

**COUNT ILYA TOLSTOY, son of the great Russian teacher, writer and philosopher—Count Leo Tolstoy—is now a resident of the United States, and is planning to carry on the gospels of world-wide peace, friendship and love to which his illustrious father devoted his life. The present Tolstoy is a deep thinker, a serious philosopher and a lover of all mankind. His constructive and reconstructive thoughts on present-day mental and physical miseries will go far toward bringing humanity out of the slough of despond and chaos to the realms of sensible optimism and tolerance.**

**Many thousands of Americans have a deep interest in the elder Tolstoy's writings and teachings and will welcome the writing of his son, especially as they relate to the father.**

NEVER shall I forget an evening that I once passed with my father. It was winter. A deep quilting of snow covered the frozen ground. We were driving in a sledge. The weather was beautiful. The air was clear and transparent, the sky was full of stars and the full moon was shedding its peaceful radiance over the white-mantled earth.

In such moments, especially at night, when all is serene and quiet for miles around you and you are far separated from the rest of mankind, it is natural for your mind to turn toward the infinity and your thoughts seem to wander in the limitless spaces of the sky overhead and pick a careless way through the intervals between the twinkling stars. You feel as if you are not of this earth but a tiny atom traversing the universe above and that you are permanent but unimportant, that your soul is eternal, more eternal than the world in which you live. Has this feeling not come to you sometimes at night in the desert, in the forest or on the deck of a ship in a calm sea?

At such times you do not talk. Ordinary conversation seems insignificant, out of place. But sometimes you think aloud and express your thoughts as if you were holding communion with your own soul.

"Soon I shall die," said my father suddenly, in his low, thoughtful tones, "and what will people remember of me?"

There was a long interval of silence. Presently he continued:

"They will recall that Tolstoy taught himself to make boots, to plow the earth and to live the primitive life of a peasant. This is probably all that people will retain out of my teachings and out of the kind of life I have tried to lead. The thing I want them to understand, the thing for which I am willing to give all my life—the idea of universal kindness and love—the basis of all my creed—this they will forget."

Many years have passed since then. My father is gone. But I have not forgotten the significant words he uttered that cold, clear night as we drove over the still, white plains.

And the longer I live the more I see how true were his apprehensions and how few are those who understand the true meaning of his teachings.

### All Know the Elder Tolstoy

THE name of Tolstoy is well known in this country. I have yet to meet one educated man to whom the name is not familiar. But what do people know about him? When I meet new people the procedure is nearly always something after this fashion: First a few obligatory words of introduction, such as, "Glad to meet you," or, "It is a great pleasure," and so on. The second conversational step is usually, "I have read a great deal of your father's writings."

When I say, "Ah, indeed, and what have you read?" ninety-nine out of every hundred mention the title of the only one of my father's books that they have read or heard of, "Anna Karenina."

In reference to this book I should like to say here that both my father and myself have considered this his weakest work. My father used to say, "I cannot see why people bother with 'Anna Karenina.' It is a kind of story very easy to write, an army officer and a love affair." We both have thought that many of his other books were of vastly greater importance.

After this introduction my new acquaintance invariably asks, "What would your father say if he were living today?"

And by this question I am at once placed in a most difficult position. I feel that I have to answer something, but what must I say? Am I speaking to a man who knows something of the creed of my father or is he the average reader of "Anna Karenina"? Am I to give him an elaborate revelation of the teachings of Jesus Christ as interpreted by my father or is it better to advise him to read "The Kingdom of God" or two volumes of the "Translation of the Gospel" by my father? The latter in most cases would certainly

# What Would Tolstoy Say?

How Russia's Peasant-Nobleman Would Have Regarded the Events of the Past Five Years and the Present World-Wide Unrest

BY HIS SON,

COUNT ILYA TOLSTOY

be the best course. But present-day life in America is fast and leaves little time for the study of books. Therefore, to this almost universal question, "What would Tolstoy say?" I feel myself bound to find a short answer, which I shall try to give here.

The whole creed of my father can be expressed in one single short word—"Love." It is written, "God is Love; he who dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God and God dwelleth in him." All the work that my father did in this world in the latter half of his life after he had written "Anna Karenina" was devoted to the development of this one great idea—this one great word. He believed in the principle of Love not as in an ideal, not as something that people worshipped but cannot reach. His belief was that Love, as typified by universal kindness, not merely the act of kindness but the actual infusion and evidence of benevolent feeling is the only practical means of making people happy. If you will give that idea a little thought you cannot fail to become convinced of its practical, everyday value. In America the question will be asked, "But what of the Germans? Can one love them and can they love anybody in the way you mean?" My answer to that is that the Germans, as well as all the rest of humanity, must be converted to this idea. The canker, which has eaten at their hearts for such a long time, must be rooted out, and in its place must be established a feeling of love and tolerance for all other people. Then only will they see the light and cease to be a menace.

Tolstoy applied his creed to all the departments of his life and the life of the world and he proved to the satisfaction of thousands of people that Love is the only path to the attainment of earthly happiness. Analyzing Love, he came to the natural conclusion that violence is the antithesis of Love and therefore should be condemned. Thus the sentence of Jesus Christ, "Do not resist evil by evil," became one of the cornerstones of my father's whole religion.

