

# **LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS!**

**Bertha von Suttner**

**Authorised Translation by  
T. Holmes  
Revised by the Authoress**



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# Lay Down Your Arms!

Bertha von Suttner

The Autobiography of Martha von Tilling

Authorised Translation by T. Holmes

Revised by the Authoress

Second Edition 1908

Original German edition first printed 1889

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

June 9, 1843: Bertha von Suttner is born as Countess Kinsky in Prague into an aristocratic family with military background. Her father, who dies at the age of 74 before she is born, had been a general, her grandfather on her mother's side a captain of the cavalry. In her youth Bertha learns several languages, concerns herself with music, science and philosophy, and travels extensively.

1873, when her father's wealth has been used up, she finds work as the governess of the industrialist von Suttner's four children, to whom she teaches languages and music. She falls in love with Arthur Gundaccar von Suttner, the youngest of the children, seven years her junior.

1876 she is dismissed by the Suttner family, who disapprove of her relationship with Arthur, but through their mediation she obtains the position as Alfred Nobel's private secretary in Paris. Soon after her arrival in Paris Nobel returns to Sweden, and she goes back to Vienna. They stay in contact until his death in 1896.

June 12, 1876: Secret marriage with Arthur von Suttner, who thereupon is disinherited by his parents.

1876 to 1885: Bertha and Arthur von Suttner live in difficult financial circumstances with a friend, an aristocrat lady, in Georgia (then part of Russia). Both work as journalists, Bertha has success with her essays and with her first novel, *Inventarium einer Seele* (Inventory of a Soul, 1883).

1885 they return to Austria and reconcile with Arthur's family. In her

writings Bertha von Suttner promotes emancipatory and pacifist ideas; among others, *Daniela Dormes* (1886) and *Das Maschinenzeitalter: Zukunftsvorlesungen über unsere Zeit* (The Machine Age: Futuristic Lectures about our Time, 1889) are published.

1889 the novel *Die Waffen nieder!* (Lay Down Your Arms!) is published, winning Bertha von Suttner international recognition and making her one of the most prominent exponents of the peace movement. Until the end of her life Bertha von Suttner stays active in the peace movement, organizes and supports peace projects, takes part in numerous international peace events, publishes in newspapers and magazines, and writes many more books.

1891 the “Österreichische Gesellschaft der Friedensfreunde” (Austrian Society of Friends of Peace) is founded upon her initiative; she becomes its president and stays in this position until her death. On the International Peace Conference in Rome in November 1891 she is elected vice president of the International Peace Bureau. In 1892 she founds the German Peace Society.

1902 Arthur von Suttner dies. While grieving, she continues their common work. The same year, her novel *Marthas Kinder* (Martha’s Children) is published as a sequel to *Die Waffen nieder!*

1904, after participating in the International Peace Conference at Boston, Bertha von Suttner goes on a seven-months lecture tour through the United States, where she is met with great interest and approval. President Theodore Roosevelt invites her to the White House.

December 10, 1905: Bertha von Suttner is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which Alfred Nobel, it is assumed, had established upon her suggestion.

1906 Bertha von Suttner's *Gesammelte Schriften* (Collected Works) are published, 1908 her *Memoires*.

1912: Bertha von Suttner's second tour through the United States, during which she gives lectures in more than 50 towns from the East Coast to the West Coast. 1913, already marked by illness, she is acclaimed at the World Peace Congress at The Hague.

June 12, 1914: Bertha von Suttner succumbs to cancer, during the preparations for the World Peace Congress planned for September in Vienna.

July 28, 1914: Austria declares war on Serbia. The First World War begins, the wholesale war of extermination that Bertha von Suttner had warned against for many years and which she had tried to prevent with all her power. About 20 million people will die in this war, and millions more from its aftermath.

## ABOUT THIS EDITION

This edition is based upon the translation by T. Holmes, second edition, from 1908. While it is not entirely free from faults (it is slightly abridged, and does not fully do justice to the original's literary style), it still captures the author's intentions, and the essence of this exciting and moving novel.

Apart from some changes to punctuation and spelling, this edition deviates from the original text of the translation in three major regards:

Most of the translator's footnotes were omitted. Three footnotes by the editor of the present edition are marked "Ed."

While the text of the German original consists of two "Volumes" with six "Books" plus an Epilogue, the translation replaced them with 19 "Chapters." For the present edition, the original structure has been restored.

And finally, most proper names, that had been translated into English, have here been restored to their original forms in the German text: Friedrich (Frederick), Konrad (Conrad), Lilli (Lilly), Gottfried (Godfrey), Kornelie (Cornelia), Franz (Francis), Heinrich (Henry) etc., this also applies to Emperor Franz Joseph (Francis) and King Wilhelm (William) of Prussia.

The English geographical denominations used in the translation are mostly retained (Bohemia, Silesia etc.), though Frankfort was restored to Frankfurt. The name of Count Blome was corrected to Blume, the newspaper "new Frankfurter Zeitung" to "Neue Frankfurter Zeitung," and "defended Königsberg" was changed to "defended the Königsberg in Silesia," to avoid confusion with the Prussian town of Königsberg.

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

When I was requested by the Committee of the International Arbitration and Peace Association, of which I have the honour to be a Member, to undertake the translation of the novel entitled *Die Waffen Nieder*, I considered it my duty to consent; and I have found the labour truly a delight. Baroness Suttner's striking tale has had so great a success on the Continent of Europe that it seems singular that no complete translation into English should yet have appeared. An incomplete version was published some time since in the United States, without the sanction of the authoress; but it gives no just idea of the work.

Apart from its value as a work of fiction — great as that is — the book has a transcendent interest for the Society with which I am connected from its bearing on the question of war in general and of the present state of Europe in particular. We English-speaking people, whether in England, in the Colonies, or in the United States, being ourselves in no immediate danger of seeing our homes invaded, and our cities laid under contribution by hostile armies, are apt to forget how terribly the remembrance of such calamities, and the constant threat of their recurrence, haunt the lives of our Continental brethren. Madame Suttner's vivid pages will enable those of us who have not seen anything of the ravages of war, or felt the griefs and anxieties of non-combatants, to realise the state in which people live on the Continent of Europe — under the grim “shadow of the sword,” with constantly increasing demands on the treasure accumulated by their



labour, and on their still dearer treasure — their children — drawn into the ravenous maw of the Conscription, to meet the ever-increasing demands of war, which seems daily drawing nearer and nearer, in spite of the protestations made by every Government of its anxiety for peace.

