

~~been in daily communication with her on the subject, and he regretted to say that the hopes entertained up to the last had been deceived. She desired him to express her deep sense of regret and of grievous disappointment at not being able to appear on the platform. Nothing short of the peremptory orders of her doctor, he need not assure them, had prevented her from being present. He had been with her for about a month at the Hague, and his impression was that overwork and constant attention of mind had brought about the feverish attack from which she was suffering. If her pulse beat higher than it should, and the doctor said so, it would be beating higher, though he trusted not injuriously so, at that hour when her thoughts reverted to that great gathering and she felt in warm sympathy with the friends and colleagues who had come from all parts of the globe. Of one thing they could all be sure—as long as the pulses of Baroness von Suttner throbbed she would work for the realisation of her ideals; she would work for that good cause, the triumph of which it was her glorious ambition to secure.~~

The President.—May I send, in your name, a message of regret and concern to Baroness von Suttner? “Applause.”

Mrs Byles then read Baroness von Suttner's address as follows:—

MY LADY PRESIDENT, while in this Congress of the International Council of Women the name “Arbitration” has been chosen as the opening subject of its meetings, another Congress is sitting, as you well know, which has been summoned by a powerful monarch, and where all governments are represented, a Congress whose task it is to conduct this same question—not only as has been done hitherto, and as we might do here, towards a theoretical, but towards a practical solution.

I have come from the place where that Conference is being held. You will perceive, therefore, that I prefer, instead of general considerations, to begin with a few statements as to what is actually being done at the Hague at this momentous juncture.

But let me first make a remark, which is suggested to me by the double fact that I am standing on English soil and addressing a meeting of women. Many people say (I heard it repeated only yesterday) “Women ought not to mix in politics; the problem of peace and war is beyond the sphere of feminine comprehension.” Well, I have just left a country which is governed by a woman, and have come into another country also governed by a woman. The one—who is the youngest amongst European sovereigns—is

privileged to begin her reign with an event which, for political importance, surpasses all preceding historical events; and the other—the first lady of this land and the senior of the monarchs in Europe—is possibly destined to have the honour of crowning her long and wise reign by putting her royal seal to a document (drawn up at the Hague) which is to open the era of international justice. I think this speaks volumes for the right of our sex to be interested in political questions.

Amongst the schemes for arbitration that have been presented at the Hague, the most far-reaching one was, as most of us know, the plan which Sir Julian Pauncefote, the plenipotentiary of Her Majesty's Government, has laid on the table. Other plans have been brought forward by the Russians and by the Americans, and the section for arbitration is endeavouring to bring the different proposals into harmony. The present position of affairs at the conference is doubly important, because the representatives of some powers have maintained a position of complete reserve, not to say antagonism, concerning the arbitration question, and the final resolutions will depend on the instructions to be given by the different Governments to their delegates. During the next two weeks which precede the last full session the question will be settled—not so much in the debates of the commissions as in the minds and hearts of the potentates—the question whether the magnanimous wishes of the Russian Emperor and the trembling hopes of mankind shall be fulfilled or frustrated. The intrinsic value of arbitration, the philosophical arguments in favour or against the institution of a tribunal will not be primary considerations, what is going to be decided will depend on personal inclinations and political considerations, on the opinions and the moods of the leading persons. Therefore, it would appear to be the urgent duty of the adherents of the peace cause and of those who possess some influence, to exercise that influence in order to help, within the fifteen days remaining, to bring about a happy solution of the vital questions under discussion.

During my stay at the Hague, I have heard a series of lectures, which opened to me and to many others a new horizon. They showed the war of the future as it must of necessity develop. The lecturer, Jean de Bloch, besides being a wealthy banker, is a thorough scientist. His great book, from which the data of his lectures were taken, is the result of eight years' conscientious study.

He maintains that the changes which have taken place in the mechanism of war, and in all other departments of social life, will

also produce so complete a change in the character of the next universal war, that it is quite impossible to form any judgment about it by inferences drawn from the experiences of former struggles.

