

BERTHA VON SUTTNER

The editors of the INTELLIGENCER have asked me to write some account of the Baroness Von Suttner, perhaps the most noted of the delegates to the recent Peace Congress in Boston.

As will be remembered, a number of these delegates, perhaps forty in all, accepted an invitation to visit Philadelphia as the guests of the friends of peace here, and spent three days, Tenth month 14th, 15th and 16th, in our city.

As a member of the committee appointed to look after their entertainment here, I happened to have the Baroness and her friend and associate, the Countess Potting, under my care, and I was privileged to become somewhat acquainted with the Baroness in the several hours I spent in her company during the few days mentioned.

I was much impressed with her strong personality, her quiet dignity, and apparent depth of character, coupled with her suavity of manner and Christian courtesy. I had been somewhat conversant with her career from the newspaper accounts, but have learned more concerning it since her departure, and a portion of her history I was privileged to hear from her own lips.

Bertha Von Suttner was the daughter of Field Marshal Kinisky, a noted soldier of the Empire, and a member of the old Austrian aristocracy. She was born in Prague, June 19th, 1843. Her father died soon after her birth, and she became the sole care of her mother, by whom she was most carefully educated. When she arrived at the proper age she was presented at the Vienna Court, and took a prominent place there, and while a member of the court circle she met the Emperor William I. It is stated that the aged Emperor was much impressed by her charms of manner and intellect, and they became correspondents, and letters are still extant testifying to the monarch's admiration of the fair Austrian.

In 1876, when she was thirty-three years of age, and in the midst of the brilliant life of the Court, she met young Baron Arthur Gundaker Von Suttner. He was seven years her junior, and the attachment which sprang up between them met with the vigorous opposition of both families, but disregarding all influences they were married, and the story of the twenty-seven years of their happy married life is said to be only rivaled by the romance of the Brownings.

Disinherited, the young couple roamed from province to province, eking out a scanty existence, the husband working as an engineer, and the wife acting as cook and housekeeper. During these years of struggle and privation both the Baron and Baroness began literary work, and in it they achieved success and won fame as authors together. As freakish fortune would have it, after attaining success by their own efforts, she also came back into her own, and the enjoyment of her family fortune, and she was welcomed again into the aristocratic circles of Vienna society. But this brilliant circle soon found that its old favorite was a changed woman. She was found

to have radical convictions and the courage to express them, and it was not long till she had earned the enmity of both Church and Court. During the years of privation and struggle her character had strengthened and developed, and the society favorite had become the radical reformer—she, the daughter of the famous soldier becoming known as the "Peace Angel of Europe." Her work, "Lay Down Your Arms," has been styled the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of the peace cause. It was translated into three or four languages, and several hundred thousand copies were sold.

The report became general on the continent that



BARONESS BERTHA VON SUTTNER.

From an amateur photograph taken in Philadelphia in Tenth month, 1904.

it was her influence over the Czar of Russia that prompted him to call the first Peace Conference at The Hague.

I was privileged on Sixth-day, Tenth month 14th, to accompany her to Swarthmore College, thence to Bryn Mawr College, etc., and the next day to escort her about the city, visiting the University at noon, and taking a long drive through the Park in the afternoon, returning to the hotel for a rest, and then accompanying her to the meeting in the Drexel Institute in the evening, taking leave of her late that night, after spending some time with her after the meeting.

She had engaged in advance to leave for Washington early First-day morning, or she would have been one of the number of delegates who attended our meeting at Fifteenth and Race Streets that day, and I greatly regretted her absence on the occasion.

The Baroness remained in this country only about ten days longer, sailing on the steamer "Deutschland," Tenth month 27th. I recall with interest a note I have from her written on the steamer, and mailed on arrival, in which she makes acknowledgment of the attentions paid her, and speaks of the "pleasant days in Philadelphia, and the hospitality and amiability which were lavished upon me in that splendid city."

To me the most interesting and instructive point in the career of this illustrious woman was the development of her character during the years of her struggle and privation, a development that probably would not have occurred but for the loss of fortune and position, which, however, it is pleasant to know came back after her crucial test and commitment by conviction to the cause of peace in Europe, and the avoidance of wars by International Arbitration, which beneficent cause is the most important which is claiming the attention of the civilized world to-day, and in which she has rendered such widespread and lasting service.

I. H. C.

THE PEACE WOMAN OF EUROPE.

[Since writing the above, the following sketch written four years ago has come to me.—I. H. C.]

Baroness Bertha Von Suttner is known as the "Peace Woman of Europe." She is known to every one who is interested in the question of arbitration, has friends in every part of Europe, and has been received by and has met the most of the celebrated personages on the continent. Her work for universal peace among the nations has greatly strengthened the peace party abroad. Singularly enough, the Baroness is a daughter of a once famous warrior of the continent—Field Marshal Count Frans von Kinsky, of Austria. She was betrothed to Prince Wittgenstein, who lost his life in battle, and it was the horror of his end which largely influenced her to devote her fortune and talents to promulgating the doctrines of peace. Later in life she met the Baron Gundaker von Suttner, a man who entirely sympathized with her views, and whose wife she became. In 1882 the Baroness wrote her first book, entitled "The Inventory of a Soul." Later appeared her work, which created a sensation in Germany, France and Austria, "Lay Down Your Arms." This deals directly with the hard side of war, and the sham glories of physical victories, and is a powerful appeal for the substitution of arbitration for force of arms. As a result of her writings the Austrian Society of the Friends of Peace was founded, and its work has been of an influential character. She has a thorough knowledge of English literature.