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MARCH 1, 1893.

TOLSTOI.

The fourth lecture in the series of Saturday afternoon lectures was given last week when Mr. Milner delivered an address on Tolstoi. Russian literature is exciting great interest just now in the commonwealth of literature, not only from the fact of its realistic tendency, but also for the reason that while to any active European country it would do honor, on an exclusive nation like the Russians it reflects the highest praise. That the school should be realistic must be evident to all, for can anyone read even at this distance of the sufferings of the poor peasants in that oppressed land without the facts stirring in his soul feelings of the deepest pity and regret? Much more then must the intellectual men of the country be aroused when they contrast the gay world of St. Petersburg with the poverty and want of the provinces.

The realistic school in Russia, had its origin in Nokolai V. Gogol whose realism springs from his inner being and who desires above all to be true. "His is the sentiment," as one writer has expressed "of one who has never reached the plane of artificiality rather than of him who, himself an artificial product exclaims 'we will be natural and paint things without fetters.'" Ivan Turgenieff is the representative artist of the school; yet though he has culture and style he has a Russian heart and in the "Annals of a Sportsman" he has given us a picture of a Russian serf in all his hopelessness and misery. The member of the school who presents its intelligence is Tolstoi while Destoieffsky is a writer who allows his pen to be ruled by his heart.

In beginning his lecture, the lecturer showed that there are two Tolstois: the Tolstoi of the past, young, impulsive and skeptical and the Tolstoi of the present who, by his energy in following out his convictions and in his sympathetic self-sacrifice has proved the beauty of the words, "*homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto.*"

He received a very desultory education and really never mastered any one department of study. He began his University course by taking up the study of Orientals, but soon gave them up for law. He read however, nearly everything else but law and when he was in his third year suddenly left the University. He next served some years as a soldier and was present as a division commander at the siege of Sebastopol. His experiences are vividly described in his novel itself, entitled "Sebastopol."

It was not however, until his return to St. Petersburg, that his real literary activity began. It was no wonder that with his high rank, wealth and fame he at first thought literature of small moment; it would seem that one who was already so famous could have no desire to add additional literary lustre to his name, yet strange to say he himself admits that it was out of pure vanity and this very love for fame that he did begin to write. Among his first productions were "The Cossacks" and "Sebastopol." These are simply the story of the author's life enlivened with a list of romance.

Not long after this, while living on his estate he became interested in the relief of the serfs. He established schools and endeavored to raise the peasantry. The rules of the school were somewhat peculiar, since each child studied when he liked and what he liked. He had however, doubts as to the value of culture and progress and held that they were for the benefit of the few, rather than the many.

In "War and Peace" published about this period he gives his judgment on human life. Putting aside the accumulated knowledge of the ages, he seeks to solve the problem *de novo*. He likens mankind to a herd of animals and holds that as they are led by one which happens to stray from this side or the other, so the greatest movements of mankind are simply due to the will of one or other single individual. There must of necessity be an inducement of fatalism running through the book, whose author holds that we have in reality no freedom of action.

In 1875 appeared his great book, "Anna Karénina," in which story he seeks to teach that divorce is never right and that the doer must always suffer. Levin is Tolstoi again, who finds in the words of a simple muzhik the secret of life. Science and all the teaching of the past must fall before simplicity and love.

Shortly after this he became interested in the study of the Bible and found in it his only stay and comfort. Finding discrepancies between the translation and the original text, he began a new translation for the benefit of the peasantry. Since 1884 he has only written short stories. In conclusion the lecturer drew attention to the fact that Tolstoi was the slave of a process of thought, i.e., that of realism. In his gospel of non-resistance he seeks to draw us nearer to God and again in his aim towards simplification of life, he seeks to follow nature, which is a reflection of God.

WHEN IN THY PRESENCE, DEAR.

I, who have lips that can utter,
Words men are pleased to hear,
Speak but to stumble and stutter
When in thy presence, dear.

Thoughts for thee rise in me thronging,
Eager with them I come,
Half but to tell to thee, longing,
Yet I am once more dumb.

When before God I am kneeling,
Need there is not of speech,
Silence then nothing concealing;
He cannot know and reach.

So with thy heart would I, dearest,
Sweeter communion seek,
Not by the words that are clearest,
But those I cannot speak.

EVELYN DURAND.