What can we expect to change this terrible condition except the formation of a healthy public opinion? And what can more powerfully contribute to its formation than a clear conception both of the horrors and sufferings that have attended the great wars waged in our times, and also of the inadequacy of the reasons, at least the ostensible reasons, for their commencement, and the ease with which they might have been avoided, if their reasons had been indeed their causes? This work appears to me of especial value, as setting this forth more plainly than a formal treatise could do, and it is towards the formation of such a public opinion that we hope it may contribute. The dawn of a better day in respect of war is plain enough in our country. We have advanced far indeed from the state of things that existed a century ago, when Coleridge could indignantly say of England: —

*'Mid thy herds and thy cornfields secure thou hast stood  
And joined the wild yelling of famine and blood!*

England since then has given and is giving many gratifying proofs of her sincere desire for peace, and her readiness to submit her claims to peaceful arbitration. Is it too much to hope that we may see our country joining in some well-considered scheme for general treaties of Arbitration and for the institution of an International Court? And may we not hope that our influence, as that of a nation not implicated in the mad race of armaments, and yet not removed from the area of European war, may avail to bring the question of disarmament before

an International Conference and thus introduce the twentieth century into a world in which there will be some brighter prospect than that

*War shall endless war still breed?*

Let us trust that this may not be found quite an idle dream, and that we may without self-delusion look forward to a more happy era, and join the cry of Baroness Suttner's Rudolf — "Es lebe die Zukunft."

HAIL TO THE FUTURE!

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The rapid sale of the first edition of this translation has encouraged the Association at whose request it was made to endeavour to make it more widely known to the various English-speaking populations, by printing a larger edition at a lower price. It is hoped, also, that the enlarged circulation of a work so graphic, and written by one who has so thoroughly studied the real aspects of war, as seen by those on the spot, may lead not so much to sentimental emotions and vague protests, as to a business-like discussion of the means by which the resort to war may be at any rate rendered more and more infrequent. The English Government has lately given repeated and practical proofs of its sincere desire to substitute the peaceful and rational method of arbitration for the rough, cruel, and uncertain decision of force; and the conspicuous success of that method hitherto — though tried under circumstances not altogether favourable — must have prepared thinking men for the question: “Why cannot some scheme for the formation of an International Tribunal of Arbitration be formed and debated among the Powers who, by taking part in the Congress at Paris after the Crimean War, formally admitted the principle, and who have already seen it successfully applied in practice?” To this question, which has been frequently asked, no satisfactory answer has yet been given, nor to the further question why our Government should not introduce the subject to the great Powers, after showing so unmistakably its adherence to the principle. People differ, and, probably, will always differ, as to the light in which they regard war. A very small and rapidly diminishing minority regard it as a good thing in itself — most as an

evil which in our present stage of civilisation cannot always be avoided; some as a crime formally prohibited by the moral law and the Christian religion. All of the two latter classes ought to join in any practical steps for diminishing the occasions of war; and of these the one which is most within the scope of politicians is the promotion of International Arbitration. The Association to which I belong has published this work in the confident hope that its circulation will aid in hastening this much-needed reform.

*The Translator*

# VOLUME ONE

## FIRST BOOK — 1859

At seventeen I was a thoroughly overwrought creature. This perhaps I should no longer be aware of today, if it were not that my diaries have been preserved. But in them the enthusiasms long since fled, the thoughts which have never been thought again, the feelings never again felt have immortalised themselves, and thus I can judge at this present time what exalted notions had stuck in my silly, pretty head. Even this prettiness, of which my glass has now little left to say, is revealed to me by the portraits of long ago. I can figure to myself what an envied person the Countess Martha Althaus — youthful, thought beautiful, and surrounded by all kinds of luxury — must have been. These remarkable diaries, however, bound in their red covers, point more to melancholy than to joy in life. The question I now ask myself is, Was I really so silly as not to recognise the advantages of my position or was I only so enthusiastic as to believe that only melancholy feelings were elevated and worthy of being expressed in poetical form and as such enrolled in the red volumes? My lot seems not to have contented me — for thus is it written: —

“O Joan of Arc! heroic virgin favoured of heaven! could I be like to thee — to wave the oriflamme, to crown my king, and then die — for the fatherland, the beloved!”

No opportunity offered itself to me of realising these modest views of life. Again, to be torn to pieces in the circus by a lion as a Christian martyr, another vocation for which I longed — see entry of September 19, 1853 — was not to be compassed by me, and so I had plainly to suffer under the consciousness that the great deeds after which my soul

thirsted must remain ever unaccomplished, that my life, considered fundamentally, was a failure. Ah! why had I not come into the world as a boy? (another fruitless reproach against destiny which often found expression in the red volumes); in that case I would have been able to strive after and to achieve “the exalted.” Of female heroism history affords but few examples. How seldom do we succeed in having the Gracchi for our sons, or in carrying our husbands out to the Weinsberg Gates, or in being saluted by sabre-brandishing Magyars with the shout, “Hurrah for Maria Theresa our king.” But when one is a man, then one need only gird on the sword and start off to win fame and laurels — win for oneself a throne like Cromwell, or the empire of the world, like Bonaparte. I recollect that the highest conception of human greatness seemed to me to be embodied in warlike heroism. For scholars, poets, explorers, I had indeed a sort of respect, but only the winners of battles inspired me with real *admiration*. These were indeed the chief pillars of history, the rulers of the fate of countries; these were in importance and in elevation near to the Divinity, as elevated above all other folk as the peaks of the Alps and Himalayas above the turf and flowers of the valley.

From all which I need not conclude that I possessed a heroic nature. The fact was simply that I was capable of enthusiasm and impassioned, and so I was of course passionately enthusiastic for that which was most highly accounted of by my school-books and my *entourage*.

My father was a general in the Austrian army, and had fought at Custozza under “Father Radetzky,” whom he venerated to superstition. What eternal campaigning stories had I to listen to! Dear papa was so proud of his warlike experiences, and spoke with such satisfaction of the campaigns in which he had fought, that I felt an involuntary pity for

every man who possessed no such reminiscences. But what a drawback for the female sex to be excluded from this most magnificent display of the manly feeling of honour and duty! If anything came to my ears about the efforts of women after equality — and of this in my youth but little was heard, and then usually in a tone of contempt and condemnation — I conceived the wish for emancipation only in one direction, *viz.*, that women also should have the right to carry arms and take the field. Ah, how beautiful was it to read in history about a Semiramis or a Catherine II. “She carried on war with this or that neighbouring state — she conquered this or that country!”

