

PREFACE

THE newspapers of November 12, 1910, communicated the fact that Leo Tolstoy had definitely left his home at Yasnaya Polyana. From that moment the whole civilised world, with intense interest, began to follow all the movements of the "Grand Old Man." Not only had he left Yasnaya Polyana, but he had decided to isolate himself from the world. This act, unexpected by the public but long anticipated by intimate friends, revealed again the greatness of Tolstoy, and conquered even the hearts of the most indifferent sceptics, till then smiling superciliously at his "eccentricities."

Whatever may have been the determining private factor of his departure, the chief cause was the contradiction between his conception of life, growing more and more definite and distinct, and the mode of life which he was obliged to follow at home. Thus his departure was the act of a man energetically and sincerely true to his words—which many people were doubting him to be. It was owing to this fact that his action produced