

For the War
by Henry



"I am now quite old - eighty-one. I do not ~~expect~~ ^{expect} to stay much longer."

These were among Count Tolstoy's first words to me at my only ~~visit~~ ^{visit} to him at Yasnaya Polyana, in the Government of Tula a few miles south of Moscow. It was on the 18th of June, 1909.

I had written from ~~Paris~~ ^{Paris} on my way from Japan, asking if he would receive me; and the newspapers in the latter country had reported his feeble health. ^{At} ~~Paris~~ ^{Paris}, three days later along the Trans-Siberian Railroad I received an answer: "I shall meet you with joy."

Arriving at the town of Tula, in the Government of Tula, I took a three-wheeled ~~carriage~~ ^{carriage}, and drove eight miles out for the most part over a splashed, wide, macadamized ~~road~~ ^{road}, to the ~~ancestral~~ ^{ancestral} Tolstoy estate, Yasnaya Polyana. ~~What~~ ^{What} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~estate~~ ^{estate} means "Clearing in the ~~Yasnaya~~ ^{Yasnaya} Woods." ~~The~~ ^{The} ~~estate~~ ^{estate} ~~comprises~~ ^{comprises} more than two thousand acres in extent, and comprises agricultural lands, woods, and a small part set off for the household. ~~The~~ ^{The} Tolstoy residence is ~~an~~ ^{an} ~~excellent~~ ^{excellent} ~~white~~ ^{white} building in the north end of this park. Part of it is ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~second~~ ^{second} ~~story~~ ^{story}, and in the lower story, or ground floor, Tolstoy in his younger years wrote "War & Peace," "Anna Karenina," and his other earlier and ~~more~~ ^{more} ordinary works. To this building at least one important extension has been made. His later work room, ~~and~~ ^{and} the one in which I met him, is in this extension, in the second story, with ~~several~~ ^{several} windows looking down over the

woods, or what the second son, Count Leo, Jr., called the "south garden." The influence of which in lending the beauties of nature to the imagination of the poet-philosopher's mind, this son believed to have been very great.

~~XX~~

For all his four-score and more of years, Tolstoy did not appear to be ~~xxxxxx~~ so much feeble with age as delicate, and his words indicated his purpose of spirit to die with his armor on- if it be only spiritual armor. He said "one of my feet has to be nursed." "But I am keeping at work." ~~xxxxxx~~

The work was one on morals, which I do not believe has yet appeared, but some idea of his range of thoughts and mental activity may be gathered from an article which he dictated and gave out to the Russian newspapers in expectation of my visit. I will quote briefly from the translation which I subsequently had made for me in London in proof of this mental vigor. ^I"The land question is, indeed, the question of the deliverance of mankind from slavery produced by the private ownership of land, which, to my mind, is now in the same situation in which the questions of ~~xxf~~ serfdom in Russia and slavery in America were in the days of my youth."

"The difference is only that, while the injustice of the private ~~xxxxxx~~ ownership of land is quite as crying as that of slave ownership, it is much more widely and deeply connected with all human relations; it extends to all parts of the world (slavery existed only in America and Russia) and is much more tormenting to the land slave than personal slavery."

"It will and must be solved in one way alone: by the recognition of the equal right of every man to live upon and to be nourished by the land on which he was born- that same principle which is so invincibly proved by the teachings of Henry George."

I must confess to ~~some secret misgivings~~ having had some secret misgivings as to the justification of Tolstoy's manner of living - his putting on the poor man's garb, doing manual labor and affecting a simplicity which the scoffers called theatrical and which in my own heart I had at times thought at least eccentric, but all this cleared away in an instant on standing before the master of Yasnaya Polyana. I saw in him nothing of the eccentric, the show-man, or the poseur. It was the man born to high station, of aristocratic rank by family right and genius who was trying in the midst of a vast despotism not to debase himself, but to be of the plain people, as Lincoln loved to call those from whom he himself had sprung. It was the striving of a great mind to strip off ~~the~~ of the flesh and to be re-born in spirit from the most primary physical conditions .

~~To understand Tolstoy's first step~~ the first
To take the first step toward understanding Tolstoy
one must remember ~~that~~ that the Russian Empire embraces more than a hundred millions of people divided into a hundred ~~many~~ nations and scattered over one great stretch of ~~territory~~ continuing territory that makes one-seventh of the dry land of the earth. It is an agricultural country; a country of farms and little towns; with a people for the most part primitive in their ways

and thoughts and practicing a religion reflecting the ~~xixktx~~ rites and ceremonies of the middle ages - a people supporting ~~szspkandkzz~~ the splendour of the Imperial Court at St. Petersburg and supported by a vast secret and ~~xpnx~~ open police system and the greatest standing army on the globe.

The Russian peasant is ~~xxx~~ accustomed to ^{the} heel of the autocrat and his official and unofficial ~~sux~~ ~~fkiewarsx~~ supporters. Through the ages he has wet his bread with tears and at each new misfortune, instead of rebelling, he reverently crosses himself and bows saying "it is the will of God."

Tolstoy threw in his lot with this peasant, ~~trixkxkx~~ ~~stzzzhts~~ wore his dress, tried to view the world here and to come, from his point of view; and tried to teach by personal example, not physical ~~szskkxkx~~ resistance to the bayonets of the Czar, but spiritual resistance to rule of ignorance and injustice. In effect he taught that involuntary ~~pxx~~ poverty and the physical degradation of the great peasant mass of all the Russias was not due to ~~xxx~~ the will of God, but to the will of the Holy Synod, which in the name of ~~xxixgixx~~ Christ put yokes on the necks of the people.

For this the Synod caused many of Tolstoy's books to be publicly burned and proclaimed them anathema; caused many of his intimate friends to be torn from him, and his secretary recently to be sent to Siberia; to ordain that when he should be dead his body should not have burial with the rites of the church. To all of which Tolstoy, following his ~~pkixkxpx~~ understanding of Christ's teachings, smiled, and turned the other cheek.

And the spectacle of this one man resisting by spiritual power alone the might of the Imperial Court and the great Greek Church has amazed and fascinated all Russia.

His departure from home on the approach of what he may have ~~been~~ believed to be dissolution is easily understandable in a man of these extraordinary powers and living in these extraordinary circumstances. He was proscribed of the church and what more natural for him-~~er~~ serene in his own thoughts and meeting death with ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the candor of a child- to desire to make his ~~own~~ end alone, or at any rate, among the poorest of the poor.

Nor is there in this leave-taking of the world anything incompatible with the fondest of marital ties or with the general current of his domestic life. It may easily ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ be imagined that he wished to die apart in order to save those most dear to him.

His wife, the Countess, is seventeen years younger than he. She was seventeen ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and he thirty-four when they married, and she ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ bore to him thirteen children, of which seven are living; with twenty-nine grandchildren. She has been a devoted and intelligent help-mate- looking after his physical needs when his thoughts were in the heavens.

Madam Tolstoy it was to reveal to me, during one of the intervals of my visit to Yasnaya Polyana, the tragic story of the nun sister, Maria, whom the recent ~~xx~~ accounts tell of Tolstoy's briefly visiting.

It was after we had partaken of the evening meal and the Count had withdrawn to his workroom with Mr. Nikolajev, one of his most intimate friends, to make out a list of books and papers he desired me to send to him from the United States. The other persons who had been sitting at the table withdrew to other apartments and Madam, the Countess, and I, sat seated ourselves under an oil light beside a little table upon which rested books in various languages (all of the members of the Tolstoy family speak five languages, including English). During the conversation lightly touching upon a variety of topics my attention was drawn to a small portrait of a young girl, perhaps twenty, which I found in casually opening a family album which ~~xxx~~ my hostess had handed me. The face in the portrait was so unusual, the eyes so direct and piercing; the hair drawn plain and with a thick braid encircling the back of the head; the mouth large but strong - very strong - yet ready to break into a smile - a face with character ~~mingling~~ so mingling strength and womanly gentleness that I must have forgotten ~~xxx~~ the conversation to look at it. ~~xxxxxxx~~

At any rate, ~~xxxx~~ the Countess bent forward to look at what I gazed and remarked: "Why she is an old woman now. - seventy-eight years old." "Let me show you her picture as she is."

The Countess left the room and in a moment brought back with her another portrait in a frame that could be set up on the table.

This new picture showed the same face - the same strength and sweetness, but with the marks of age upon them; and all but the circle of the face was shrouded in black.

"It is Count Tolstoy's sister ~~Мари~~ Maria, and she is a nun. "

"A nun ? "

~~Казнь~~ surprised

"~~Ах~~ Ah, you are surprised. She has had much sadness in her life, although she is naturally full, of vivacity. She was married to another Count Tolstoy, distantly related. But he was not true to her. It was first a kitchenmaid in his own house; then a nursemaid; then an actress outside, and so one woman after another - but not his ~~wife~~ wife. But he is long since dead, and she is a nun. "Q

It flashed upon me that here, out of the life of his own sister, Tolstoy had found some of those vivid details of the household scandal depicted in the opening of the wonderful story of "Anna Karenina".

I was roused from my reflections by Madam saying: "But it is said that Tourganeff - the great Tourganeff - have you heard his name ? - that he loved her. I do not say that it is so. I only say what is said. "

"And did she love Tourganeff ?" I asked.

"Who can say? But it was a high love, for she was an honest woman. "

" May not a man and woman love in the greater, higher sense ? " I questioned, thinking to correct her view of my conception of the matter.

She at once ~~ответила~~ returned to the indirect manner saying, as with great pride: "She has a beautiful

character, and it is said that Tourganeff loved her."

I felt that here I was on the edge of a great romance, but the Count just then entered to say that there would be some music and so that romance was lost to me for ever.

I left that household a few hours later filled with thoughts of the lights and shades of life. And so possessed by them that ~~xxxxxxx~~ even now I have but faint recollection of the ride through the frosty night behind the three wild Russian horses running abreast; although I do remember as harmonizing with my strange talk the glow of the ~~xxxx~~ long set sun in the western sky as I stepped on the platform at midnight to catch my train for Moscow.