Speaking generally it is history which, as our youth are instructed, is the chief source of the admiration of war. From thence it is stamped on the childish mind that the Lord of armies is constantly decreeing battles, that these are, as it were, the vehicle upon which the destiny of nations is carried on through the ages; that they are the fulfilment of an inevitable law of nature and must always occur from time to time like storms at sea or earthquakes; that terror and woe are indeed connected with them; but the latter is fully counterpoised, for the commonwealth by the importance of the results, for individuals by the blaze of glory which may be won in them, or even by the consciousness of the fulfilment of the most elevated duty. Can there be a more glorious death than that on the field of honour, a nobler immortality than that of the hero? All this comes out clear and unanimous in all school-books or “readings for the use of schools,” where, besides the formal history, which is only represented as a concatenation of military events, even the separate tales and poems always manage to tell only of heroic deeds of arms. This is a part of the patriotic system of education. Since out of every scholar a defender of his country has to be formed, therefore the enthusiasm even of the child must be aroused for this its first duty



as a citizen; his spirit must be hardened against the natural horror which the terrors of war might awaken, by passing over as quickly as possible the story of the most fearful massacres and butcheries as of something quite common and necessary, and laying meanwhile all possible stress on the ideal side of this ancient national custom; and it is in this way they have succeeded in forming a race eager for battle and delighting in war.

The girls — who indeed are not to take the field — are educated out of the same books as are prepared for the military training of the boys, and so in the female youth arises the same conception which exhausts itself in envy that they have nothing to do with war and in admiration for the military class. What pictures of horror out of all the battles on earth, from the Biblical and Macedonian and Punic Wars down to the Thirty Years' War and the wars of Napoleon, were brought before us tender maidens, who in all other things were formed to be gentle and mild; how we saw there cities burnt and the inhabitants put to the sword and the conquered trodden down — and all this was a real enjoyment; and of course through this heaping up and repetition of the horrors the perception that they were horrors becomes blunted, everything which belongs to the category of war comes no longer to be regarded from the point of view of humanity, and receives a perfectly peculiar mystico-historico-political consecration. War must be — it is the source of the highest dignities and honours — *that* the girls see very well, and they have had also to learn by heart the poems and tirades in which war is magnified. And thus originate the Spartan mothers, and the “mothers of the colours,” and the frequent invitations to the cotillon which are given to a corps of officers when it is the turn of the ladies to choose partners.

I was not like so many of my companions in rank educated in a convent, but under the direction of governesses and masters in my father's house. My mother I lost early. Our aunt, an old canoness, filled the place of a mother to us children — for there were three younger children. We spent the winter months in Vienna, the summer on a family estate in Lower Austria.

I can remember that I gave my governesses and masters much satisfaction, for I was an industrious and ambitious scholar, gifted with an accurate memory. When I could not, as I have remarked, satisfy my ambition by winning battles like a heroine, I contented myself with passing judgments on them in my lessons, and extorting admiration by my zeal for learning. In the French and English languages I was nearly perfect. In geology and astronomy I made as much progress as was ordinarily accessible in the programme of the education of a girl, but in the subject of history I learned more than was required of me. Out of the library of my father I fetched the ponderous works of history, in which I studied in my leisure hours. I always thought myself a little bit cleverer when I could enrich my memory with an event, a name, or a date out of past times. Against pianoforte-playing — which was put down in the plan of education — I made a resolute resistance. I possessed neither talent nor desire for music, and felt that in it, for me, no satisfaction of my ambition would be found. I begged so long and so pressingly that my precious time, which I might spend on my other studies, should not be shortened by this meaningless strumming, that my good father let me off this musical servitude, to the great grief of my aunt, whose opinion was that without pianoforte-playing there could be no proper education.

On March 10, 1857, I celebrated my seventeenth birthday. “Seventeen already!” runs the entry of that date in my diary. This “already” is in itself a poem. There is no commentary added, but probably I meant by it “and as yet nothing done for immortality.” These red volumes do me excellent service now, when I want to recall the recollections of a life. They render it possible for me to depict even down to their minutest details the feelings of the past, which would have remained in my memory only as faded outlines, and to reproduce whole trains of thought long forgotten, and long-silent speeches.

In the following carnival I was to be “brought out.” This prospect delighted me, but not to such an extraordinary degree as is usually the case with young girls. My spirit yearned for something higher than the triumphs of the ballroom. What was it I yearned for? A question that I could have hardly answered to myself. Probably for love, though I was not aware of it. All those glowing dreams of aspiration and ambition which swell the hearts of young men and women, and which long to work themselves out all sorts of ways — as thirst for knowledge, love of travel or adventure — are in reality for the most part only the unrecognised activity of the growing instinct of love.

This summer my aunt was ordered a course of the waters at Marienbad. She was pleased to take me with her. Though my official introduction into the so-called “world” was not to take place till the following winter, I was yet allowed to take part in some little dances at the Kurhaus, with an idea also of exercising me in dancing and conversation, so that I might not be altogether too shy and awkward in entering on my first carnival season.

But what happened at the first party which I visited? A serious, vital love affair. It was of course a lieutenant of hussars. The civilians in the hall appeared to me like cockchafers to butterflies compared to

the soldiers. And of the wearers of uniforms present the hussars were every way the most splendid; and, finally, of all the hussars Count Arno Dotzky was the most dazzling. Over six feet high, with black curly hair, twisted moustaches, glittering white teeth, dark eyes, with such a penetrating and tender expression — in fine, at his question, “Have you the cotillon free, countess?” I felt that there might be other triumphs as exciting as the banner-waving of the Maid of Orleans, or the sceptre-waving of the great Catherine. And he at the age of twenty-two felt something very similar as he flew round the room in the waltz with the prettiest girl in the hall (for one may say so thirty years afterwards) — at any rate he was probably thinking, “To possess thee, thou sweet creature, would outweigh a field-marshal’s baton.”

“Why, Martha, Martha,” remonstrated my aunt, as I sank breathless on the seat at her side, covering her head-dress with the floating muslins of my robe.

“Oh, I beg your pardon, auntie,” said I, and sat more upright. “I could not help it.”

“I was not finding fault with you for that. My blame was for your behaviour with that hussar. You ought not to cling so in dancing, and who would ever look so close into a gentleman’s eyes?”

I blushed deep. Had I committed some unmaidenly offence, and might the Incomparable have conceived a bad idea of me?

I was relieved of this anxious doubt before the ball was over, for in the course of the supper waltz the Incomparable whispered to me: “Listen to me. I cannot help it — you must know it even today — I love you.”

This sounded a little more sweet than Joan’s famous “voices.” However, while the dance was going on I could not give him any reply. He must have seen this, for he came to a stop. We were standing in

an empty corner of the room, and could continue the conversation without being overheard

“Speak, countess; what have I to hope?”

