

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

AMONG the late Count Tolstoy's intimate friends it is a matter for regret that, in the English language, there is no reliable biography of the great Russian teacher. In their opinion all existing works are marred by the entirely wrong standpoint from which the authors regard, and try to expound, the important facts of Tolstoy's life and the tenets of his philosophy.

M. Paul Birukoff was one of Tolstoy's closest friends, and Tolstoy himself actually collaborated with him in the present work, and selected personally the letters and other documents from which extracts have been quoted. With remarkable knowledge of his great compatriot's private life, M. Birukoff has also brought to his task an understanding of Tolstoy's ideals and a peculiar gift for sober, unbiased criticism.

For this English edition M. Birukoff, with the approval of the executors, has written a prefatory note and a short account of Tolstoy's latter days.