



Reminiscences of Tolstoy, by His Son, Count Ilya Tolstoy

AT this point I shall turn back and try to trace the influence which my father had on my upbringing, and I shall recall as well as I can the impressions that he left on my mind in my childhood, and later in the melancholy days of my early manhood, which happened to coincide with the radical change in his whole philosophy of life.

In 1852, tired of life in the Caucasus and remembering his old home at Yasnaya Polyana, he wrote to his aunt, Tatyana Alexandrovna: After some years, I shall find myself, neither very young nor very old, back at Yasnaya Polyana again: my affairs will all be in order; I shall have no anxieties for the future and no troubles in the present.

You also will be living at Yasnaya. You will be getting a little old, but you will be healthy and vigorous. We shall lead the life we led in the old days; I shall work in the mornings, but we shall meet and see each other almost all day.

We shall dine together in the evening. I shall read you something that interests you. Then we shall talk: I shall tell you about my life in the Caucasus; you will give me reminiscences of my father and mother; you will tell me some of those "terrible stories" to which we used to listen in the old days with frightened eyes and open mouths.

We shall talk about the people that we loved and who are no more. You will cry, and I, too; but our tears will be refreshing, tranquilizing tears. We shall talk about my brothers, who will visit us from time to time, and about dear Masha, who will also spend several months every year at Yasnaya, which she loves, with all her children.

We shall have no acquaintances; no one will come in to bore us with gossip.

It is a wonderful dream; but that is not all that I let myself dream of.

I shall be married. My wife will be gentle, kind, and affectionate;

The whole house will be run on the same lines as it was in my father's time, and we shall begin the same life over again, but with a change of roles.

You will take my grandmother's place, but you will be better still than she was; I shall take my father's place, though I can never hope to be worthy of the honor.

My wife will take my mother's place, and the children ours.

Masha will fill the part of both my aunts, except for their sorrow; and there will even be Gasha there to take the place of Prashovya Ilyinitchna.

The only thing lacking will be some one to take the part you played in the life of our family. We shall never find such a noble and loving heart as yours. There is no one to succeed you.

There will be three new faces that will appear among us from time to time: my brothers, especially one who will often be with us, Nikolenka, who will be an old bachelor, bald, retired, always the same kindly, noble fellow.

Just ten years after this letter, my father married, and almost all his dreams were realized, just as he had wished. Only the big house, with his grandmother's room, was missing, and his brother Nikolenka, with the dirty hands, for he died two years before, in 1860. In his family life my father witnessed a repetition of the life of his parents, and in us children he sought to find a repetition of himself and his brothers.

We were brought up as regular gentlefolk, proud of our social position and holding aloof from all the outer world. Everything that was not us was below us, and therefore unworthy of imitation. I knew that my father felt very earnestly about the chastity of young people; I knew how much strength he laid on purity. An early marriage seemed to me

the best solution of the difficult question that must harass every thoughtful boy when he attains to man's estate.

Two or three years later, when I was eighteen and we were living in Moscow, I fell in love with a young lady I knew, my present wife, and went

almost every Saturday to her father's house.

My father knew, but said nothing. One day when he was going out for a walk I asked if I might go with him. As I very seldom went for walks with him in Moscow, he guessed that I wanted to have a serious talk with him about something, and after walking some distance in silence, evidently feeling that I was shy about it and did not like to break the ice, he suddenly began:

"You seem to go pretty often to the F—s'."

I said that I was very fond of the eldest daughter.

"Oh, do you want to marry her?"

"Yes."

"Is she a good girl? Well, mind you don't make a mistake, and don't be false to her," he said with a curious gentleness and thoughtfulness.

I left him at once and ran back home, delighted, along the Arbat. I was glad that I had told him the truth, and his affectionate and cautious way of taking it strengthened my affection both for him, to whom I was boundlessly grateful for his cordiality, and for her, whom I loved still more warmly from that moment, and to whom I resolved still more fervently never to be untrue.