“I do not understand you,” was my insincere reply.

“Perhaps you do not believe in love at first sight? I myself held it a fable till now, but today I have experienced the truth of it.”

How my heart beat! but I was silent.

“I have leapt head over heels into my fate,” he continued. “You or no one! Decide then for my bliss or my death, for without you I neither can nor will live. Will you be mine?”

To so direct a question I was obliged to give some reply. I sought for some extremely diplomatic phrase which without cutting off all hope would sacrifice nothing of my dignity, but I got out nothing more than a tremulous whispered “yes.”

“Then may I tomorrow propose for your hand to your aunt, and write to Count Althaus?”

“Yes” again, this time a little firmer.

“Oh, what happiness! So at first sight you love me too?”

This time I only answered with my eyes, but they, I fancy, spoke the plainest “yes.”

~

On my eighteenth birthday I was married, after having been first introduced into society, and presented to the empress on my engagement. After our wedding we went for a tour in Italy. For this purpose Arno had got a long leave of absence; of retirement from the military service nothing was ever said. It is true we both possessed a tolerable property, but my husband loved his profession, and I agreed with him. I was proud of my handsome hussar officer, and looked forward with satis-

faction to the time when he would rise to the rank of major, colonel, even general. Who knows? Perhaps he might even be called to a higher fortune; perhaps he might shine in the glorious history of his country as a great military commander!

That the red volumes exhibit a break just during the happy wedding time and the honeymoon is now to me a great grief. The joys of those days would indeed have been evaporated, dispersed, scattered to the winds, even if I had entered them there, but at any rate a reflection of them would have been kept bound tight between the leaves. But no! for my grief and my pain I could not find complaints enough — enough dashes and notes of exclamation. All grievous things had to be cried over carefully before the world, present and to come, but the happy hours I enjoyed in silence. I was not proud of my happiness, and so gave no one, not even myself, in my diary, any information about it, but sufferings and longings I looked on as a kind of merit, and so made much of them. But how true a mirror these red volumes present of my sad experiences, while in the happy times the leaves are quite blank! It is too silly! It is as if during a walk a man were to make a collection to bring home with him, and to collect of all the things he found by the way only those that were ugly, as if he filled his botanic case with nothing but thorns, thistles, worms and toads, and left the flowers and butterflies behind.

Still I recollect that it was a grand time, a kind of fairy dream. I had indeed everything that the heart of a young woman could wish: love, wealth, rank, fortune, and most of it so new, so surprising, so incredible! We loved each other — my Arno and I — devotedly, with all the fire of our youth, abounding as it was in life and scenes of beauty. And it so happened that my darling hussar was besides a worthy, good-hearted, noble-minded young gentleman, with the education of a man

of the world and a cheerful temper — it happened so; for he might as well, for anything that the ball at Marienbad could testify to the contrary, have been a vicious, rough man — and as it happened also I was a moderately sensible, good-hearted creature; for he might just as well at the said ball have fallen in love with a pretty capricious, little goose. And so it came about that we were completely happy, and that as a consequence the red-bound book of lamentation remained empty for a long while.

Stop; here I do find a joyous entry — Raptures over the new dignity of motherhood. On the 1st of January, 1859 (was not *that* a new-year's gift?), a little son was born to us. Of course this event awakened in us as much astonishment and pride as if we were the first pair to which anything of the kind had happened; and this accounts also for the resumption of the diary. Of this wonder, and of this dignity of mine, the world of the future had to be informed. Besides, the theme "youthful motherhood" is so extremely well adapted for art and literature. It belongs to the class of the best sung and most carefully painted subjects; besides, it may be treated mystically and sacredly, touchingly and pathetically, simply and affectionately — in short, immensely poetically. To nurse this disposition all possible collections of poems, illustrated journals, picture galleries, and current phrases of rapture, such as "mother's love," "mother's happiness," "mother's pride," contribute their power, just as the school-books do to nurse the admiration for war. The highest pitch of deification which has been reached next to the adoration of heroes (see Carlyle's *Hero Worship*) is reached by the multitude in "baby worship;" and of course in this also I was not left behind. My little charming Ruru was to me the mightiest wonder of the world. Ah, my son! my grown-up, stately Rudolf, what I feel for you is such that against it that childish baby-wonder loses

colour, against it that blind, apish, devouring love of the young mother is as insignificant as the child himself in swaddling clothes is insignificant by the side of the grown man.

The young father was not less proud of his successor, and built on him the fairest schemes for the future. “What will he be?” This question, not as yet a very pressing one, was nevertheless often discussed over Ruru’s cradle and always decided unanimously — a soldier. Sometimes it awoke a weak protest on the mother’s part. “But suppose he should meet with any accident in a war?” “Ah, bah!” was the answer to this objection, “every one must die when and where it is appointed him.” Ruru was also not to remain the only son; of the following sons one might, please God, be brought up as a diplomatist, another as a country gentleman, a third as a priest; but the eldest, he must choose his father’s and grandfather’s profession — the noblest profession of all. He must be a soldier.

And so it was settled. Ruru, as soon as he was two months old, was promoted by us to be lance-corporal. Well, as all crown princes immediately they are born are named “proprietors” of some regiment, why should not we also decorate our little one with an imaginary rank? It was only a regular joke this playing at soldiers with our baby.

~

On April 1, as the third monthly recurrence of his birthday (for to keep only the anniversaries would have given too few opportunities for festivity), Ruru was promoted from lance-corporal to corporal. But on the same day there happened also something more mournful — something that made my heart heavy, and obliged me to relieve it into the red volumes.

There had been now for a long time a certain black point visible on



the political horizon, about the possible increase of which the liveliest commentaries were made in all journals and at all private parties. I had up to that time thought nothing about it. My husband and my father and their military friends might have often said in my hearing, "There will soon be something to settle with Italy," but it glanced off my understanding. I had little time or inclination to trouble myself about politics. So that however eagerly people about me might debate about the relations between Sardinia and Austria, or the behaviour of Napoleon III., of whose help Cavour had assured himself by taking part in the Crimean War, or however constantly they might talk about the tension which this alliance had called forth between us and our Italian neighbours, I took no notice of it.

But on April 1 my husband said to me very seriously: —

"Do you know, dear, that it will soon break out?"

"What will break out, darling?"

"The war with Sardinia."

I was terrified. "My God! that would be terrible! And will you have to go?"

"I hope so."

"How can you say such a thing? Hope to leave your wife and child!"

"If duty calls."

"One might reconcile oneself to it; but to hope — which means wish — that such a bitter duty should arise!"

"Bitter! A rattling jolly war like that must be something glorious! You are a soldier's wife; don't forget that."

I fell on his neck. "O my dear husband, be content. I also can be brave! How often have I sympathised with the heroes and heroines of

history! What an elevating feeling it must be to go into battle! If I only might fight, fall, or conquer at your side!”

“Bravely spoken, little wife, but nonsense! Your place is here, by the cradle of the little one, who also is to become a defender of his country when he is grown up. Your place is at our household hearth. It is to protect this, and guard it from any hostile attack, to preserve peace for our homes and our wives, that we men have to go to battle.”

I don’t know why, but these words, which, or something of the same sort, I had often before heard and read with assent, this time seemed to me to be in a sense mere “phrases.” There was certainly no hearth menaced, no horde of barbarians at the gate, merely a political tension between two cabinets. So, if my husband was all on fire to rush into the war, it was not so much from the pressing need of defending his wife, child, and country, but much rather his delight in the march out, which promised change and adventure — his seeking for distinction and promotion. “Oh, yes,” was my conclusion from this train of thought, “it is ambition — a noble, honourable ambition — delight in the brave discharge of duty.”

It was good of him that he was rejoicing in the *chance* of being obliged to take the field — for as yet there was assuredly no certainty. Perhaps the war might not break out at all, and even in case they came to blows, who knows whether it would be Arno’s fate to be sent off? — the whole army does not always see the enemy. No, this splendid, perfect happiness which fate had just built as a snug house for me, it was impossible that the same fate should roughly shatter it to pieces! “O Arno, my dearly-loved husband! it would be horrible to know that you are in danger!” These and similar outpourings fill the leaves of the diary which were written in those days.

From this period the red volumes are full for some time of political

stuff. Louis Napoleon is an intriguer; Austria cannot long be only a spectator. It is coming to war. Sardinia will be frightened at our superior power, and give in. Peace is going to be maintained. My wishes, despite of all theoretical admiration of the battles of the past, were, of course, secretly directed to the preservation of peace, but the wish of my spouse called openly for the other alternative. He did not say anything out plainly, but he always communicated any news about the increase of “the black spot” with sparkling eyes; while, on the contrary, he always took note of such peaceful prospects as occurred now and then (but, alas! they became always rarer) with a kind of dejection.

My father, also, was all on fire for the war. To conquer the Piedmontese would be only child’s play; and, in support of this assertion, the Radetzky anecdotes were poured out again. I heard the impending campaign talked about always from the strategic point of view — *i.e.*, a balancing of the chances on the two sides; how and where the enemy would be routed, and the advantages which would thereby accrue to “us.” The humane point of view, *viz.*, that whether lost or won every battle demands innumerable sacrifices of blood and tears, was quite left out of sight. The interests which were here in question were represented as raised to such a height above any private destiny, that I felt ashamed of the meanness of my way of thinking, if at times the thought occurred to me: “Ah! what joy do the poor slain men, the poor cripples, the poor widows, get out of the victory?” However, very soon the old school-book dithyrambs came in again for an answer to all these despairing questionings: “Glory offers recompense for all.” Still — suppose the enemy wins? This question I propounded in the circle of my military friends, but was ignominiously hissed down. The mere mention of the possibility of a shadow of a doubt is in itself unpatriotic. To be certain beforehand of one’s invincibility is a part of

a soldier's duties, and, therefore, in her degree, of those of a loyal wife of a lieutenant.

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My husband's regiment was quartered in Vienna. From our house there was a view over the Prater, and from the window there was such a lovely promise of summer over everything. It was a wonderful spring. The air was warm and redolent of violets, and the fresh foliage sprouted out more early than in other years. I was amusing myself without any anxiety over the great processions in the Prater which were planned for the following month. We had, for this purpose, procured a tasty little equipage — a brake with a four-in-hand team of Hungarian horses. Even already, in this splendid April weather, we kept driving almost daily in the alleys of the Prater — but that was only a foretaste of the pleasure peculiar to May. Ah! if the war had not broken in on all that!

“Now, thank God, at last this uncertainty is at an end,” cried my husband one morning — April 19 — on coming home from parade. “The ultimatum has been sent.”

I shrieked out: “Eh, what? What does that mean?”

“It means that the last word of the diplomatic formalities, the one which precedes the declaration of war, has been spoken. Our ultimatum to Sardinia calls on Sardinia to disarm. She, of course, will take no notice of it, and we march across the frontier.”

“Good God! But perhaps they may disarm?”

“Well, then, the quarrel would be at an end, and peace would continue.”

I fell on my knees. I could not help it. Silently, but still as earnestly

as if with a cry, there rose the prayer from my soul to heaven for  
“Peace! peace!”

Arno raised me up.

“My silly child, what are you doing?”

I threw my arms round his neck and began to weep. It was no burst of pain, for the misfortune was certainly as yet not decided on; but the news had so shaken me that my nerves quivered, and that caused this flood of tears.

“Martha, Martha, you will make me angry,” said Arno, reproachfully. “Is this being my brave little soldier’s wife? Do you forget that you are a general’s daughter, wife of a first lieutenant, and,” he concluded with a smile, “mother of a corporal?”

“No, no, Arno. I do not comprehend myself. It was only a kind of seizure. I am really myself ardent for military glory. But — I do not know how it is — a little while ago everything was hanging on a single word, which must by this time have been spoken — ‘yes’ or ‘no’ — in answer to this ultimatum as it is called, and this ‘yes’ or ‘no’ is to decide whether thousands must bleed and die — die in these sunny happy days of spring — and so it came over me that the word of peace *must* come, and I could not help falling on my knees in prayer.”

“To inform the Almighty of the position of affairs, you dear little goose!”

The house bell rang. I dried my eyes at once. Who could it be so early?

It was my father. He rushed in all in a hurry.

“Now, children,” he cried, all out of breath, throwing himself into an arm-chair. “Have you heard the great news? The ultimatum —”

“I have just told my wife.”

“Tell me, dear papa, what you think,” I asked anxiously. “Will that prevent the war?”

“I am not aware that an ultimatum ever prevented a war. It would indeed be only prudent of this wretched rabble of Italians to give in and not expose themselves to a second Novara. Ah! if good Father Radetzky had not died last year I believe he would, in spite of his ninety years, have put himself again at the head of his army, and, by God! I would have marched along with him. We two have, I think, shown already how to manage these foreign scum. But it seems they have not yet had enough of it, the puppies! They want a second lesson. All right. Our Lombardo-Venetian kingdom will get a handsome addition in the Piedmontese territory, and I already look forward to the entry of our troops into Turin.”

