



VOL. XXXIII.

DECEMBER 1st, 1905.

No. 4

MR. CROSBY'S TOLSTOI.

THE University and the city owe a debt of gratitude to those who were instrumental in bringing Mr. Ernest Crosby here. The lectures Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon in Convocation Hall and Sunday evening in Sydenham St. Methodist Church were almost equally good. Delivered with scarcely a scrap of notes, in exquisite English, and faultless accent, deeply felt yet restrained and moderate in tone, idealistic without losing touch with practical interests, eminently serious yet full of fine humor, they were models of popular addresses. Of the speaker himself, it is only necessary to add to what has already appeared in the Journal, that he is a most charming personality—uniting a fine simplicity of taste, genuine feeling, intellectual breadth and much humor. Indeed his wholesome outlook on life, the anomalies of which are so apparent to himself, is perhaps the best thing one gets from him, so different from the morbid dejection or hysterical extravagance of many critics.

From his Tolstoi, reported below, one carries away, I think, the impression that, make a bonfire of what you will of Tolstoi's practical schemes, what resists all your criticism is the imperishable example of his splendid humanity, his opposition to all vio-

lence and injustice and his sympathy with the grievously handicapped players of the game of life.

Mr. Crosby began by characterizing Russia at the present time as the land of violence—the violence of the autocracy, the violence of the revolutionists, and the recent violence of a most unjust foreign war. And yet the most conspicuous man in Russia was one who disapproved of all violence. To understand Tolstoi it was necessary to take account of the dramatic quality of his genius. He saw things dramatically. He had not learned from books but from dramatic incidents and experiences in his own life. In his first year at the University of Kasan, Tolstoi was invited to a ball at a nobleman's country home. He hired a sleigh, drove out some miles across the plains to his host's place, and leaving the coachman outside in the cold entered the spacious ball-room filled with life and light and warmth and perfume. Hours afterward when ready to return to the city he found the coachman almost dead from exposure. The incident took hold of Tolstoi's imagination. He began to ask himself what right had he, a young nobleman, to the things he possessed, to eat and drink in the course of the evening dainty viands and wines that would cost a