My father's tactfulness toward us amounted almost to timidity. There were certain questions which he could never bring himself to touch on for fear of causing us pain. I shall never forget how once in Moscow I found him sitting writing at the table in my room when I dashed in suddenly to change my clothes.

My bed stood behind a screen, which hid him from me.

When he heard my footsteps he said, without looking round:

"Is that you, Ilya?"

"Yes, it's I."

"Are you alone? Shut the door. There's no one to hear us, and we can't see each other, so we shall not feel ashamed. Tell me, did you ever have anything to do with women?"

When I said no, I suddenly heard him break out sobbing, like a little child.

I sobbed and cried, too, and for a long time we stayed weeping tears of joy, with the screen between us, and we were neither of us ashamed, but both so joyful that I look on that moment as one of the happiest in my whole life.

No arguments or homilies could ever have effected what the emotion I experienced at that moment did. Such tears as those shed by a father of sixty can never be forgotten even in moments of the strongest temptation.

My father observed my inward life most attentively between the ages of sixteen and twenty, noted all my doubts and hesitations, encouraged me in my good impulses, and often found fault with me for inconsistency.

I still have some of his letters written at that time. Here are two:

I had just written you, my dear friend Ilya, a letter that was true to my own feelings, but, I am afraid, unjust, and I am not sending it. I said unpleasant things in it, but I have no right to do so. I do not know you as I should like to and as I ought to know you. That is my fault. And I wish to remedy it. I know much in you that I do not like, but I do not know everything.

As for your proposed journey home, I think that in your position of student, not only student of a gymnase, but at the age of study, it is better to gad about as little as possible; moreover, all useless expenditure of money that you can easily refrain from is immoral, in my

opinion, and in yours, too, if you only consider it. If you come, I shall be glad for my own sake, so long as you are not inseparable from G—.

Do as you think best. But you must work, both with your head, thinking and reading, and with your heart; that is, find out for yourself what is really good and what is bad, although it seems to be good. I kiss you.

L. T.

Dear Friend Ilya:

There is always somebody or something that prevents me from answering your two letters, which are important and dear to me, especially the last. First it was Baturlin, then bad health, insomnia, then the arrival of D—, the friend of H— that I wrote you about. He is sitting at tea talking to the ladies, neither understanding the other; so I left them, and want to write what little I can of all that I think about you.

Even supposing that S— A— demands too much of you, 19 there is no harm in waiting; especially from the point of view of fortifying your opinions, your faith. That is the one important thing. If you don't, it is a fearful disaster to put off from one shore and not reach the other.

The one shore is an honest and good life, for your own delight and the profit of others. But there is a bad life, too—a life so sugared, so common to all, that if you follow it, you do not notice that it is a bad life, and suffer only in your conscience, if you have one; but if you leave it, and do not reach the real shore, you will be made miserable by solitude and by the reproach of having deserted your fellows, and you will be ashamed.

In short, I want to say that it is out of the question to want to be rather good; it is out of the question to jump into the water unless you know how to swim. One must be truthful and wish to be good with all one's might, too. Do you feel this in you? The drift of what I say is that we all know what PRINCESS MARYA ALEXEVNA 20 verdict about your

marriage would be: that if young people marry without a sufficient fortune, it means children, poverty, getting tired of each other in a year or two; in ten years,

quarrels, want—hell. And in all this PRINCESS MARYA ALEXEVNA is perfectly right and plays the true prophet, unless these young people who are getting married have another purpose, their one and only one, unknown to PRINCESS MARYA ALEXEVNA, and that not a brainish purpose, not one recognized by the intellect, but one that gives life its color and the attainment of which is more moving than any other.

If you have this, good; marry at once, and give the lie to PRINCESS MARYA ALEXEVNA. If not, it is a hundred to one that your marriage will lead to nothing but misery. I am speaking to you from the bottom of my heart. Receive my words into the bottom of yours, and weigh them well. Besides love for you as a son, I have love for you also as a man standing at the crossways. I kiss you and Lyolya and Noletchka and Seryozha, if he is back. We are all alive and well.

The following letter belongs to the same period:

Your letter to Tanya has arrived, my dear friend Ilya, and I see that you are still advancing toward that purpose which you set up for yourself; and I want to write to you and to her—for no doubt you tell her everything—what I think about it. Well, I think about it a great deal, with joy and with fear mixed.

This is what I think. If one marries in order to enjoy oneself more, no good will ever come of it. To set up as one's main object, ousting everything else, marriage, union with the being you love, is a great mistake. And an obvious one, if you think about it. Object, marriage. Well, you marry; and what then? If you had no other object in life before your marriage, it will be twice as hard to find one.

As a rule, people who are getting married completely forget this.

So many joyful events await them in the future, in wedlock and the arrival of children, that those events seem to constitute life itself. But this is indeed a dangerous illusion.

If parents merely live from day to day, begetting children, and have no purpose in life, they are only putting off the question of the purpose of life and that punishment which is allotted to people who live without knowing why; they are only putting it off and not escaping it, because they will have to bring up their children and guide their steps, but they will have nothing to guide them by. And then the parents lose their human qualities and the happiness which depends on the possession of them, and turn into mere breeding cattle.

That is why I say that people who are proposing to marry because their life SEEMS to them to be full must more than ever set themselves to think and make clear to their own minds for the sake of what each of them lives.

And in order to make this clear, you must consider the circumstances in which you live, your past. Reckon up what you consider important and what unimportant in life. Find out what you believe in; that is, what you look on as

eternal and immutable truth, and what you will take for your guide in life. And not only find out, but make clear to your own mind, and try to practise or to learn to practise in your daily life; because until you practise what you believe you cannot tell whether you believe it or not.

I know your faith, and that faith, or those sides of it which can be expressed in deeds, you must now more than ever make clear to your own mind, by putting them into practice.

Your faith is that your welfare consists in loving people and being loved by them. For the attainment of this end I know of three lines of action in which I perpetually exercise myself, in which one can never exercise oneself enough and which are specially necessary to you now.

First, in order to be able to love people and to be loved by them, one must accustom oneself to expect as little as possible from them, and that is very hard work; for if I expect much, and am often disappointed, I am inclined rather to reproach them than to love them.

Second, in order to love people not in words, but in deed, one must train oneself to do what benefits them. That needs still harder work, especially at your age, when it is one's natural business to be studying.

Third, in order to love people and to b. l. b. t., 21 one must train oneself to gentleness, humility, the art of bearing with disagreeable people and things, the art of behaving to them so as not to offend any one, of being able to choose the least offense.

And this is the hardest work of all—work that never ceases from the time you wake till the time you go to sleep, and the most joyful work of all, because day after day you rejoice in your growing success in it, and receive a further reward, unperceived at first, but very joyful after, in being loved by others.

So I advise you, Friend Ilya, and both of you, to live and to think as sincerely as you can, because it is the only way you can discover if you are really going along the same road, and whether it is wise to join hands or not; and at the same time, if you are sincere, you must be making your future ready.

Your purpose in life must not be the joy of wedlock, but, by your life to bring more love and truth into the world. The object of marriage is to help one another in the attainment of that purpose.

The vilest and most selfish life is the life of the people who have joined together only in order to enjoy life; and the highest vocation in the world is that of those who live in order to serve God by bringing good into the world, and who have joined together for that very purpose. Don't mistake half-measures for the real thing. Why should a man not choose the highest? Only when you have chosen the highest, you must set your whole heart on it, and not just a little. Just a little leads to

nothing. There, I am tired of writing, and still have much left that I wanted to say. I kiss you.

HELP FOR THE FAMINE-STRICKEN

AFTER my father had come to the conclusion that it was not only useless to help people with money, but immoral, the part he took in distributing food among the peasants during the famines of 1890, 1891, and 1898 may seem to have shown inconsistency and contradiction of thought.

"If a horseman sees that his horse is tired out, he must not remain seated on its back and hold up its head, but simply get off," he used to say, condemning all the charities of the well-fed people who sit on the back of the working classes, continue to enjoy all the benefits of their privileged position, and merely give from their superfluity.

He did not believe in the good of such charity and considered it a form of self-hallucination, all the more harmful because people thereby acquire a sort of moral right to continue that idle, aristocratic life and get to go on increasing the poverty of the people.

In the autumn of 1890 my father thought of writing an article on the famine, which had then spread over nearly all Russia.

Although from the newspapers and from the accounts brought by those who came from the famine-stricken parts he already knew about the extent of the peasantry's disaster, nevertheless, when his old friend Ivanovitch Rayovsky called on him at Yasnaya Polyana and proposed that he should drive through to the Dankovski District with him in order to see the state of things in the villages for himself, he readily agreed, and went with him to his property at Begitchovka.

He went there with the intention of staying only for a day or two; but when he saw what a call there was for immediate measures, he at once set to work to help Rayovsky, who had already instituted several kitchens in the villages, in relieving the distress of the peasantry, at first

on a small scale, and then, when big subscriptions began to pour in from every side, on a continually increasing one. The upshot of it was that he devoted two whole years of his life to the work.

It is wrong to think that my father showed any inconsistency in this matter. He did not delude himself for a moment into thinking he was engaged on a virtuous and momentous task, but when he saw the sufferings of the people, he simply could not bear to go on living comfortably at Yasnaya or in Moscow any longer, but had to go out and help in order to relieve his own feelings. Once he wrote:

There is much about it that is not what it ought to be; there is S. A.'s money 22 and the subscriptions; there is the relation of those who feed and those who are fed. THERE IS SIN WITHOUT END, but I cannot stay at home and write. I feel the necessity of taking part in it, of doing something.

Six years later I worked again at the same job with my father in Tchornski and Mtsenski districts.

After the bad crops of the two preceding years it became clear by the beginning of the winter of 1898 that a new famine was approaching in our neighborhood, and that charitable assistance to the peasantry would be needed. I turned to my father for help.

By the spring he had managed to collect some money, and at the beginning of April he came himself to see me.

I must say that my father, who was very economical by nature, was extraordinarily cautious and, I may say, even parsimonious in charitable matters. It is of course easy to understand, if one considers the unlimited confidence which he enjoyed among the subscribers and the great moral responsibility which he could not but feel toward them. So that before undertaking anything he had himself to be fully convinced of the necessity of giving aid.

The day after his arrival, we saddled a couple of horses and rode out. We rode as we had ridden together twenty years before, when we went out coursing with our greyhounds; that is, across country, over the fields.

It was all the same to me which way we rode, as I believed that all the neighboring villages were equally distressed, and my father, for the sake of old memories, wanted to revisit Spasskoye Lyutovinovo, which was only six miles from me, and where he had not been since Turgenieff's death. On the way there I remember he told me all about Turgenieff's mother, who was famous through all the neighborhood for her remarkable intelligence, energy, and craziness. I do not know that he ever saw her himself, or whether he was telling me only the reports that he had heard.

As we rode across the Turgenieff's park, he recalled in passing how of old he and Ivan Sergeyeitch had disputed which park was best, Spasskoye or Yasnaya Polyana. I asked him:
"And now which do you think?"

"Yasnaya Polyana IS the best, though this is very fine, very fine indeed."

In the village we visited the head-man's and two or three other cottages, and came away disappointed. There was no famine.

The peasants, who had been endowed at the emancipation with a full share of good land, and had enriched themselves since by wage-earnings, were hardly in want at all. It is true that some of the yards were badly stocked; but there was none of that acute degree of want which amounts to famine and which strikes the

eye at once.

I even remember my father reproaching me a little for having sounded the alarm when there was no sufficient cause for it, and for a little while I felt rather ashamed and awkward before him.

Of course when he talked to the peasants he asked each of them if he remembered Turgenieff and eagerly picked up anything they had to say about him. Some of the old men remembered him and spoke of him with great affection.

MY FATHER'S ILLNESS IN THE CRIMEA

IN the autumn of 1901 my father was attacked by persistent feverishness, and the doctors advised him to spend the winter in the Crimea. