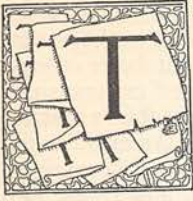


A VISIT TO COUNT TOLSTOI.



THE visit to the Russian novelist Count Leo Tolstoi which forms the subject of the present paper was made in the latter part of the month of June, 1886; but it had been planned nearly a year before that time at one of the convict mines in Eastern Siberia, and was the result of a promise which I made to a number of Count Tolstoi's friends and acquaintances who were then, and are still, in penal servitude in the vast lonely wilderness of the Trans-Baikal. My first knowledge of the fact that there were friends and acquaintances of the Russian novelist among the political convicts at the Nertchinsk mines came to me in the shape of a request that I would carry a copy of his "Ispoved," or Confession, to one of his friends, a lady, who was serving out a sentence of twelve years' penal servitude at the mines of Kara. The book was under the ban of the ecclesiastical censor; its publication and circulation in Russia had been absolutely forbidden, and the copy which I was requested to deliver was in manuscript. How it had found its way in spite of censors, inquisitors, official package-openers, house-searchers, body-searchers, baggage-examiners, police-officers, and gendarmes to the remote East Siberian village where I was asked to take charge of it I do not know; but there it was, a silent but convincing proof of the futility of repressive measures when directed against human thought. It showed that the Government had not been able to keep a forbidden book even out of the hands of its own political convicts, living under strict guard in a penal settlement of the Trans-Baikal, five thousand miles from the fertile brain in which the proscribed ideas had their origin.

I consented, of course, to take charge of the manuscript, and in less than three months I had made the acquaintance not only of the lady for whom it was destined, but of many other political exiles in Eastern Siberia who had either known the great Russian author personally or had at some time been in correspondence with him. All of these exiles were very desirous that upon my return to European Russia I should see Count Tolstoi and describe to him the working of the exile sys-

tem and the life of political convicts at the mines and in the penal settlements of the Trans-Baikal. They seemed to have the impression that he was more or less in sympathy with their aims and hopes, if not with their methods, and that the information which I could give him would strengthen that sympathy, and perhaps change his attitude toward the Government from one of passive resistance to one of active and uncompromising hostility. This belief in the possibility of enrolling Count Tolstoi among the active enemies of the Government was founded, so far as I could judge, mainly upon the fact, known even to the exiles in Siberia, that most of his later writings had been prohibited by the censor. The conclusion drawn from that fact was that the author had attacked the Government, or at least had openly expressed his disapproval of its political methods. The conclusion, however, was erroneous. If these exiled revolutionists had been able to get and read Tolstoi's later books and articles, they would have seen at once that the suppressed literature was obnoxious to the ecclesiastical rather than to the civil power, and that the very corner-stone of Tolstoi's religious and social philosophy is non-resistance to evil. Most of these revolutionists, however, had been many years in prison or in exile; they had had no means of following closely the development of Tolstoi's ideas, and they were misled by a superficial resemblance between his views and theirs with regard to property and social organization, and by the attitude of hostility which the Government had taken toward his later writings. Believing, however, as they did, that he was wavering on the brink of open revolt, and that a little more provocation would cause him to throw the weight of his forceful personality and powerful influence against the despotism which they hated, they urged me to see him and tell him all that I knew about Russian administration in Siberia and about the treatment of the political exiles. They also turned over to me a ghastly narrative in manuscript of the "hunger strike"* of four educated women in the Irkoutsk prison,—one of them the sister of the well-known Russian publicist and political economist, V. V. Vorontsov,—and made me promise that I would give the document to Tolstoi to read. I took the manuscript and gave the promise, and un-

* A "hunger strike," in the language of Russian prisons, means organized voluntary self-starvation, undertaken by the prisoners as a last desperate protest against intolerable treatment, and continued until the

prison authorities yield to the strikers' demands, or the strikers themselves break down or die under the self-imposed torture.

der these circumstances my visit to the great Russian novelist was planned.

Many months elapsed before I returned to European Russia, and when at last I found myself once more in Moscow, I learned that Count Tolstoi had left the city and was spending the summer on his estate near the village of Yasnaya Polyana [Anglicè Clearfield], in the province of Tula. On the 16th of June I took the late evening train southward over the Moscow-Kursk railroad, and reached the town of Tula early the following morning. Count Tolstoi's estate is situated about ten miles from the town, on the old turnpike road from Moscow to Kursk. There is a railway station nearer to it than Tula, but express trains do not stop there, and I was obliged, therefore, to find some other means of conveyance to my destination. Selecting from the throng of droshky drivers at the railway station one in whose face there was an attractive expression of mingled shrewdness and good-humor, I called him to me and asked him if he knew Count Tolstoi. "Know our Bahrin!" he exclaimed with a broad smile and the half-caressing, half-deferential manner of the Russian peasant who has been accustomed to associate upon terms of permitted equality with his superiors. "How is it possible not to know the Graf? Why, he is ours! — he lives in Yasnaya Polyana, only fifteen versts from here."

"Is there an inn or a post station in Yasnaya Polyana where I can go?" I inquired.

"No," replied the droshky driver; "but why go to an inn? You can stay with the Count; he is a plain, simple man [*sofsem prostoi*]; he always shakes hands with me when I go there, and he works in the fields just like a common muzhik. He is a good man, our Bahrin; he will be glad to have you stay with him."

It seemed to me that it would be rather awkward, if not an unwarrantable presumption, for a stranger to go directly to Count Tolstoi's house, satchel in hand, as if to stay a week, but there did not seem to be any alternative; and trusting that the necessities of the case would be a sufficient apology for any apparent presumption, I made an agreement with the droshky driver for transportation to Yasnaya Polyana, and at 10 o'clock we rolled out of Tula upon the broad white turnpike which leads to Orel and Kursk.

It was a bright, sunshiny June morning; the atmosphere, cleared and freshened by recent rain, was full of fragrance and ozone; and as we reached the summit of a high hill behind the town, I looked out with delight over a vast cultivated landscape rising in places through splendid slopes of vivid green to dark ridges of forest, sinking again into deep sequestered valleys where clusters of brown thatched houses

hid themselves in clumps of olive foliage, and finally stretching away on the left to the distant horizon in one vast undulating expanse of growing wheat. Far or near there was not a fence, nor a wall, nor even a hedge to break with stiff rectangles the vast flowing outlines of the picture; nor could there anywhere be seen a single isolated house, barn, or granary. Only the high state of cultivation to which the land had been brought, and occasionally the green or golden dome of a village church, calling attention to a modest cluster of thatched cottages nestling under it in a clump of trees, showed that the beautiful picturesque country was inhabited. The roadside was bright with daisies, cranebill, poppies, and wild mustard; the warm air was laden with the perfume of clover, and yellow butterflies zigzagged in eccentric flight from flower to flower as if half intoxicated by the rich fragrance and yet unable to discover its source. Here and there beside the road ragged peasants, armed with short iron sledge-hammers, were sitting in a group on the ground near a conical pile of broken stone, cracking large water-worn pebbles which they held between their huge, shapeless, cloth-bandaged feet; and now and then we overtook a bare-headed, bare-footed peasant woman, with tucked-up skirts, trudging homeward from the market-place in Tula, with her purchases in a gray bag or hanging from a long pole carried over one shoulder.

About ten versts from Tula, in a shallow valley beside a brook, we came suddenly upon one of those scenes which are so characteristic of Russian life and Russian country roads in the early spring and summer. It was a group of "bogomoltsi," or pilgrims, who had been resting and eating their lunch of black rye-bread and tea beside the road under the shade of a clump of trees. They were all women, and as we passed they sprang to their feet, picked up their long walking-poles, tied their tea-kettles and tin cups to their girdles, shouldered their gray linen bags, and trudged away from their smoldering camp fire, as if ashamed to have been seen in the act of yielding to such a weakness of the flesh as a desire for rest and food. They were nearly all women past middle age; their coarse, ragged, dust-whitened attire, basket sandals, and bandaged legs were evidences of extreme poverty; and their hard, sun-burned features were as stolid and expressionless as if they had never had a thought beyond the gratification of mere animal impulses; and yet these "God-worshippers," forsaking homes, families, and friends, had walked across half the empire, and were bound for the great Troitskaya monastery,—the Canterbury of Russia,—forty-five miles beyond Moscow. For weeks they had not

changed their clothing, eaten a substantial meal, or slept in a bed, and for weeks to come they would trudge wearily along the highways of Russia in scorching heat and drenching rain, ready to do all, bear all, and suffer all, if at last they might press their faces to the cold stone floor of the Cathedral of the Trinity, drink out of the holy well of Saint Sergius, and pray before the massive silver shrine in which the relics of that holy man repose. During the months of May and June—and in fact throughout the summer—there are thousands of such parties of pilgrims on the march in all parts of the empire. Some are bound for the catacombs of Saint Anthony, in Kiev; some for the ancient monastery of Saint Valamo, on Lake Ladoga; some for the holy shrines of Novgorod the Great; some for the monastery of Solovetsk, on the bleak arctic coast of the White Sea; and a few for the holy places of far-away Jerusalem. To a casual observer in the streets of Moscow these wandering “bogomoltsi” and “stranniki” seem at times to compose a quarter of the population of the city.

As we left behind us one by one the black-and-white barred posts which mark the long versts between stations on a Russian post-road, the heat of the sun grew more and more oppressive, and the blinding reflection of its vertical rays from the white unshaded turnpike became more and more insupportable, until my head and eyes ached with the heat and the glare. I was just about to ask my driver if we were not almost there when he gathered up his reins, turned into what seemed to be an old wood-road leading away from the turnpike on the right in the direction of an inclosed forest, and said, “*Na konets daiekheli,*”—“At last we have arrived.” I looked eagerly around for the imposing baronial mansion which I had pictured to myself as the country home of the great author, who was at the same time a wealthy Russian noble; but, with the exception of a little cluster of thatched log-houses on the crest of a sloping ridge about a mile away, I could not see a sign of human habitation.

“Where is the Count’s house?” I inquired.

“It is over there in the woods,” replied the driver, pointing with his whip; “you can’t see it until you get close to it. Here is the gate of the park,” he added, as, skirting the edge of a mud-hole, we turned again to the right and passed between two high and evidently ancient brick columns, which were hollow on the inner side, as if to afford places of shelter for gate-keepers or sentinels. Nothing, except these columns and an artificial but long-neglected pond which glimmered between the trees on the left, indicated that we were in a park or upon the premises of a wealthy Russian landowner. I

should have supposed that we were taking “a short cut” through the woods to some peasant village. The road had not been graveled, and was muddy from recent rain; the grass under the forest trees was long, choked by weeds, and mingled with wild flowers; and there was not the slightest evidence anywhere of care, cultivation, or pride in the appearance of the grounds. About two hundred yards from the gateway the road turned suddenly to the right and stopped abruptly at one end of a plain, white, rectangular, two-story house of stuccoed brick standing among the trees in such a position that it could not be seen from the road at a greater distance than thirty or forty yards. It would be hard to imagine a simpler, barer, less pretentious building. It had neither piazzas nor towers nor architectural ornaments of any kind; there were no vines to soften its hard rectangular outlines or relieve the staring whiteness of its flat walls; and its front door, which looked so much like a side or back door that I did not dare to knock at it, was situated nearer the end than the center of the façade, and was reached by a flight of steps and a small square platform of gray, uncut paving-stones with grass growing in the chinks.

At the end of the house where the road stopped there was a croquet ground of bare, hard-trodden earth, and on a bench beside it, in the shade of a tree, sat a lady in a broad-brimmed, summer hat, reading. Not feeling sure that what I saw was the front of the house, and dreading the awkwardness of knocking at what might prove to be the kitchen or dining-room door, I crossed the croquet ground, apologized to the lady for interrupting her reading, and inquired if the Count was at home. She replied that she believed he was, and, asking me to follow her, she entered the house, requested me to be seated in a small reception-room, and then, turning to an open door in a wooden partition, she called in English, “Count, are you there?” A deep voice from the other side of the partition replied, “Yes.” “A gentleman wishes to see you,” she said, and then, without waiting for a response, she returned to the croquet ground. There was the sound of a moving chair in the adjoining room, and in a moment Count Tolstoi appeared at the door. I had heard not a little from his friends with regard to his eccentricities in the matter of dress; I had been shown photographs of him in peasant garb, and I did not therefore expect to see a man clothed in soft raiment; but I was hardly prepared, nevertheless, for the extreme unconventionality of his attire.

The day was a warm and sultry one; he had just returned from work in the fields, and his apparel consisted of heavy calfskin shoes, loose, almost shapeless, trousers of the coarse

homespun linen of the Russian peasants, and a white cotton undershirt without collar or neckerchief. He wore neither coat nor waistcoat, and everything that he had on seemed to be of domestic manufacture. But even in this coarse peasant garb Count Tolstoi was a striking and impressive figure. The massive proportions of his heavily molded frame were only rendered the more apparent by the scantiness and plainness of his dress, and his strong, resolute, virile face, deeply sunburned by exposure in the fields, seemed to acquire added strength from the feminine arrangement of his iron-gray hair, which was parted in the middle and brushed back over the temples. Count Tolstoi's features may be best described in Tuscan phrase as "molded with the fist and polished with the pickaxe," and the impression which they convey is that of independence, self-reliance, and unconquerable strength. The face does not seem at first glance to be that of a student or a speculative thinker, but rather that of a man of action accustomed to deal promptly and decisively with perilous emergencies, and to fight fiercely for his own hand, regardless of odds. The rather small eyes deeply set under shaggy brows are of the peculiar gray which lights up in excitement with a flash like that of drawn steel; the nose is large and prominent with a singular wideness and bluntness at the end; the lips are full, and firmly closed; and the outlines of the chin and jaws, so far as they can be seen through the full gray beard, only give additional emphasis to the expression of virile strength, which is the distinguishing characteristic of the large, rugged face.

In the book which has been translated into English by Isabel F. Hapgood, and published in New York under the title of "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth," Count Tolstoi refers to the pain which he felt at the early age of six years when his mother was obliged to confess that he was a homely boy. "I fancied," he says, "that there was no happiness on earth for a person with such a wide nose, such thick lips, and such small gray eyes as I had; I besought God to work a miracle, to turn me into a beauty, and all I had in the present or might have in the future I would give in exchange for a handsome face." But there is something better and higher in Count Tolstoi's face than mere beauty or regularity of feature, and that is the deep impress of moral, intellectual, and physical power.

He stood for an instant on the threshold as if surprised to see a stranger, but quickly advanced into the room with outstretched hand, and when I had briefly introduced myself he expressed simply but cordially the great pleasure and gratification which he said it gave him

to receive a visit from a foreigner, and especially from an American. I explained to him that my call was the result partly of a promise which I had made to some of his friends and admirers in Siberia, and partly of a desire to make the personal acquaintance of an author whose books had given me so much pleasure.

"What books of mine have you read?" he asked quickly. I replied that I had read all of his novels, including "War and Peace," "Anna Karenina," and "The Cossacks."

"Have you seen any of my later writings?" he inquired.

"No," I said; "they have all, or nearly all, appeared since I went to Siberia."

"Ah!" he responded, "then you don't know me at all. We will get acquainted."