“But, papa, you speak just as if war were already declared, and you were glad of it! But how if Arno has to go too?” And the tears were already in my eyes again.

“That he will too — the enviable young fellow!”

“But my terror! The danger —”

“Eh! what? Danger! ‘A man may fight and not be slain,’ as the saying goes. I have gone through more than one campaign, thank God, and been wounded mere than once — and yet I am all alive, just because it was ordained that I should live through it.”

The old fatalist way of talking! the same as prevailed to settle Ruru’s choice of a profession — and which even now appeared to me again as quite philosophical.

“Even if it should chance that my regiment is not ordered out —” Arno began.

“Ah, yes!” I joyfully broke in, “there is still that hope.”

“In that case I would get exchanged, if possible.”

“Oh, it will be quite possible,” my father assured him. “Hess is to receive the command-in-chief and he is a good friend of mine.” My heart trembled, and yet I could not help admiring both the men. With what a joyful equanimity they spoke of a coming campaign, as if it were only a question of some pleasure trip that had been arranged. My brave Aino was desirous, even if his duty did not summon him, to go and meet the foe, and my magnanimous father thought that quite simple and natural. I collected myself. Away with childish, womanish fear! Now was the time to show myself worthy of this my love, to raise my heart above all egotistic fears and find room for nothing but the noble reflection — “my husband is a hero.”

I sprang up and stretched out both my hands to him: “Arno, I am proud of you!”

He put my hands to his lips, then turned to papa and said, with a face radiant with joy: —

“You have brought the girl up well, father-in-law!”

~

Rejected! The ultimatum rejected! This took place at Turin, April 26. The die is cast! War has broken out. For a week I had been prepared for the catastrophe, and yet its occurrence gave me a bitter blow. I threw myself sobbing on the sofa, and hid my face in the cushion when Arno brought me the news.

He sat down by me, and began gently to comfort me.

“My darling! Courage! Compose yourself! It is not so bad after all. In a short time we shall return as conquerors. Then we two shall be doubly happy. Do not weep so — it breaks my heart. I am almost sorry that I have engaged to go in any case. But, no; just think, if my comrades are forced to go, with what right could I remain at home?”

You yourself would feel ashamed of me. No. I must experience the baptism of fire some time, and till that has happened I do not feel myself truly a man or a soldier. Only think how delightful if I come back with a third star on my collar — perhaps with the cross on my breast.”

I rested my head on his shoulder, and kept on weeping the more. But I reflected how small such things were. Stars and crosses seemed to be at that moment only empty spangles. Not ten grand crosses on that dear breast could offer me any recompense for the terrible possibility that a ball might shatter it.

Arno kissed me on the forehead, put me softly aside, and stood up.

“I must go out now, my dear, to my colonel. Have your cry out. When I come back I hope to find you firm and cheerful. That is what I have need of, and not to be shaken with sad anticipations. At such a decisive moment as this my own dear little wife surely will do nothing to take the heart out of me or damp my ardour for exploits? Good-bye, my treasure.” And he departed.

I collected myself. His last words were still ringing in my ears. Yes, plainly my duty now was not merely not to damp, but as far as possible to increase, his spirit and his ardour for exploits. That is the only way in which we women can exercise our patriotism, in which we can take any share in the glory our husbands bring from the battlefields. “Battlefields” — it is surprising how this word suddenly presented itself to my mind in two radically different meanings. Partly in the accustomed historical signification, so pathetic, and so calculated to awake the highest admiration; partly in the loathsomeness of the bloody, brutal syllable “fight.” Yes, those poor men who were being hurried out had to lie stricken down on the field, with their gaping,



bleeding wounds, and among them perhaps — and a loud shriek escaped me as the thought passed through my mind.

My maid Betty came running in all in a fright. “For God’s sake, my lady, what has happened?” she asked trembling.

I looked at the girl. Her eyes also were red with weeping. I guessed; she knew the tidings already, and her lover was a soldier. I felt as if I could press my sister in misfortune to my heart.

“It is nothing, my child,” I said softly. “Those who go away will surely return.”

“Ah, my gracious lady, not all,” she replied, breaking out anew into tears.

My aunt now came in, and Betty withdrew.

“I am come, Martha, to speak comfort to you,” said the old lady as she embraced me, “and to preach to you resignation in this trial.”

“So you know it?”

“The whole city knows it, and great joy prevails, for this war is very popular.”

“Joy, Aunt Mary?”

“Oh, yes, among those who see no beloved member of their families ordered out. I could easily understand that you must be sad, and so I hastened here. Your papa will also come directly, but not to comfort, only to congratulate. He is quite beside himself with joy that it is to go on, and looks on it as a noble chance for Arno to take part in it. And he is right in the main. For a soldier there is nothing better than a war. And that is the way you must look at it, my dear child. To fulfil the duty of your calling is before everything. What must be —”

“Yes, you are right, aunt; what must be, what is inevitable —”

“What is the will of God —” put in Aunt Mary in corroboration.

“Must be borne with composure and resignation.”

“Bravo, Martha. It is certain that everything happens as is before determined by a wise and all-merciful Providence in His immutable counsels. Every one’s death-hour is fixed and written down at the hour of his birth. And for our dear warriors we will pray so much and so earnestly!”

I did not stop to debate more closely the contradiction that lay between the two assumptions that a fatal event was at the same time ordained and also could be turned aside by prayer. I was myself not clear on the point, and had from my whole education a vague impression that in such sacred matters one ought not to embark on reasonings. And, indeed, if I had given voice to such scruples before my aunt it would have grievously shocked her. Nothing could hurt her more than for people to express rational doubt on certain points. “Not to argue about it” is the conventional commandment in matters mysterious. As etiquette forbids to address questions to a king, so it is a kind of impious breach of etiquette to want to make inquiries or criticise about a dogma. “Not to argue about it” is also a commandment easily obeyed, and on this occasion I followed it very willingly; and so I did not enter into any contention with my aunt, but on the contrary clung to the consolation that lay in the resort to prayer. Yes, during the whole time my lord was absent, I determined to beg so earnestly for the protection of Heaven, that it should turn aside every bullet in the volley from Arno. Turn them aside! Whither? To the breast of another, for whom, nevertheless, prayers were also being made? ... And, besides, what had been demonstrated to me in my course of physics about the accurately computable and infallible effects of matter and its motion? ... What, another doubt? Away with it.

