BARONESS BERTHA VON SUTTNER

Author of "Lay Down Your Arms" and Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize

A LIFE devoted heart and soul to the progress of mankind and to its emancipation from the barbarous and inhuman fiction of war is recorded in the Memoirs* of Bertha von Suttner, to whom was awarded in 1905 the Nobel Peace prize of $40,000. In its meaning and import for humanity, this life of an offspring of the Austrian aristocracy is as sanctified as the life of that child of American democracy recently set down in a book. There is something saintly about Bertha von Suttner as about Jane Addams, and to read the memoirs of one after the autobiography of the other is enough to inspire one with hopefulness for the future of humanity and, with faith in its eventual triumph over the traces of animal brutality still clinging to the structure of civilized society.

The development of the woman whose words "Die Waffen nieder!" ("Throw down your arms!") caused her name to be cherished through the world is most extraordinary, inasmuch as it does not, in the earlier years, give the slightest premonition of its later accomplishment. Bertha Sophia Felicita, Countess Kinsky, was not to her mission born. She was reared in the conventions and educated according to the standards of her class, and early launched upon a life of international nomadism and social adventure. With singular frankness she speaks of attempts to increase the dwindling family fortune by experiments at roulette and trente-et-quarante in Baden-Baden and other resorts of the fashionable world. Then came a period of earnest aspirations toward an artistic career, the training of her voice by Duprez in Paris and Lamperti in Milan, culminating in her engagement to a Prince Wittgenstein, who had similar ambitions, but died on the way to America, where he was to have made his début. The shock of this loss and the growing entanglement of the family's finances crushed her hopes, and she resolved to take a position as companion. She found it in the family of a Baron Suttner, and the intellectual sympathies which she had in common with the youngest son, Arthur Gundaccar, ripened into love. The family's attitude toward the son's affection for a woman some years his senior induced her to leave and accept a position in Paris in the house of Alfred Nobel, then known only as the inventor of dynamite and a man of great wealth. But when a note of personal attachment entered into his relations with her she fled from her new suitor and returned to Vienna. Arthur Gundaccar was not slow in joining her; they eloped and were married and went to the Caucasus. There they spent nine years in quiet work, by which they established their position in the literary world. Baron Suttner there found the material for his fascinating novels of the country about the Caspian shores, some of which, like "Daredjan," were of a quality to leave a lasting impression upon the reader.

Not until the couple returned to Austria did they become aware of the existence of the movement with which they soon were to be identified. The author gives a vivid account of the effect produced upon her mind when she first learned of the International Peace and Arbitration Association of London. She had just succeeded in creating something like a sensation by her book "Das Maschinenzeitalter" ("The Age of Machinery"), but immediately became engrossed in a new work:

> I wanted to be of service to the Peace League, and how could I better do so than by trying to write a book which should propagate its ideas? And I could do it most effectively, I thought, in the form of a story.

She was not mistaken in deciding that a story in the form of an autobiography would make a more concrete appeal and reach a wider public than a treatise, however tangibly she might formulate its theses. Thus was conceived and brought into existence a work which, after futile efforts to secure its appearance as a serial, was published in book form. In the electrifying effect which it had upon the world, it stands next, perhaps, to Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel of slavery. Letters from Tolstoy, Nobel, Haeckel, Nordau, von Egidy, Lemonnier, from men in all walks of life and from all countries of the earth, poured in upon her. Within the first year the book was translated into English and the Scandinavian languages, and when she attended the Peace Congress in Rome in 1891 she found herself in the midst of friends that she had won through her work. From that time there was no public manifestation of the pacifists in which she and her husband did not take part, either directly or indirectly. Even when her companion's death, nine years ago, had left her a prey to grief, she did not quit her post in the cause, but braved the ocean voyage to attend the Peace Congress in this country.

Those who had the opportunity of meeting her in these brief three weeks of her American sojourn bore away an unforgettable impression. Intellectual strength, seriousness of purpose, and courage of conviction have rarely been coupled with so much feminine beauty and charm, so much simplicity and dignity of noble womanhood. Frau von Suttner, now in her sixty-eighth year, has one of the most magnetic personalities among the women who have been more or less in the public eye during the past decades. Her appearance, her winning manners, and her insinuatingly musical voice must have been powerful factors in her career as a propagandist. They still make an irresistible appeal even in the privacy of the drawing-room.

This unique personality finds its reflection in the memoirs, and engages the sympathy of the reader, even where in her chronicle of the various stages of the peace movement and her reminiscences of meetings and conventions she goes into details of little interest to outsiders. For one feels that every chapter is inspired by a noble spirit and a rich mind, and by the great heart which has been the mainspring of her wonderful life. Every page breathes sincerity of sentiment. Whether she naïvely relates the innocent flirtations and the fanciful dreams of her girlhood, or records her triumphs in the social whirl of her early life, or dwells upon the honors heaped upon her as author and champion of her cause, one is struck with the genuineness and the naturalness of her manner.