At this moment my ragged and generally unpresentable droshky driver, whose existence I had wholly forgotten, entered the door. Count Tolstoi at once rose, greeted him cordially as an old acquaintance, shook his hand as warmly as he had shaken mine, and asked him with unaffected interest a number of questions about his domestic affairs and the news of the day in Tula. It was perhaps a trifling incident, but I was not at that time as well acquainted as I now am with Count Tolstoi's ideas concerning social questions, and to see a wealthy Russian noble, and the greatest of living novelists, shaking hands upon terms of perfect equality with a poor, ragged, and not overclean droshky driver whom I had picked up in the streets of Tula was the first of the series of surprises which made my visit to Count Tolstoi memorable. When the droshky driver, after inquiring affectionately with regard to the health of the Countess and of all the children, had taken his departure, Count Tolstoi excused himself for a moment and returned to the apartment out of which he had come, leaving me alone.

The room where I sat was small and nearly square, and seemed to serve a double purpose as a reception-room and a hall. Two of its walls were of white plaster; the third consisted of one side of a large oven covered with glazed tiles, and the fourth was formed by an unpainted wooden partition pierced by a door which opened apparently into Count Tolstoi's library or work-room. The floor was bare; the furniture, which was old-fashioned in form, consisted of two or three plain chairs, a deep sofa, or settle, upholstered with worn green morocco, and a small cheap table without a cloth. Three pairs of antlers were fastened against the walls, and upon one of them hung an old slouch hat and a white cotton shirt similar to that which Count Tolstoi had on. There was a marble bust in a niche behind the settle, but the only pictures which the

room contained were a small engraved portrait of Dickens and another of Schopenhauer. It would be impossible to imagine anything plainer or simpler than the room and its contents. More evidences of wealth and luxury might be found in many a peasant's cabin in Eastern Siberia.

Before I had had time to do more than glance hastily about me, Count Tolstoi reappeared in the act of belting around his waist, with a wide black strap, a coarse gray blouse, or tunic, of homespun linen, which he had put on in the adjoining room. Then seating himself beside me, he began to question me about the journey to Siberia from which I had just returned, and I — mindful of my promise to the exiles — began to tell him what I knew about Russian administration and the treatment of political convicts. It soon became evident that he was not to be surprised, or shocked, or aroused by any such information as I had to give him. He listened attentively, but without any manifestation of emotion, to my descriptions of exile life, and drew from the storehouse of his own experience as many cases of administrative injustice and oppression that were new to me as I could give that were new to him. He was evidently familiar with the whole subject, and had with regard to it well-settled views which were not to be shaken by a few additional facts not differing essentially from those that he had previously considered. I finally asked him whether he did not think that resistance to such oppression was justifiable.

"That depends," he replied, "upon what you mean by resistance; if you mean persuasion, argument, protest, I answer yes; if you mean violence — no. I do not believe that violent resistance to evil is ever justifiable under any circumstances."

He then set forth clearly, eloquently, and with more feeling than he had yet shown, the views with regard to man's duty as a member of society which are contained in his book entitled "My Religion," and which are further explained and illustrated in a number of his recently published tracts for the people. He laid particular stress upon the doctrine of non-resistance to evil, which, he said, is in accordance both with the teachings of Christ and the results of human experience. He declared that violence, as a means of redressing wrongs, is not only futile, but an aggravation of the original evil, since it is the nature of violence to multiply and reproduce itself in all directions. "The revolutionists," he said, "whom you have seen in Siberia, undertook to resist evil by violence, and what has been the result? Bitterness, and misery, and hatred, and bloodshed! The evils against which they took up arms still exist, and to them has been added a

mass of previously non-existent human suffering. It is not in that way that the kingdom of God is to be realized on earth."

I cannot now repeat from memory all the arguments and illustrations with which Count Tolstoi enforced his views and fortified his position; but I still remember the eloquence and earnestness with which they were presented, and the deep impression made upon me by the personality of the speaker. The ideas themselves were not new to me; I had repeatedly heard them discussed in literary circles in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Tver, and Kazan; but they never appealed to me with any real force until they came from the lips of a strong, sensitive, and earnest man who believed in them with passionate fervor.

For a long time I did not suggest any difficulties or raise any objections; but at last I made an effort to escape from the enthrallment of Count Tolstoi's strong personal influence by proposing to him questions which would necessitate the application of his general principles to specific cases. It is one thing to ask a man in a general way whether he would use violence to resist evil, and quite another thing to ask him specifically whether he would knock down a burglar who was about to cut the throat of his mother. Many men would say *yes* to the first question who would hesitate at the second. Count Tolstoi, however, was consistent. I related to him many cases of cruelty, brutality, and oppression which had come to my knowledge in Siberia, and at the end of every recital I said to him, "Count Tolstoi, if you had been there and had witnessed that transaction, would you not have interfered with violence?" He invariably answered, "No." I asked him the direct question whether he would kill a highwayman who was about to murder an innocent traveler, provided there were no other way to save the traveler's life. He replied, "If I should see a bear about to kill a peasant in the forest, I would sink an axe in the bear's head; but I would not kill a man who was about to do the same thing." There finally came into my mind a case which, although really not worse than many that I had already presented to him, would, I thought, appeal with peculiar force to a brave, sensitive, chivalrous man.

"Count Tolstoi," I said, "three or four years ago there was arrested in one of the provinces of European Russia a young, sensitive, cultivated woman named Olga Liubatovitch. I will not relate her whole history; it is enough to say that, inspired by ideas which, even if mistaken, were at least unselfish and heroic, she, with hundreds of other young people of both sexes, undertook to overturn the existing system of government. She was arrested, thrown

into prison, and after being kept for a year in solitary confinement she was exiled to Siberia by administrative process. You perhaps know—or if you do not know, I can tell you—what hardships and sufferings and humiliations a young girl must undergo who is sent to Siberia alone by 'etape' with a common criminal party. You can imagine the state of nervous excitement, the abnormal mental and emotional condition, to which she is brought by months of riding in springless telegas; by being compelled to yield to the demands of nature under the eyes of a soldier, and by sleeping for weeks on the hard benches and in the foul air of 'etapes' swarming with vermin. In this abnormal mental and emotional condition Olga Liubatovitch reached the town of Krasnoyarsk in Eastern Siberia. She had up to this time been permitted to wear her own dress and her own underclothing; but at Krasnoyarsk the local governor directed that she should put on the dress of a common convict. She refused to do so upon the ground that administrative exiles had the right to wear their own clothing, and that if convict dress had been obligatory, she would have been required to put it on before she left Moscow. The local governor insisted upon obedience to his order, and Miss Liubatovitch persisted in refusal. I do not know the reason for her obstinacy, but as convicts are not always supplied with new clothing, and are sometimes compelled to put on garments which have already been worn by others and which are foul and full of vermin, it is not difficult to suggest a number of good reasons for objecting to such a change. The chief of police and the officer of the convoy were finally directed to use force. In their presence, and that of half a dozen other men, three or four soldiers seized the poor girl and attempted to take off her clothes. She resisted, and there followed a horrible scene of violence and unavailing self-defense. Her lips were cut in the contest and her face covered with blood, but she continued to resist as long as she had strength. In spite of her cries, appeals, and struggles, she was finally overpowered, stripped naked under the eyes of six or eight men, and forcibly re clothed in the coarse convict dress. Now," I said, "suppose that all this had occurred in your presence; suppose that this bleeding, defenseless, half-naked girl had appealed to you for protection and had thrown herself into your arms; suppose that it had been your daughter—would you still have refused to interfere by an act of violence?"

He was silent. His eyes filled with tears as his imagination pictured to him the horror of such a situation, but for a moment he made no reply. Finally he said, "Do you know absolutely that that thing was done?"

"No," I said, "because I did not see it done; but I have it from two eye-witnesses, one of them a lady in whose statements I put implicit trust, and the other an officer of the exile administration. They saw it and they told me."