“Yes, aunt,” I said aloud, in order to break short these contra-

dictions that kept crossing each other in my mind. “Yes, we will pray continually and God will hear us. Arno will keep unhurt.”

“You see — you see, dear child, how in heavy times the soul still flies to religion ... Perhaps the Almighty sends you this trial in order that you may lay aside your former luke-warmness.”

This again did not strike me as correct. That the whole misunderstanding between Austria and Sardinia, dating even from the Crimean War, all the negotiations, the despatch of the ultimatum and its rejection, could have been ordained by God, in order to warm up my lukewarm spirit!

But to express this doubt would also have been a breach of propriety. As soon as any one introduces the name of the Almighty, the claims connected with that name give him a kind of spiritual immunity. But with regard to the charge of lukewarmness, it had some foundation. My aunt’s religious feeling came from the depths of her heart, while my piety was more external. My father was in this respect quite indifferent, and so was my husband; and so I had had no stimulus from either the one or the other to any particular zeal of belief. I had never had any means either of plunging deeply into ecclesiastical learning, since I had always been able to leave such things unattacked on the “not-argue-about-them” principle. True, I went every week to mass and every year to confession, and attended these services with much reverence and devotion; but the whole thing was still more or less an observance of the etiquette becoming to my position: I fulfilled my religious duties with the same correctness as I went through the figures of the Lancers at the state ball and made the state courtesy when the empress came into the room. Our chaplain at the château in Lower Austria and the nuntio in Vienna could have nothing to say against

me — yet the charge which my aunt brought against me was perfectly justified.

“Yes, my child,” she went on, “in prosperity and happiness people easily forget their home above; but if sickness or fear of death breaks in on us — or, still more, on those we love — if we are stricken down or in sorrow —”

She would have gone on in this style for a long time, but the door burst open, and my father rushed in.

“Hurrah, it’s begun now,” was his joyful greeting to us. “They wanted a whipping, these puppies, did they? And a whipping they shall have — that they shall!”

~

It was a time of excitement. The war “has broken out.” People forget that it is really two masses of men who are rushing to fight each other, and conceive of the event as if it was some exalted overruling third power, whose outbreak compels these two masses into the fight. The whole responsibility falls on this power, lying beyond the wills of individuals, and which on its side merely produces the fulfilment of the destined fate of the nations. Such is the dark and awful conception which the majority of mankind have of war, and which was mine too. There was no question of my feeling any revolt against making war in general. What I suffered from was only that my beloved husband had to go out into the danger and I to stay behind in anxiety and solitude. I rummaged up all my old impressions from the days of my historical studies, in order to strengthen and inspire me with the conviction that it was the highest of human duties which called my dear one away, and that thereby the possibility was offered to him of covering himself with glory and honour. Now at any rate I was living in the midst of an

epoch of history, and this again was a peculiarly elevating thought. Since from Herodotus and Tacitus, down to the historians of modern times, wars have always been represented as the events of most importance and of weightiest consequence, I concluded that at the present time also a war of this sort would pass with future historians as an event to serve for the title of a chapter.

This elevated tone, overpowering in its impressiveness, was that which prevailed everywhere else. Nothing else was spoken of in rooms or streets, nothing else read in the newspapers, nothing else prayed about in the churches. Wherever one went one found everywhere the same excited faces, the same eager talk about the possibilities of the war. Everything else which engaged the people's interest at other times — the theatre, business, art — was now looked on as perfectly insignificant. It seemed to one as if it were not right to think of anything else whilst the opening scene in this great drama of the destiny of the world was being played out. And the different orders to the army with the well-known phrases of the certainty of victory and promise of glory; and the troops marching out with clanging music and waving banners; and the leading articles and public speeches conceived in the most glowing tone of loyalty and patriotism; the eternal appeal to virtue, honour, duty, courage, self-sacrifice; the assurances made on both sides that their nation was known to be the most invincible, most courageous, most certainly destined to a higher extension of power, the best and the noblest — all this spread around an atmosphere of heroism, which filled the whole population with pride and called out in each individual the belief that he was a great citizen in a great state.

Such bad qualities, however, as these — lust of conquest, love of fighting, hatred, cruelty, guile, were also certainly to be found, and were admitted to be shown in war, but always by “the enemy.” To him,

his being in the wrong was quite clear. Quite apart from the political necessity of the campaign just commenced, apart also from the patriotic advantages which undoubtedly grew out of it, the conquest over one's adversary was a moral work, a discipline carried out by the genius of culture. These Italians! what a foul, false, sensual, light-minded, conceited people! And this Louis Napoleon! what a mixture of ambition and the spirit of intrigue! When his proclamation of war, published on April 29, appeared with its motto, "Italy free to the Adriatic Sea," it called out amongst us a storm of indignation. I did allow myself a feeble remark that this was at least an unselfish and noble idea, which must have an inspiring influence on Italian patriots, but I was soon put to silence. The dogma that "Louis Napoleon is a scoundrel" was not to be shaken as long as he was "the enemy." Everything proceeding from him was *ab initio* "scoundrelly."

Another slight doubt arose in me. In all the battle-stories of history I had found that the sympathy and admiration of the relaters were always expressed for the party who wanted to free themselves from a foreign yoke and who fought for freedom. It is true that I was not capable of giving any distinct idea of the meaning of the word "yoke," or of that of "freedom," though so abundantly sung about; but one thing seemed to me perfectly clear, *viz.*, that "the shaking off of the yoke" and "the struggle for freedom" lay this time on the side, not of Austria, but of Italy. But even for these scruples, timidly conceived as they were, and still more timidly expressed, I was thundered down. For, here I was so unlucky as again to trench on a sacred principle — namely, that our government — *i.e.*, the government under which one happened to have been born — could never result in a yoke, but only in a blessing; that any who wished to tear themselves loose from "us" could not be warriors of freedom but only simple rebels; and that

generally and in all circumstances “we” were always and everywhere wholly in the right.

In the early days of May — they were luckily cold and rainy days — sunny spring weather would have made too painful a contrast — the regiment into which Arno had exchanged marched. At seven in the morning —

Ah, the preceding night! what a terrible night it was! If the dear one had only been going on a journey of business, free from any danger, the parting would have made me unspeakably sorrowful — parting is indeed so sad! but to the war! to meet the fiery shower of the enemy’s bullets! Why could I no longer on that night apprehend at all in that word “war” its elevated historical signification, but only its terror and threatening of death?