There is a particular charm in the passages relating to her married life. A halcyon happiness was that of Arthur and Bertha von Suttner. It does good to read of their laborious life, if not engaged in writing for their living, devoted to propaganda; of their golden days of leisure, when the two hard workers would relax in almost childlike abandon. For not the least engaging quality of these memoirs is the author's gift of showing the two sides of her life, the private and the public. Though denied the crown of woman's life, this childless woman did not bewail her lot. She found compensation, saying in one place:

> Not only did we find perfect satisfaction in each other but that need of living for the future which lies at the base of the desire to have offspring and to work and to provide for them was satisfied in our case by our vocation, which was also striving for the future, and which delighted in something still in its infancy, but growing and flourishing.

The two volumes are, of course, rich in anecdote. Perhaps no other woman of her time has been in direct communication with so many men and women prominently identified with the intellectual life of the period as Frau von Suttner. Her recollections of Alfred Nobel, who became her lifelong friend; of Vrchlicky, the greatest poet of Bohemia; of the Hungarian novelist Jokai, of Moritz von Egidy, W. T. Stead, Mme. Adam, Björnson, Cherbuliez, Daudet, Ludovic Halévy, Bodenstedt, Spielhagen, Lilliencron, of our American champions of humanity, Andrew D. White and the late Frederick W. Holls, and of various crowned heads, foremost among them the Empress Frederick, add illuminating touches to the animated panorama of European life during the last three or four decades. Particularly interesting among these reminiscences is her meeting with Verestchagin and the story told of William II., which proves that even he was conscious of the sermon which that artist's canvases preached.

Whether read from the standpoint of the pacifist looking for a trustworthy and unabridged record of his cause, or from that of the psychologist, seeing in it a human document of importance, or even from that of the general reader seeking information or entertainment, these memoirs will prove of absorbing interest. The name of the translator is not given, though his work deserves special mention for accuracy and fluency. The portrait of the author introducing the first volume is a splendid likeness and adds an artistic feature to the work.

*MEMOIRS OF BERTHA VON SUTTNER. Authorized translation. With frontispiece. 2 vols. Ginn & Co. $5.50.

"MAGICIANS' TRICKS"

ANYONE yearning to become a conjurer, either professional or amateur, will find "Magicians' Tricks: How They are Done" very interesting and helpful (Century, $1.60). The book was written by Henry Hatton and Adrian Plate, and is based upon their experience and practice as conjurers, and upon contributions by Felicien Treway, Karl Gelman, Will Goldston, and other public entertainers. Its explanations are full and clear and cover an almost endless variety of interesting tricks and illusions.

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS

A SLENDER talent, but a very refined and individual one, went out of American letters with the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward. Sensitive, idealistic, intense, her work was so markedly the out-speaking of her character that one who had never seen her could have formed from it a fairly distinct and accurate conception of her personality. It was inevitable that her appeal, save for two or three of her books, should be to a rather limited audience, but it was an audience that loved her much and upon which she left a deep impress. Her early work was perhaps her best, or, at least, it found the readiest and largest body of admirers. "Gates Ajar," published when she was but twenty-four years old (in 1868), went through twenty editions in its first twelve-month, enjoyed a steady sale for twenty years or more, and was translated into several European languages. Its remarkable popularity was due to the fact that it answered a need of the time, that it appeared at the opportune moment, when the modern demand for more humanity in religion, for something that would touch more nearly the ordinary human understanding and human feeling, was beginning to make itself felt. And for that reason it fed and satisfied thousands upon thousands of hungry souls.

But whether her theme was of this world or the next, Mrs. Ward had always the uplifted vision and an unfailing sense of the sacredness of the soul's ideal. She was fond of embodying this loyalty to an ideal in her heroines and of leading them, in devotion to it, over stony paths of renunciation. Her novels and stories, except those that deal with the future life, have always had their warmest admirers among young women of education and refinement, and two generations of these have eagerly read "The Story of Avis," "Doctor Zay," "Friends" and some of her later books.

MR. JEFFERY FARNOL

MR. FARNOL, author of "The Broad Highway," is a little man, but strongly built and athletic. His steady, dark eyes regard you wisely from behind his spectacles, and apparently do not miss anything of interest that may be going forward. He is a Warwickshire man, but left Shakespeare's county early in boyhood to settle in Kent. He has traveled much. "The Broad Highway" was written in America, but the woods and fields and the village life of his own native land hold the strongest place in his affections.

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