Again he was silent. Finally, ignoring my direct question as to what he personally would have done in such a case, Count Tolstoi said, "Even under such circumstances violence would not be justifiable. Let us analyze that situation carefully. I will grant, for the sake of argument, that the local governor who ordered the act of violence was an ignorant man, a cruel man, a brutal man—what you will; but he probably had an idea that he was doing his duty; he probably believed that he was enforcing a law of the Government to which he owed obedience and service. You suddenly appear and set yourself up as a judge in the case; you assume that he is not doing his duty,—that he is committing an act of unjustifiable violence,—and then, with strange inconsistency, you proceed to aggravate and complicate the evil by yourself committing another act of unjustifiable violence. One wrong added to another wrong does not make a right; it merely extends the area of wrong. Furthermore, your resistance, in order to be effective,—in order to accomplish anything,—must be directed against the soldiers who are committing the assault. But those soldiers are not free agents; they are subject to military discipline and are acting under orders which they dare not disobey. To prevent the execution of the orders you must kill or maim two or three of the soldiers—that is, kill or wound the only parties to the transaction who are certainly innocent, who are manifestly acting without malice and without evil intention. Is that just? Is it rational? But go a step further: suppose that you do kill or wound two or three of the soldiers; you may or may not thus succeed in preventing the completion of the act against which your violence is a protest; but one thing you certainly will do, and that is, extend the area of enmity, injustice, and misery. Every one of the soldiers whom you kill or maim has a family, and upon every such family you bring grief and suffering which would not have come to it but for your act. In the hearts of perhaps a score of people you rouse the anti-Christian and anti-social emotions of hatred and revenge, and thus sow broadcast the seeds of further violence and strife. At the time when you interposed there was only one center of evil and suffering. By your violent interference you have created half a dozen such centers. It does not seem to me, Mr. Kennan, that that is the way to bring about the reign of peace and good-will on earth."

My curiosity as to the extent to which Count Tolstoi would go in the application of his general principles to specific cases was entirely satisfied. The answer to this reasoning, from the point of view of sociology, is obvious, but it was not my purpose to object, or argue, more than might be necessary to bring out Count Tolstoi's views in their full strength.

Further conversation was prevented by a summons to lunch, which was served in a large, cheerful, sunny room in the second story. This part of the house, so far as plainness and simplicity are concerned, was perfectly in harmony with the part that I had already seen. The floor was bare; the furniture was homely and old-fashioned; the windows were hung with simple white muslin curtains without lambrequins or unnecessary drapery; and the whitewashed walls were relieved only by a few oil portraits in faded gilt frames, which evidently represented ancestors and dated from the last century.

At lunch I met, for the first time, Count Tolstoi's large family, which consisted of the Countess, a stately, dark-eyed, dark-haired lady, who must in her youth have been extremely beautiful; the eldest son, who had recently been graduated from one of the Russian universities; the eldest daughter, a girl perhaps twenty years of age; two bright-faced nieces, and three or four younger children. There were also present a young man in a highly ornamented peasant costume, worn evidently from caprice or in imitation of the Count, and two ladies of middle age whose relations to the family I could not determine, but who were probably nothing more than friends and converts to the Tolstoi philosophy.

The lunch passed quickly with bright, spontaneous conversation, in which all joined without the least appearance of formality or restraint, and in the course of which Count Tolstoi himself manifested more boyishness and gayety than I had yet given him credit for. When we had risen from the table he produced and proceeded to sell at auction to the highest bidder a richly embroidered towel, the work of a peasant woman, which, he said, had been brought to him as a present, but which he was unwilling to accept because the giver was very poor and really in need of the money that the towel represented. Amid general laughter Count Tolstoi's son and I, who were the principal bidders, ran the price up by successive offers of five kopeks more to two roubles and a half, when the auctioneer, with non-professional candor, declared that that was too much; that the American traveler in the course of the bidding had offered two roubles, which was about what the towel was worth, and that consequently it was his duty to award

it to him. Young Tolstoi, with mock indignation, protested against the unfairness of that sort of an auction, but his motion for a new trial was overruled on the novel ground that the towel belonged to the auctioneer, who therefore had an unquestionable right to knock it down to any bidder whom he chose. His son laughingly acquiesced in the ruling, and the merry group which had gathered about the auctioneer dispersed.

I had not yet had a favorable opportunity to show Count Tolstoi the manuscript embodying the narrative of the "hunger strike" in the Irkoutsk prison, which I had promised the political exiles in the Trans-Baikal that I would give to him. Upon our return to the little reception-room on the first floor, I raised again the question of the treatment of the political convicts in Siberia, and, as an illustration of some of my statements, I handed him the manuscript. It was a detailed history of the voluntary self-starvation of four political convicts, all educated women, in the prison at Irkoutsk. This "hunger strike," which took place in December, 1884, lasted sixteen days, and brought all of the women very near to death. It was undertaken as the last possible protest against what they regarded as intolerable cruelty. The narrative was written by Madame Rossikova, one of the "hunger strikers," and was smuggled out of the prison by an administrative exile who occupied a cell near hers, and who succeeded in opening communication with her at night by means of a cord, with a small weight attached, which he swung within reach of her window. I shall in a subsequent paper give a translation of this narrative, and I need only say here that it is a detailed account of perhaps the most desperate "hunger strike" recorded in the annals of Russian prisons.

Count Tolstoi read three or four pages of the manuscript with a gradually clouding face, and then returned it to me. His manner and his subsequent conversation conveyed to my mind the impression that he was already overburdened with a consciousness of human misery, and that he shrank from the contemplation of more suffering which he was powerless to relieve, and which could not change his views with regard to the principles that should govern human conduct.

"I have no doubt," he said, "that the courage and fortitude of these people are heroic, but their methods are irrational, and I cannot sympathize with them. They resorted to violence, knowing that they rendered themselves liable to violence in return, and they are suffering the natural consequences of their mistaken action. I cannot imagine," he continued, "any darker conception of hell than the state

of some of those unfortunate people in Siberia, whose hearts are full of bitterness and hatred, and who, at the same time, are absolutely powerless even to return evil for evil. If," he added after a moment's pause, "they had only changed their views a little,—if they had adopted the course which seems to me the only right one to pursue in dealing with evil,—what might not such people have done for Russia! Mine is the true revolutionary method. If the people of the empire refuse, as I believe they should refuse, to render military service,—if they decline to pay taxes to support that instrument of violence, an army,—the present system of government cannot stand. The proper way to resist evil is to absolutely refuse to do evil either for one's self or for others."

"But," I said, surprised by this advocacy of a revolutionary method which seemed to me utterly impracticable and visionary, "the Government *forces* its people to render military service and pay taxes—they *must* serve and pay or go to prison."

"Then let them go to prison," he rejoined. "The Government cannot put the whole population in prison; and if it could, it would still be without material for an army and without money for its support."

"But," I objected, "you cannot get the whole people to act simultaneously in this way. If you were let alone, you could perhaps convert a few hundred thousand peasants to your views; but do you think that you would be let alone? As soon as your teaching began to be dangerous to the stability of the state it would be suppressed. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that you succeeded in converting a quarter of the population; the Government would draw soldiers enough from the other three quarters to put that one quarter in prison or in Siberia, and there would be an end of your propaganda and your revolution. It seems to me that the first thing to be done is to obtain freedom of action—peaceably if possible, forcibly if necessary. You cannot persuade, nor teach, nor show people how they ought to live, if some other man holds you by the throat and chokes you every time you open your mouth or raise your hand. How are you ever going to get your propaganda under way?"

"But do you not see," replied the Count, "that if you claim and exercise the right to resist by an act of violence what you regard as evil, every other man will insist upon his right to resist in the same way what he regards as evil, and the world will continue to be filled with violence? It is your duty to show that there is a better way."

"But," I objected, "you cannot show any-

thing if somebody smites you on the mouth every time you open it to speak the truth."