Arno had fallen asleep. He lay there breathing quietly, with a cheerful expression on his features. I had lighted a fresh candle and put it behind a screen; I could not be in the dark that night. Of sleep there was no question whatever for me in that, the *last*, night. I felt that I must spend the whole time in gazing at least into the beloved face. I lay on our bed wrapped in a dressing-gown, and, with my elbow on the pillow, and my chin resting on the palm of my hand, looked down on the sleeper and wept silently. “How I love you, how I love you, my own one — and you are going away from me! Why is fate so cruel? How shall I live without you? O that you may soon come back to me! O God! my good God! my merciful Father above! let him come back soon — him and all. Let there soon be peace! Why then cannot there be peace always? We were so happy — perhaps too happy — for there cannot be any perfect happiness on earth. Oh, rapture! if he comes home unhurt, and then lies at my side as he is doing now, and no parting threatened for the morrow! How quietly you are sleeping,

O my dear, brave husband! But how shall you sleep there? There there is no soft bed for you hung with silk and lace; there you must lie on the hard wet earth — perhaps in some ditch — helpless — wounded!” And with this thought I could not help picturing a gaping sabre-cut on his forehead with the blood trickling from it, or a bullet-wound in his breast — and a hot pang of compassion seized me. How I should have liked to throw my arms round him and kiss him — but I dared not wake him, he wanted this invigorating sleep. Not six o’clock yet! — tick-tack, tick-tack, unpitifully swift and sure time marches on to every mark. This indifferent tick-tack distressed me. The light, too, burned just as indifferently behind its screen as this clock ticked with its silly, motionless Cupid ... Can it be that all these things have no perception that it is our *last* night? My tearful lids fell together, my consciousness gradually went away, and letting my head sink on the pillow, I fell asleep at last myself. But only for a short time. Hardly had I lost my sense in the fog of some formless dream, when my heart suddenly contracted painfully, and I awoke with a violent palpitation, and the same feeling of fear as when one is awakened by a cry for help or an alarm of fire. “Parting, parting!” was the alarm cry. When I had started so out of sleep for the tenth or twelfth time it was day, and the candle was flickering out. A knock came at the door.

“Six o’clock, lieutenant,” said the orderly, who had been ordered to wake him in good time.

Arno rose up. So now the hour was come — now was to be spoken this sad, sad word — “Farewell.”

It had been settled that I was not to go to the railway with him. The one quarter of an hour more or less together — that was not worth much. And the pain of tearing ourselves asunder at last! That I did not wish to show to strangers. I wanted to be alone in my room when we



exchanged the parting kiss, that I might be able to throw myself on the floor and shriek — shriek out loud.

Arno put on his clothes quickly. As he was doing so he made me all kinds of comforting speeches.

“Courage, Martha! In two months at the most the affair will be over, and I shall be back again at cuckoo-time; only one in a thousand bullets hits, and that one must not hit me. Others before me have come back from the wars — look at your papa. It must happen sometime or other. You did not marry an officer of hussars with the notion that his business was to grow hyacinths. I will write to you as often as possible, and tell you how pleasantly and lively the whole campaign is going on. If anything bad were destined for me I could not feel so cheerful. I am going only to win an order, nothing else. Take great care here of yourself and our Ruru; and if I get promotion he shall have another step too. Kiss him for me; I will not repeat the parting of last night. The time will come when it will be a treat for him to have his father tell him how in the year ’59 he was present at the great victory over Italy.”

I listened to him greedily. This confident chatter did me good. He was going away all pleased and in good spirits, and so my suffering must be egotistic and therefore wrong; this thought ought to give me strength to conquer it.

Another knock at the door.

“Time now, lieutenant.”

“I am quite ready; coming directly.” He spread out his arms. “Now then, Martha — my wife — my love.”

I lay at once on his breast. I could not speak a word. The word “farewell” would not pass my lips. I felt that in saying that word I should give way, and I did not dare to poison the peace, the cheer-

fulness of his departure. I reserved the outbreak of my pain as a kind of reward for my solitude.

But now he spoke the heartbreaking word.

“Good-bye, my all, good-bye,” and pressed his lips closely to mine.

We could not tear ourselves out of this embrace — as though it were our last. Then on a sudden I felt how his lips were trembling, how convulsively his bosom heaved, and then releasing me, he covered his face and sobbed aloud.

That was too much for me. I thought I was going out of my mind.

“Arno, Arno!” I cried out, throwing my arms round him, “stay, stay!” I knew I was asking what was impossible; still I cried out persistently: “Stay, stay!”

“Lieutenant,” we heard from outside, “it is now quite time.”

One more kiss — the last of all — and he rushed out.

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To tear charpie, to read the news in the papers, to stick pins with flags into our maps in order to follow the movements of the two armies, and try to solve the chess problems that followed from them in the sense that “Austria attacks and gives mate at the fourth move;” to pray continually in the churches for the protection of our loved ones and the victory of our country’s arms; to talk of nothing except the news that came in from the theatre of war; such was what filled up my existence now and that of my relatives and acquaintance. Life with all its other interests appeared suspended as it were during the term of the campaign. Everything except the question “How and when will this war end?” was bereft of importance — nay, almost of reality. One ate, drank, read, saw after one’s affairs, but all this had no real concern for us; one thing only concerned us thoroughly — the telegrams from Italy.

My chief gleams of light were, of course, the news that I received from Arno himself. They were in a curt style — letter-writing had never been his strong point — but they brought me the most cheering testimony that he was still alive and unwounded. These letters and despatches could not indeed arrive with much regularity, for the communications were often interrupted, or when an action was impending the field-post was suspended.

If a few days had passed thus, without my hearing from Arno, and a list of killed and wounded was published, with what terror did I not read over the names! It is as great a strain as for the holder of a lottery ticket to look through the winning numbers in the list of a drawing — but in the opposite sense; what one seeks in this case, well knowing, thank God, that the chance is against one, is the chief prize in misery.

The first time that I read the names of the slain — and I had been four days without news — and saw that the name of Arno Dotzky was not among them, I folded my hands and cried aloud: “My God, I thank Thee!” But the words were hardly out of my mouth when it seemed to me like a shrill discord. I took the paper in my hand again and looked at the list of names once more. So I thank God because Adolf Schmidt and Carl Müller and many others were slain, but not Arno Dotzky. Then the same thanksgiving would have been appropriate if it had risen to heaven from the hearts of those who trembled for Schmidt and Müller, if they had read “Dotzky” instead of those names. And why should my thanks in particular be more pleasing to Heaven than theirs? Yes, this was the shrill discord of my ejaculation, the presumption and the self-seeking which lay in it, in believing that Arno had been spared in love for me, and thanking God that not I but Schmidt’s mother and Müller’s affianced and fifty others had to burst out in tears over that list.



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