

cause for which we are striving would be aided and encouraged through the convening of a congress of editors in Washington, D. C., for the discussion of international arbitration and for the awakening of the public conscience to the advantages of a peaceful settlement of differences arising between nations.

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THE BARONESS BERTHA VON SUTTNER (1843–1914)

It is essential to the success of any reform that it be presented to the public in such a way as to gain and hold its attention. A small knot of reformers may convert their immediate friends and create a sentiment in favor of their projects, and this sentiment may suffice if the reform in question concern but a section of the community and can be carried into effect by the legislature, if it require a statute, provided that the reform does not meet with the opposition of large and interested sections of the particular community.

Thus John Howard started prison reform, and he and his followers only needed to overcome the indifference of the authorities and the public. Again, Sir Samuel Romilly started a movement in favor of the reform of the criminal law of England. This was preëminently a legislative question. Members of Parliament were apathetic; and, curiously enough, the judges, such as Lords Eldon and Ellenborough, set their faces against every attempt to lessen the number of capital offenses. But however unsuccessful he was in Parliament, his efforts attracted the attention of the public, and the great body of Englishmen became convinced of the essential barbarity of their criminal code. The efforts of Romilly's associate and successor in the good work, Sir James Mackintosh, were seconded by public opinion, which made itself felt even in an unreformed Parliament, where Sir Robert Peel, on behalf of a Tory Government and in the teeth of the old opponents, declared himself in his great speech of March 9, 1826, in favor of the reform of the code and, as Home Secretary, carried it out.

Let us take, however, an example of a larger movement carried to success which required and received the support of the public at large. The movement for the abolition of slavery in the United States was started by a few obscure reformers whose names are, however, treasured today by a grateful and regenerated people. Their appeal was largely to the conscience; it did not and could not touch or stir the heart. In 1852, one Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly*. The situation changed, as it were, overnight.

The evils of slavery were presented in a story of absorbing interest; the heart of the people was touched, and the abolition of slavery became inevitable.

The peace movement has had its Harriet Beecher Stowe; and the Baroness von Suttner's novel, *Die Waffen Nieder* (Lay Down your Arms), published in 1889, can properly be compared with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It has been translated into many languages. It has shown the horrors of war just as its prototype showed the horrors of slavery. Both reached the heart and, through the heart, the conscience. Slavery was in 1852 discredited and confined to particular localities. Mrs. Stowe's triumph was therefore easier and more immediate. The war system is not confined to any locality, and it can not be said that however opposed by the select few it was discredited by the many. But the Baroness von Suttner's book called attention to it in such a way as to put it on the defensive; and the style of the novel and its incidents were so interesting in themselves as to compel attention. This is the service which this high minded and gifted woman rendered to the cause of mankind.