"You can at least refrain from striking back," replied the Count; "you can show by your peaceable behavior that you are not governed by the barbarous law of retaliation, and your adversary will not continue to strike a man who neither resists nor tries to defend himself. It is by those who have suffered, not by those who have inflicted suffering, that the world has been advanced."

I said it seemed to me that the advancement of the world had been promoted not a little by the protests—and often the violent and bloody protests—of its inhabitants against wrong and outrage, and that all history goes to show that a people which tamely submits to oppression never acquires either liberty or happiness.

"The whole history of the world," replied the Count, "is a history of violence, and you can of course cite violence in support of violence; but do you not see that there is in human society an endless variety of opinions as to what constitutes wrong and oppression, and that if you once concede the right of any man to resort to violence to resist what he regards as wrong, he being the judge, you authorize every other man to enforce his opinions in the same way, and you have a universal reign of violence?"

"If, on the other hand," I said, "oppression is advantageous to the oppressor, and if he finds that he can oppress with impunity and that nobody resists, when is he likely to stop oppressing? It seems to me that the peaceable submission to injustice which you advocate would simply divide society into two classes: tyrants, who find tyranny profitable, and who therefore will continue it indefinitely, and slaves, who regard resistance as wrong, and who will therefore submit indefinitely."

Count Tolstoi, however, continued to maintain that the only way to abolish oppression and violence is to refuse absolutely to do violence regardless of provocation. He said that the policy of passive resistance to evil which he advocated as a revolutionary method is in complete harmony with the character of the Russian peasant, and he referred to the wide and rapid spread of religious dissent in the empire as showing the chance of success which such a policy would have in spite of repressive measures.

After some further conversation Count Tolstoi proposed that we should take a walk, and I assented. A short distance from the house we met Miss Tolstoi, the Count's eldest daughter, dressed as a peasant girl, on her way home from the fields where she had been raking hay with the village girls of Yasnaya Polyana.

The peasant dress of bright scarlet, cut low in the neck all around, the braided hair, and the strings of large colored glass beads which hung in festoons over her breast, changed her appearance so completely that I did not recognize her until her father called her by name. It appeared that she shared his views with regard to manual toil, and was accustomed to work in the fields of any poor neighbor who was in need of assistance. Count Tolstoi himself had spent the morning in spreading manure over the land of a poor widow who lived near his estate, and would have devoted the afternoon to the same occupation but for my visit.

"I believe," he said, "that it is every man's duty to labor for others who need assistance, and to work at least a part of every day with his hands. It is better to actually labor for and with the poor in their particular employment, than it is to work in your own higher and possibly more remunerative intellectual field and then give the poor the results of your labor. In the one case you not only help the people who need help, but you set the poor and the idle an example; you show them that you do not regard even their prosaic toil as beneath your dignity, and you thus teach them self-respect, industry, and contentment with their lot. If, on the other hand, you work exclusively in your own higher intellectual field and give the poor the results of your labor, as you would give alms to a beggar, you encourage idleness and dependence; you establish a social class distinction between yourself and the recipient of your alms; you break down his self-respect and self-reliance, and you inspire him with a longing to escape from the hard conditions of his own life of daily physical toil, and to share your life, which he thinks is easier than his; to wear your clothes, which seem to him better than his, and to gain admission to your social class, which he regards as higher than his. That is not the way to help the poor or to promote the brotherhood of man."

"If I admit," I said, "that it is man's highest duty to do good to others, and that he owes only a secondary duty to himself and to his family, I cannot dispute the soundness of your reasoning. If I accept your premises I leave myself no ground to stand on in an argument; but, waiving that point, the characteristic of your scheme that strikes me most forcibly is its utter impracticability. Given the present organization of society and the existing traits of human character, it seems to me that a man who practices non-resistance, and who devotes his life to the good of others, simply sacrifices himself and his family without any commensurate gain to the world, because nobody else acts upon the same principles."

"You say," rejoined Count Tolstoi, "that if you admit my premises you leave yourself no ground to stand on in an argument; but why should you not admit my premises? You *must* admit my premises. If every man should do good to every other man instead of evil, the condition of things would be better than it is now, would it not? The state of society in which every man shall do good instead of evil is a thing to be hoped for and worked for, is it not? Then why do you say that I am impracticable when I hope and work for the realization of a social state which you yourself admit is desirable? If we are ever to reach that desirable social state somebody must make a beginning, must he not? Somebody must take a step in that direction and show that it is possible to live so? What if the present organization of society and the existing traits of human character do make such a step difficult — that has no bearing on my personal duty. The question is not what is easy, but what is right. There is nothing sacred or necessarily immutable about the present organization of society and the existing traits of human character. They are the results of man's activity, and by man's activity they can be changed. I believe that they ought to be changed, and I am doing what I can to change them."

Count Tolstoi then related with great fullness of detail the history of his change of attitude toward the teaching of Christ, and the steps by which he was brought to see that that teaching, rightly understood, furnishes a reasonable solution of some of the darkest problems of human life. He based upon it not only his opposition to resistance as a means of overcoming evil, but his hostility to courts of justice, established churches, class distinctions, private property, and all civil and ecclesiastical organization in existing forms. His frequent references to the New Testament, and his insistence on the precepts of Christ as furnishing the only rule for the right government of human conduct, might lead one to regard Count Tolstoi as a devout and orthodox Christian, but, judged by a doctrinal standard, he is very far from being so. He rejects the whole doctrinal framework of the Christian scheme of redemption, including original sin, atonement, the triune personality of God, and the divinity of Christ, and has very little faith in the immortality of the soul. His religion is a religion of this world, and it is based almost wholly upon terrestrial considerations. If he refers frequently to the teachings of Christ, and accepts Christ's precepts as the rules which should govern human conduct, it is not because he believes that Christ was God, but because he regards those precepts as a formal embodiment of the high-

est and noblest philosophy of life, and as a revelation, in a certain sense, of the Divine will and character. He insists, however, that Christ's precepts shall be understood — and that they were intended to be understood — literally and in their most obvious sense. He will not recognize nor tolerate any softening or modification of a hard commandment by subtle and plausible interpretation. If Christ said, "Resist not evil," he meant resist not evil. He did not mean resist not evil if you can help it, nor resist not evil unless it is unbearable; he meant resist not at all. How unflinchingly Count Tolstoi faces the logical results of his system of belief I have tried to show.

We wandered aimlessly about his estate, talking and arguing, nearly the whole afternoon; I do not remember where we went; I cannot remember anything that I saw; I was conscious only of the stream of ideas, arguments, and illustrations which flowed unceasingly from his mind into mine, and the emotions which were roused by it, and by the strong, earnest, lovable personality of the man himself.

Late in the afternoon we were compelled by a summer shower to take refuge in the house, and Count Tolstoi invited me into his work-room. It was very small, not much larger than an ordinary bedroom, and the cell of a hermit could hardly have been less luxurious. It contained no furniture except a narrow iron bedstead, a single plain wooden chair, and a small table of stained pine covered with worn green morocco. There was a portrait over the table of a well-known Russian dissenter named Siutaief, and around the walls were book-shelves filled with books, mostly in paper covers, but I could see nothing else to distinguish Count Tolstoi's library from a room in the house of any well-to-do peasant.

"I receive many letters," said the Count, opening a drawer in the table, "from people in America who have read my 'Confession' and 'Religion' — here is one"; and he put into my hands a letter from some man living in a village in the backwoods of Pennsylvania, informing the Count that he — the writer — and many of his fellow-villagers had long practiced the principles advocated in "My Religion"; that they "confessed the truth as it is in Jesus," and that they had recently organized a church.

"Now," said the Count, "what do you think of that letter? You see he doesn't understand; he thinks that he cannot have religion without a church. I wrote him that he didn't need a church in order to live rightly."

