed to bring this about was considered unfortunate. But the newspapers continued to say much about the unavoidable war between Prussia and France.

The brilliant season, reached even more extravagant heights with the spring-time, and we began to long for rest. We were overwhelmed with invitations to visit the country-places of our friends. But we refused to think of it, and not desiring to return to Grunitz on account of the unhappy memories, we settled in a quiet spot in Switzerland, and promised our Paris friends that the following winter would find us in their midst again.

And what a refreshment was this summer with its long walks, its long hours of study, and longer hours of play for the children. But there were few pages in the little red book, which always meant a mind free of care, and peace.

Europe as a whole also seemed tolerably peaceful. There were no "dark spots," and no more talk of revenge. But the only thing which annoyed us was that Austria had introduced conscription; and that my Rudolf, like the rest, must some day also become a soldier was a thing I could not bear to contemplate.

"And yet people dare dream of freedom!" I exclaimed.

"A year of volunteering is not much," said Frederick, trying to comfort me.

I shook my head. "Even a day is too much. To have to pretend for a single day to do unwillingly what you detest—to live a lie—is abhorrent, and I mean to train my son for the truth."

"Then he should have been born a few centuries later, my dear," replied Frederick. "To be a perfectly true man and a perfectly free one seems impossible in our day. The deeper I go into my studies the more I see it so."

Double time was now possible to Frederick for his work, and in our quiet summer we determined to return the next winter to Paris, not for safety, but to devote the entire season to the one object of our lives. We wished to help bring about some practical results, and hoped to be able to co-operate with the plans of the Emperor for disarmament, for we might get his ear through our friends. Through our old friend the Cabinet Minister we hoped also to get to the ear of the Austrian government. Frederick also had influential relatives at the Berlin Court, through whom such a plan might be brought

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