

month of the labor of the peasant. His mind came to be occupied with the picture of a great lower class working hard and receiving little for their labor and a small leisured class living on the results of the peasants' toil and giving nothing in return. He left the University and returned home to devote himself to the people whom God had placed in his hands. Here he met the labor question in its most elementary form. He began to ask himself questions. Indeed one important function of the man had been to raise uncomfortable questions. Why should he, rather than any of his serfs, have these hundreds and thousands of acres? He tried to be a good landlord, introducing new methods of agriculture, building, &c. The peasants however were suspicious and distrustful. He could not get into human relations with them. He sought relief in writing. His first book was *The Russian Proprietor*, the hero of which, as also of his latest novel, *Nekludoff*, was Tolstoi himself. It expressed his sense of failure at this his first experiment in social equity.

He sought to forget the whole thing in travel, went to the Caucasus, was induced to enter the army as lieutenant of artillery. These experiences were recorded in his next book, *The Cossacks*. The Crimean war broke out. He asked to be transferred to the front, fought in many battles, defended Sebastopol, took part in the hand-to-hand fighting and was decorated for bravery by the Czar. There could not, said the speaker, be a better war in which to learn the folly and horror of war. Five great nations were engaged and not one of them knew what they were fight-

ing for, such was the wisdom with which the world was governed. The effect on Tolstoi could be imagined. In his Sebastopol might be seen in process of formation the embryos of his later ideas about war. Was it not a marvellous thing, said Tolstoi in that book, that the representatives of five great nations who had no quarrel with one another should go out into the fields and begin killing and maiming each other for no ascertainable cause.

Returning to St. Petersburg where the fame of his books had preceded him, decorated for bravery by the Czar, flattered and feted, with every inducement to yield to a life of ease and pleasure, he could not be content. He went abroad, an agnostic seeking some certainty. He was not much concerned about the art or scenery of Western Europe. He sought the philosophers and scientists for the solution of life's riddle, but found no satisfaction. Characteristically, a single dramatic incident taught him more than anything else. In Paris one morning at sunrise he witnessed (one of ten thousand spectators) the guillotining of a criminal. As the head and body fell separately into the basket prepared to receive them, the terrible wrong of it flashed upon him. Though the whole world said it was right he knew it was wrong. Punishment was a mistake. Thus did Tolstoi challenge our most cherished institutions.

The freeing of the serfs brought him hurriedly home to look after his own serfs. He established a school with himself as headmaster and published an educational paper. The collected articles gave an interesting picture of Tolstoi as schoolmaster.