At this moment there entered the room a young man shabbily dressed in the garb of a common peasant, who brought to Count Tolstoi the day's mail from the neighboring village.

I took the man to be a servant employed about the stables, and did not rise from my seat. I was greatly surprised therefore when Count Tolstoi introduced him to me as Mr. F., one of his friends and co-workers. He proved to be an educated gentleman, a graduate of one of the Russian universities, and the most consistent and thorough-going of Count Tolstoi's disciples. He carried the latter's principles in fact to the utmost limit of logical application. He had no property, no home, not even a settled place of abode. He worked constantly for others, and refused absolutely to receive any compensation except food, clothing, and shelter. Even these necessities of life he accepted not as payment for his labor, but merely as things which every man is bound to give every other man if they are needed. He toiled wherever he thought his work would be most useful; when he needed clothes, he asked some peasant woman to make them for him; when he was hungry, he went to the nearest house for food; and when night came, he slept under any roof where he happened to be. In short, he devoted his life to society at large, and society at large supported him. He paid no taxes, refused to take out a passport, ignored the Government in every way, and was liable to arrest at any moment as a vagrant. If he had been arrested, he would have persisted in his refusal to pay taxes which might be used to support an army, and would have gone quietly, if not contentedly, to prison. Could there be a more perfect illustration of altruistic principles carried unflinchingly to their logical conclusion?

Among the letters and packages brought from the post-office by this young man was a copy of the English translation, published in New York, of Count Tolstoi's book entitled "My Religion." It was the first time he had seen it in its English dress, and he expressed a curiosity to know whether or not the translation, which had been made through the French, was a good one. He brought out the original manuscript, which bore evident traces of much handling and copying, and we compared three or four pages of it with the translation. The author seemed to be satisfied, and said, "The ideas are apparently all there."

The conversation then turned upon foreign editions of his books, and he said that he had recently received from the American publishers of one of his novels an offer of a royalty, upon condition that he should allow that firm to call theirs the authorized edition of his works. He had written them, he said, that he did not recognize nor believe in contracts or agreements, and that he did not desire to have anything to do with the foreign sale of his novels. He spoke slightly, almost contemptuously, of his works of fiction, and seemed

to regard them for the most part as monuments of misdirected energy. He had great difficulty, he said, in getting his religious ideas before the Russian people on account of the attitude of hostility taking toward them by Pobedonostsef, the Procureur of the Holy Synod, and by the ecclesiastical censor. I told him that I had seen many lithographed and hektographed copies of his later writings in circulation in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

"Yes," he replied; "the Government will not allow me to print them, but it cannot suppress them altogether. Sometimes it proscribes my ideas in one form and allows them to be printed in another. It refused me permission to publish in the form of an argument the ideas contained in 'Ivan Durak' ('Ivan the Fool'). I recast them in the form of a short story for the common people, and the censor passed them without objection. I was forbidden to print my 'Isповед' ('Confession'), but the ecclesiastical authorities finally printed it themselves in their own 'Orthodox Review,' with an elaborate refutation of my heresies by a prelate of the church. I am told," he added with a smile, "that in the public libraries the only leaves of the 'Orthodox Review' that are cut are those on which my 'Confession' is found."

Our conversation was interrupted at this point by the announcement of dinner. Count Tolstoi of course made no change in his dress; I was unable to make any change in mine even had I felt disposed to do so, and the ladies alone showed a disposition to respect the established conventionalities of life in the matter of apparel. The dinner was simple, informal, and in every way enjoyable. The conversation, as at lunch, was bright and unconstrained, and Count Tolstoi himself in particular seemed to participate with keen zest in the laughter, raillery, and badinage of the younger people. His relations with his children, whenever I saw them together, were everything that such relations should be — cordial, sympathetic, and affectionate.

After dinner the family again separated. The young man who had brought the mail from the post-office, and one of the two ladies whom I supposed to be visiting disciples of

the Count, had a philosophic symposium in his work-room, where I found them later in the evening, reading and discussing one of his unpublished manuscripts. The Countess Tolstoi invited me to drink tea in her sitting-room, and there we were soon afterward joined by the Count, who brought in with him a large lap-board, an open box, or tray, containing shoemaker's instruments and appliances, and an unfinished pair of shoes. Seating himself quietly in a good light, he laid the board across his knees, took up one of the shoes, and began to put on a heel, as if it were the most natural thing in the world for the author of "Anna Karenina," and the owner of an estate worth six hundred thousand roubles, to spend his evenings in cobbling. I had already been surprised so many times that day that my nervous organization had nearly ceased to respond to that sort of emotional stimulation; but the discovery that Count Tolstoi was a shoemaker had still enough piquancy and grotesqueness about it to excite a faint thrill of wonderment. I seated myself directly opposite him, where I could occasionally facilitate his labor by handing him the necessary implements, and he discoursed learnedly upon shoemaking as an art, and explained to me the fine points of workmanship involved in putting on a heel and the extreme difficulty of trimming a sole neatly without cutting the "upper." He seemed to feel more honest pride in his ability to make a shoe than in his ability to write "War and Peace" or "The Cossacks"; but after watching the progress of his labor for half an hour with an unprejudiced, if an uncritical, eye, I decided, with all respect for the versatility of his talent, that I would rather read one of his novels than wear a pair of his shoes.

After some further talk upon the art of shoemaking, accompanied by practical illustrations, Count Tolstoi turned the conversation to America, and began to ask me questions about people and things there that interested him. He said that he regarded William Lloyd Garrison as one of the most remarkable men that America had produced,* and he called my attention to an engraved portrait of the great

* Through the courtesy of Mr. W. P. Garrison of the New York "Nation," I have been permitted to make the following extracts from a letter written to him in English by Count Tolstoi under date of Moscow, March 25th, 1886:

"I have received your letter and the books you sent me. I thank you very much for both. To be informed of the existence of such a pure Christian personality as was your father has been a great joy to me. I have not yet had the time to read the whole book, but the Declaration of Non-Resistance, that I had looked over, is, in my opinion, an era in the history of humanity. This Declaration, as it has been composed nearly half a century ago, fully expresses the sentiments we pro-

less now and which will be professed by the whole mankind, because they express God's eternal law unto men, revealed by Christ, and which is to be fulfilled. (Chap. V. 18 Matt.). . . . Does the Society of Non-Resistance exist yet? And where is its organ and who are its members? It is strange of me to make this last question; the Society of Non-Resistance is not an exceptional society, but is, in fact, the only church which was founded by Christ, and which never can end. My question properly means: Are there people who profess the true faith, and who boldly accuse the errors of false Christians who acknowledge Government, and violence which is inseparable with it?"

antislavery agitator which hung near the window in the room where we were sitting. He said he had sent to the United States for the biography of Garrison by Oliver Johnson, and had read it with great interest; but he thought the author had not given prominence enough to Garrison's views with regard to non-resistance, and had shown a disposition to treat them in a deprecatory way, as if they were something to be apologized for. In his (Count Tolstoi's) opinion, the fact that Garrison was, at one time at least, a non-resistant, did him more honor perhaps than any other fact in his history. The Count also spoke with warm respect and admiration of Theodore Parker, whose "Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion" he regarded as the most remarkable effort of the American mind in that field. In the course of further conversation he said he thought it deeply to be regretted that America had in two particulars proved false to her traditions.

"In what particulars?" I inquired.

"In the persecution of the Chinese and the Mormons," he replied. "You are crushing the Mormons by oppressive legislation, and you have forbidden Chinese immigration."

"But," I said, "have you ever heard what we have to say for ourselves upon these questions?"

"Perhaps not," he answered; "tell me."

I then proceeded to give him the most extreme anti-Chinese views that have ever prevailed upon the Pacific coast, and to draw as dark a picture as I could of the economic condition of a once prosperous and happy State "ruined by Chinese cheap labor."

"Well," he said when I had finished, "is that all?"

"All!" I exclaimed. "Isn't that enough? Suppose the Chinese should come to California at the rate of a hundred thousand a year; they would simply crush our civilization on the Pacific coast."

"Well," rejoined the Count coolly, "what of it? The Chinese have as much right there as you have."

"But would you not allow a people to protect itself against that sort of alien invasion?" I asked.

"Why alien?" said the Count. "Why do you make a distinction between foreigners and countrymen? To me all men are brothers, no matter whether they are Russians or Mexicans, Americans or Chinese."

"But suppose," I said, "that your Chinese brethren come across the sea in sufficient numbers to reduce you to slavery; you would probably object to that."

"Why should I?" rejoined the Count with quiet imperturbability. "Slavery is working for others — all I want is to work for others."

I abandoned the discussion. To argue with

a man who would not resist enslavement by a Chinese was as unprofitable as to discuss surgery with a man who would not admit the desirability of relieving suffering and saving life. I allowed the Mormon question to go by default. In fact, I did not see upon what ground I could defend anything against an antagonist who would neither give me standing room nor allow me to use any of the weapons in my armory.

Later in the evening something was said which brought up the subject of civil government, and that in turn led to a discussion of punishment in general and capital punishment in particular. Count Tolstoi, as might have been expected, was opposed to both, and in the course of the conversation he said that shortly after the assassination of Alexander II. and the trial and sentence of the assassins, he wrote a letter to the present Tsar, making an appeal in behalf of the condemned regicides, setting forth the wrongfulness of taking human life, even by due judicial process, and imploring the Tsar not to begin his reign with murder. He sent this letter by a friend to Pobedenostsef, the Procureur of the Holy Synod, who had been the tutor of Alexander III., and was supposed to have great influence over him, and besought Pobedenostsef to lay the letter before the Tsar with a favorable recommendation. He received from Pobedenostsef in reply what he described to me as "a terrible letter" [*uzhasnoe pismoe*], in which the writer said that he approved of the death sentence pronounced upon the murderers of Alexander II., that he did not sympathize with appeals for mercy based upon such considerations as those which Count Tolstoi urged, and that he must therefore decline to bring the letter to the Tsar's attention. He closed by saying, "Your religion is a religion of weakness and sentimentality, but there is a religion of authority and power" [*sil i vlast*].

I could see by Count Tolstoi's manner while relating this incident that he had been deeply disappointed by the result of his intercession, though why he should have expected any other result it is hard to understand. The circumstance furnishes an illustration of what seems to me a weakness — or, if that word be too harsh, a peculiarity — which distinguishes Russian character as a whole, and which is to me one of the most noticeable features of the character and the philosophy of Count Tolstoi. I cannot think of any better word to describe that peculiarity than "childishness," although that word has also a deprecatory significance which renders it objectionable, and which I should like in this case to reject. I mean that the Russian, as a rule, has a childish faith in the practicability and the speedy

realization of plans, hopes, and schemes which an American, under precisely similar circumstances, would regard as visionary and quixotic, and would therefore throw aside as having no bearing on his present conduct. When this national trait is united, as it is in the Russian character, with a boundless capacity for self-sacrifice, it brings about results which, to the American mind, are simply bewildering and astonishing. This characteristic which I have called "childishness" is no less apparent in the reasoning and the activity of the Nihilists than in the doctrines and the eccentric practices of Count Tolstoi. It was as childish for the Nihilists to suppose that they could attain their objects by assassinating the Tsar as it was for Count Tolstoi to suppose that he could save them from punishment for that act by urging such considerations as the barbarity and sinfulness of the death penalty upon a government which had already shot or hanged fifteen or twenty men for political offenses of far less gravity. Both the Nihilists and Count Tolstoi answered affirmatively the question, "Is the object to be attained desirable?" and then both proceeded at once to act, regardless of the equally important question, "Is the proposed method practicable?" The Russian seems to throw himself with a sort of noble, generous, but childish enthusiasm into the most thorny path of self-denial and self-sacrifice, if he can only see, or think that he sees, the shining walls of his ideal golden city at the end of it. He takes no account of difficulties, heeds not the suggestions of prudence, cares not for the natural laws which limit his powers, but presses on, with a sublime confidence that he can reach the ideal city because he can see it so plainly, and because it is such a desirable city to reach. From Count Tolstoi, striving to bring about the millennium by working for others and sacrificing himself, down to the poor pilgrims by the roadside, striving to better their characters and atone for their sins by laborious pilgrimages to holy shrines, there is manifested this same national characteristic — the disposition to seek desirable ends by inadequate and impracticable methods.

I had had no favorable opportunity during the day to ascertain Count Tolstoi's views with regard to modern science, but late in the afternoon such an opportunity presented itself in the course of a discussion of heredity as a factor in social problems. I said it seemed to me that in considering the possibility of eradicating evil by altruistic conduct and non-resistance he did not give the facts of heredity enough weight. He replied that he did not believe in inherited total depravity, and that as for Darwinism he regarded it as a "great deception" [*bolshoi obman*].

"I do not pretend," he said, "to be well informed upon the subject of development; but I am told that a Russian scientist, named Danilefski, has written a book which will completely demolish the Darwinian theory." It was evident from this remark that Count Tolstoi had no adequate conception of the cumulative strength of the mass of evidence which now supports the theory of development, and I did not therefore pursue the subject. Callers soon afterward came in, and, although Count Tolstoi did not discontinue his shoemaking, the conversation soon became general, and was directed to subjects of local interest.

At 11 o'clock it became necessary for me to return to the railway station, and I bade good-bye, with sincere regret, to a man whom I had known only one day, but for whom I had already come to feel an almost affectionate respect. His theories of life and conduct seemed to me nobly, generously, and heroically wrong, but for the man himself I had, and could have, only the warmest respect and esteem.

It has of course been impossible, within the limits of such a paper as this, to give even the substance of a conversation which lasted many hours, and which ranged over the whole field of human conduct. I am conscious that in what I have written, from memory and from fragmentary notes, I have failed to do even partial justice to Count Tolstoi's arguments, to his eloquence, and to the deep, earnest sincerity which pervaded them, and which impressed me more than all else. I hope, however, that I have at least reported him fairly and understandingly.

Count Tolstoi is perhaps at the present time the most generally talked of and widely read author in Russia. His books and pamphlets circulate by tens of thousands among the educated classes, and by millions among the peasants; his theories of life are bitterly attacked and sometimes warmly defended in the Russian periodical press, and his religious ideas are discussed in the luxurious homes of the wealthy nobles and in the cottages of the peasants, and from the capital of the empire to the mines of Kara. The fifth collection of his works, in twelve volumes, has just been published in St. Petersburg, and up to July last there had been sold nearly three million copies of his tracts for the common people. What permanent effect, if any, his teaching and his example will have upon the course of events in Russia it is impossible as yet to predict. Thus far the results are unimportant, and the verdict of educated society is adverse to the philosopher and to his philosophy. I am not at all sure, however, that the results would long continue to be unimportant if the Government should allow Count Tolstoi's propagan-

da to get fairly under way. There is no doubt that his teachings are, to a certain extent, in harmony with the character of the Russian peasant; and that he spoke the simple truth when he said to me, "The muzhik is not naturally aggressive nor combative, but he is capable of passive resistance to an almost unlimited extent." Both of these facts are illustrated by the history of Russian dissent, and particularly by the springing up in various parts of the empire of such sects as the "Non-Tax-payers," the "Hiders," and the "Followers of Siutaief." All of these sects hold views closely analogous to those of Count Tolstoi, and they hold them with a tenacity which neither prison nor exile can conquer. Siberia is full of people who have been banished for religious heresies which they could not be persuaded nor forced to relinquish, and the number of dissenters in the empire is now about fourteen millions. If Count Tolstoi were allowed to sow the seeds of his doctrines broadcast in this fertile soil, it might possibly change to a very considerable extent the course of Russian history; but, as I have before said, he will not be permitted to do so. Nearly all of his later writings have been prohibited by the censor, in whole or in part, and if, notwithstanding these repressive measures, his religious heresy should gain adherents enough to make it dangerous, or even troublesome, to the state, it would be stamped out with imprisonment and exile, as scores of such dangerous heresies have been stamped out before.