Ten years ago, when I published an appeal with a view to creating the Austrian Peace Society, I wrote: "Through the new instruments of destruction, through the growth of the armed forces, war has been changed into a thing that ought to be described by another name, because through the ever-growing competition in warlike preparations, it has completely changed since the time when we last had any experience of it" If, to illustrate my meaning, you keep on warming a bath until the water boils, so that the person who steps, or rather falls into the tub is scalded to death, would you still call this a "bath"? But of what use are such reflections and prophecies? People do not listen to the first and laugh at the second. But now, Bloch's action has brought a similar idea to light; the god of war, who has silently grown into a race-devouring Moloch, has been brought before the tribunal of the awakened conscience of the world; he is summoned to defend himself, or, if he fails to do so, to accept the death-warrant which sooner or later must be his lot.

I must skip the chapters in Bloch's work, "Continental War" and "Naval War." Let me only mention that, owing to the tremendous force of the new weapons, and the ways adopted to use them, all officers of the land army will inevitably be killed, and that, according to the calculation of the French General Langlois, and the Prussian General Müller, the future battle between the Double and the Triple Alliance would lead, if all the guns were put into action, to the destruction of 41 millions of men, that is to the slaughter of eight times as many troops as could cover the battlefield. As to the naval combats, Bloch demonstrates how impossible it would be to decide which of the belligerents had gained the victory.

Let us consider the economical aspect of the question as shown by Bloch.

On the very first day when the order for mobilisation was issued, and with the first beginning of hostilities, the nations engaged would drift to economic destruction. The suspension of all industrial life, of all work and business, the ruin of all capital, universal famine; such are the mathematically certain results of the coming "great war."

Under such circumstances, it is war and no longer peace

which deserves the name "Utopia." The President of the Conference at the Hague, Monsieur de Staal, in speaking to me of M. de Bloch, endorsed the opinion of this "most interesting man," as he expressed himself. He is right, he added, "War is gradually becoming a Utopia."

Utopia means "impossible dream." Well, thank God, the methods of wholesale destruction leading to universal disaster are gradually becoming impossibilities; while the old dreams be, it cannot bring forth complete and perfect solutions of the great problems before the delegates. Institutions that are many thousand years old cannot be changed by the work possible in a session of eight weeks. For the community of peace-workers enough work will remain. The women who, from all parts of the world, have come to this Congress, will, I feel sure, zealously and unanimously join in the work for peace, for they are the courageous representatives of right, freedom and ethical progress. But I wish that the words which are spoken in this hall may reach our sisters outside, and that all mothers and wives—be they feminists or not, be they members of peace societies or not—may be roused to the duty of the present time.

It is a solemn time. It is not only the transition of one century to another, it is the transition of one conception of the world, of one civilisation, to another. It is the moment when the old order, weighed down under the growth of its inherited errors and crimes, has been brought to the verge of destruction; but when, through the awakening self-consciousness of human society, salvation may be achieved and the impending danger averted. It is a work of salvation to which the delegates at the Hague have been called. To make this work a success, ten or fifteen days are still left to them. But not only to them—to all peoples the near future of the reign of right, of human happiness and human dignity are slowly becoming true.

Arbitration and disarmament? It is superfluous to discuss the practicability, the benefits and the difficulties of these measures. It is enough to have demonstrated the impossibility of war as a means of settling national disputes—a double suicide can settle nothing at all—for finally other means *must be* established, a judicial system will grow up and the fever of armaments will, without further doctoring, fall from its present heat of 80 to zero.

"But," they say, "Bloch is no soldier, no expert; his conclusions are based on fallacies." With such phrases the friends

of militarism console themselves. "Only sophisms," said Professor Zorn to me the other day, talking of Bloch's lectures. "Military men affirm that future wars will be much less bloody than the wars of the past" . . . "But the new weapons," I remonstrated, "forty times more murderous than the old ones!" "Oh, only very few shots hit the mark."

Sophisms! Such can be made with abstractions and arguments, but not with figures and with physical laws. What Bloch says is not a compound of simple speculation and rhetoric which might be refuted by opposing speculation and rhetorics; it is a bundle of facts that can be verified; it is a collection of conclusions which experts of high rank—the Generals Von der Goltz, Häseler, Jansen—have laid down in their writings where they have been overlooked by the public. Bloch does not say, "You *ought* not to make war." He says, "You *cannot* make war;" for the immeasurable disturbance of all economic conditions will surely produce catastrophes in industry and in the means of intercourse, will loosen all ties of order, and will bring forth untold misery not only to the armed men in the field, but also to the women, children and old men left at home. Home? The sweet and holy word will lose all its meaning when the next fierce war breaks out. Abodes of despair are no longer "homes."

No State up till now has considered it a duty to put before us what must follow on an explosion of war in the future. It has not been done, because the Governments are well aware that untold misery and famines would follow, and that a sober description, based on figures and on dry statistics, would show war as a mad Utopia—as a gigantic crime.

Well, and this is the task of the moment to which the energies of every philanthropist should be directed. *Such statistics must be demanded.* The facts and figures must be faced. The peace movement can add a new form to its work and its propaganda. The demand must be peremptorily raised that the *scientific truth* on the war question should be brought to the knowledge of the public—that regular studies and investigations should be made.

The result of such study, which, of course, would mostly fall to the task of military men, must be that amongst all open-minded soldiers the conviction would be roused that war has become a kind of double suicide, and that some other means must be devised for settling international conflicts; and then the principle in the name of which we are assembled to-night in Queen's Hall

would find its most earnest defenders among the members of the general staff.

Whatever the issue of the Conference at the Hague may be, it will impose the great duty of rescuing the world from the horrors of the unchecked war system. And this near future must be filled with energetic, active, practical labour.

When lately somebody said to Czar Nicholas, "With your noble manifesto your Majesty will have given the world at least a beautiful hope," the young Emperor, with an impatient shrug of the shoulders, answered, "Hope, hope . . . poor humanity has long enough been deceived with this word; this is the time for realisation." So let us say, "Enough of theories and wishes; this is the time for action."

Mrs Byles, on behalf of Baroness von Suttner, then moved the following resolution :—

"That the International Council of Women do take steps in every country to further and advance, by every means in their power, the movement towards International Arbitration."

Frau Selenka (Germany) said she seconded the resolution with the deep conviction that if it is accepted and carried out resolutely, immense good will come out of it for the sacred cause which it is to support. I am, perhaps, the person in this whole audience best authorised to prophesy this, because I have had the privilege and the joy of having passed through my hands the testimonies of a great international demonstration of women for the Peace Conference just now, and have been witness of the strong impression which they have produced on the members of the Conference.

It has, in fact, been the first truly international public act among women, and their first resolute entering into the domain of international politics.

At the same time it has given a striking proof of the force and energy of women's international organisation, as well as of individual activity and devotion in the service of a *great* idea of *Progress*.

Full particulars in detail will, of course, be found in the records of the proceedings at the Hague and elsewhere, and a detailed report is coming out in print. But I may say here that the total number of simultaneous meetings held in eighteen countries on almost one and the same day—the 15th of May—amounts to 562. The number of women standing up personally for Peace in

virtually one and the same hour round the world is at least 200,000; and the number of women represented by these will very nearly reach 3 millions. This result is the more remarkable as the whole movement, though outlined and aimed at as early as September last year, was carried out in the course of only about seven weeks, and with the most simple means, not even a printed sheet having been sent out.

I can report 260 meetings in England, 74 meetings in 21 States in America, 20 meetings in Italy, 20 in Sweden, whilst successful gatherings have been held in Germany, Russia, Austria, Spain, Servia, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and last, not least, a meeting in Tokio, Japan, of over 2000 women, under the presidency of a princess of the Imperial House.

All these meetings had exchanged letters of sympathy expressing the unanimous determination of women to maintain peace. They have passed resolutions in which unanimously the principle of arbitration has stood in front as fundamental to every progress that can be attained in those problems with which the Conference at the Hague has to deal.

The documents containing these resolutions, together with hundreds of telegrams stating their acceptance at the meetings in all parts of the world, forming an imposing collection, I had the privilege to deliver to the President of the Conference, Baron de Staal, in a private audience of half an hour, in which His Excellency expressed his confidence that the women would help to carry the cause.

I have to state that this is the only message to the Conference that had been thus officially sent to and accepted by the Conference through the medium of the President himself.

We have received a direct acknowledgment in the name of the Conference from the President himself, as the following letter shows :—

LA HAYE, le 19 Juin.

MADAME,—J'ai eu l'honneur de recevoir d'entre vos mains une adresse de la part des femmes de tous les pays civilisés dans laquelle elles expriment leur profond dévouement à la cause sacrée de la Paix.

C'est au nom de la Conférence Internationale de la Paix, que je vous prie, madame, d'accepter ses sincères remerciements de ces nombreux témoignages de sympathie pour son œuvre, parmi