The idea of nonresistance, which is so often misunderstood and many times laughed at, must not be taken to mean that evil is not to be resisted. On the contrary, evil has got to be resisted with all the force of the individual and the world by all possible means except by violence and further evil.

"One of the main causes of human misery is the erroneous idea that some men may, by force, alter or improve the life of others," says my father in one of his works. Violence can never lead to any happy result.

Let us see now how this creed would apply to modern problems. Let us begin with the natural question, "What would Tolstoy say about the war?"

What would have happened to the world had Germany attained her evil design I have no means of knowing. But as all war is based exclusively upon violence, I know that my father would certainly have condemned the war which has just ended so incompletely. He was against all war, whether aggressive or in self-defense. Both kinds were the same to him—both evil—and neither could lead to happy results. It seems to me that no matter what means were employed to prevent the great catastrophe which has just fallen upon mankind it could not have accomplished anything more horrible than what has now happened. A passive resistance without any violence to the most arrogant and aggressive invader would never produce so much misery or take so many victims as the war took. On the material side it would be cheaper. Spiritually, in this case I do not know what to say, for I do not know under what conditions the world would live if Germany had had her way. I cannot believe, however, that the results would have been nearly as bad as those produced by the course which was taken. I believe that by the adoption of the creed of my father the world, including the Germans, could have been brought to a basis of understanding and to a higher standard of thought, action and life. The moral depravity that war causes to every country engaged in it cannot be overestimated. Millions of our youth have been wounded mentally and spiritually by the sight of death and the encouragement to kill. The world will pay the price of it and in many countries the result is already evidenced.

In Russia alone more than ten million men were under arms, all of them trained expertly in the art of killing. One of my intimate friends said to me during the war, "I felt it impossible for me to kill a man. Now I can do it as easily as if I were killing a fly."

What would Tolstoy say about the Russian Revolution?

As far as it is founded on violence he would never approve of it. Then would he wish to see the people

stified under the rule of autocracy? No. But there is another remedy. If all of the teeming millions of Russia would refuse to obey the autocratic government when it tried to compel them to act against their individual consciences, the government would be powerless. It could not, no matter how many soldiers it had to do its bidding, impose its will on the masses, especially if the masses were composed of all branches of society. The government would either have to give up its power or to limit it in its application so as to render it harmless.

The world is good at heart. The right is bound to triumph eventually. If a sufficient number of the inhabitants of any country are of one mind in the direction of right they can, by passive means, disarm any power that may arise in that country. The evil may endure for awhile, but eventually it will give way and cease to exist, thereby raising the moral standard of the country and reducing the sacrifice which would be caused by opposing violence with violence.

What would Tolstoy say of modern Bolshevism? Are not these people fighting for the welfare of the working classes? Are they not aiming at the abolishment of vested property rights and the accumulation of capital, these modern substitutes of old-time slavery?

"What are the methods by which these people are attempting to attain their aim?" would be my father's first question. And the answer would be, by violence, by class struggle and by civil war.

Then he would most certainly condemn it and they most certainly are wrong. Violence can lead only to hatred and no good can be based upon discord. Only free co-operation of individuals can overcome the evils which have grown up in our modern economic system and lead people to brotherhood and equality. The Bolsheviks are misguided, ignorant people, under the management of leaders who do not believe their own teachings but are seeking only material advantages and selfish ends by the basest and most violent means. They are causing great trouble now and may cause considerably more before the serpent of discontent is scotched. But their idea cannot endure, cannot triumph above the accumulated wisdom and righteousness of the majority.

"What is the influence of Tolstoy's teachings in Russia at the present time?" That will be the third question my new acquaintance will ask.

### Now Led by Hatred

I AM sorry to say that in the active spheres of Russian life it is almost nil. Nearly all parties are engaged in fighting. They one and all have forsaken the idea of passive resistance. Hatred and violence have blinded them and they are deaf to the teachings and expressions of love.

But in Russia this is only true of the small groups, those who hold the power and those who are struggling to obtain it. With the majority of the population, with the Russian peasant, who alone forms 85 per cent of the whole population, the feeling is distinctly otherwise. He does not know much of the philosophical works of Tolstoy. (The Government of the Czar did all it could to withhold his books from the peasantry.) But he has heard that such a man existed; he has heard that Tolstoy was a good old man who taught the doctrine of life following the will of God. "And the Russian peasant himself knows what the will of God is. He knows that where Love is there God is." And he is the one who suffered most from the evil of violence during the reign of the Czar and during the war and who is suffering from the same evil now during the many struggles of the revolution and the counter-revolutions.

The ideas of Tolstoy were not mentioned and not considered by the rulers of the autocratic régime in Russia. Neither were they considered during the war. They were not thought of by the leaders of the Russian Revolution. I am sure that his name was never mentioned at the Peace Table at Versailles. Neither will it ever be mentioned in the conferences of the League of Nations. But those who have suffered and who are now suffering the results of the evil—they will not forget him.

And I am sure that the Russian peasant, in his continuous agony, has many times remembered some of the words of Tolstoy concerning the "Conscience of the World." And many thousands of these wretched people, living under conditions of unthinkable squalor, poverty and starvation, have undoubtedly said to themselves, "The old man, our teacher Tolstoy, was right. We are tired of violence. The only constructive power of the world is Love."