The question most frequently put to me in St. Petersburg and Moscow after my return from Yasnaya Polyana was, "Did Count Tolstoi impress you as sincere and in earnest?" There seemed to be a prevalent belief that he was merely amusing himself with shoemaking, field-labor, and tract-writing, and that there was behind it all no real sincerity of conviction. In support of this belief it was urged that Count Tolstoi's practice did not in all respects accord with his preaching; that he pretended to regard his works of fiction as useless, if not pernicious, and yet superintended the publication of a fifth edition of them; and that he opposed private property and preached against money-getting, and yet continued to hold his estate and to take the proceeds from the sales of his books.

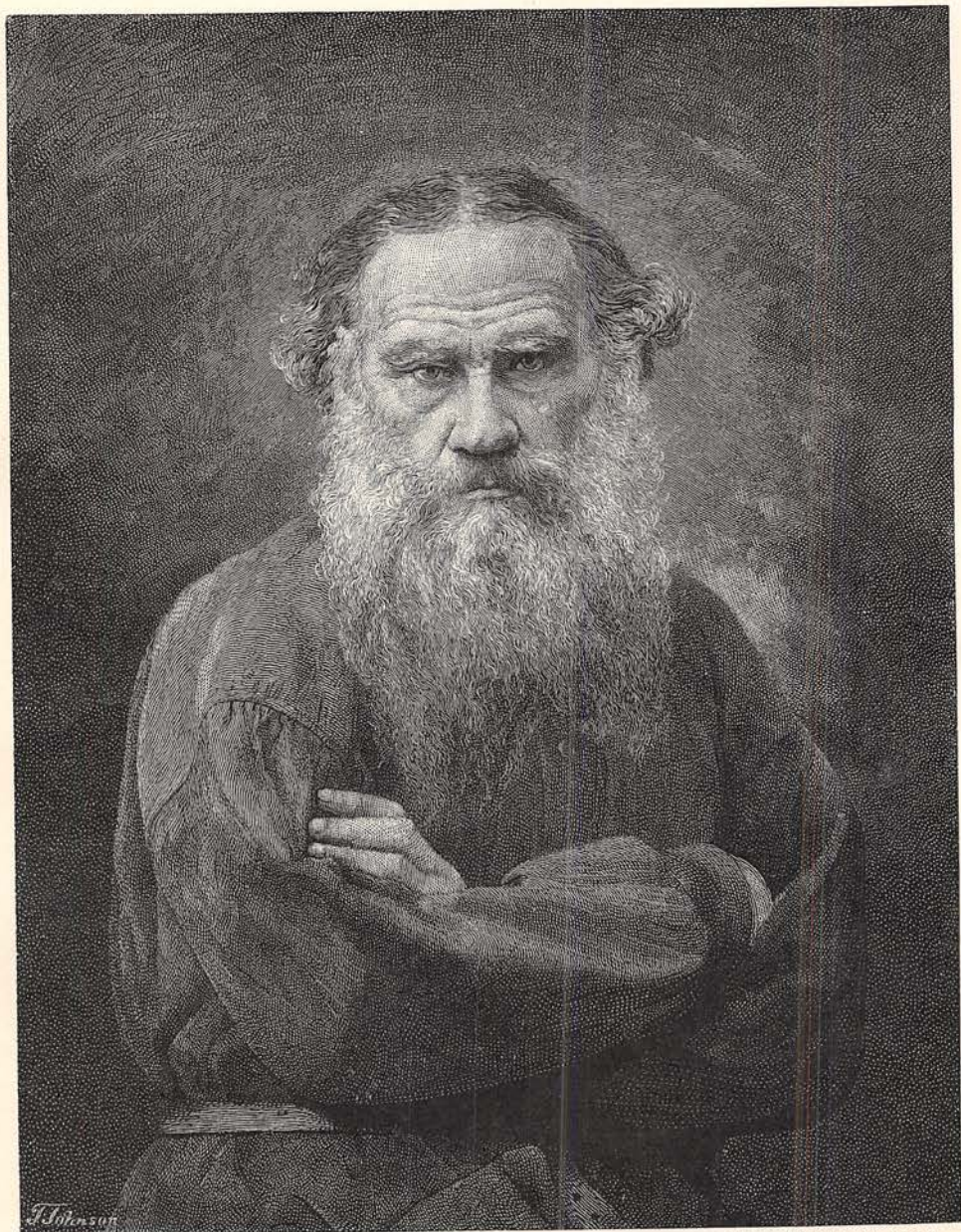
In reply to these attacks upon Count Tolstoi's sincerity it may be said that if there is any discrepancy between his preaching and his practice it arises from the fact that he is acting under restraint. It is an open secret in Russia that all of Count Tolstoi's family do not share his religious belief, and that in the attempt to put his ideas into practice he is

obliged to choose between two lines of conduct, each of which involves evil and suffering, not only to himself but to others. Under such circumstances he has chosen what seems to him the least wrong alternative, and has made his practice conform to his preaching just so far as he can without bringing upon himself and upon others a greater evil than that growing out of his admitted inconsistency. It is therefore ungenerous, if not unjust, to attack him upon this ground, since he is precluded by the very nature of the case from making any defense.

In an authorized interview recently published in a Russian journal, Count Tolstoi refers to this subject as follows, in language whose graphic idiomatic simplicity and vigor can only be suggested in a translation:

"People say to me, 'Well, Lef Nikolaivitch, as far as preaching goes, you preach; but how about your practice?' The question is a perfectly natural one; it is always put to me, and it always shuts my mouth. 'You preach,' it is said, 'but how do you live?' I can only reply that I do not preach — passionately as I desire to do so. I might preach through my actions, but my actions are bad. That which I say is not preaching; it is only my attempt to find out the meaning and the significance of life. People often say to me, 'If you think that there is no reasonable life outside the teachings of Christ, and if you love a reasonable life, why do you not fulfill the Christian precepts?' I am guilty and blameworthy and contemptible because I do not fulfill them; but at the same time I say, — not in justification, but in explanation, of my inconsistency, — Compare my previous life with the life I am now living, and you will see that I am trying to fulfill. I have not, it is true, fulfilled one eighty-thousandth part, and I am to blame for it; but it is not because I do not wish to fulfill all, but because I am unable. Teach me how to extricate myself from the meshes of temptation in which I am entangled, — help me, — and I will fulfill all. I wish and hope to do it even without help. Condemn me if you choose, — I do that myself, — but condemn *me*, and not the path which I am following, and which I point out to those who ask me where, in my opinion, the path is. If I know the road home, and if I go along it drunk, and staggering from side to side, does that prove that the road is not the right one? If it is not the right one, show me another. If I stagger and wander, come to my help, and support and guide me in the right path. Do not yourselves confuse and mislead me and then rejoice over it and cry, 'Look at him! He says he is going home, and he is floundering into the swamp!' You are not evil spirits from the swamp; you are also human beings, and you also are going home. You know that I am alone, — you know that I cannot wish or intend to go into the swamp, — then help me! My heart is breaking with despair because we have all lost the road; and while I struggle with all my strength to find it and keep in it, you, instead of pitying me when I go astray, cry triumphantly, 'See! He is in the swamp with us!'"

Never, it seems to me, was there written a simpler, franker, more sincere confession of inconsistency than this, and never was there a more eloquent and touching appeal for sympathy, encouragement, and support.



ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

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Левъ Толстой

LEO TOLSTOI.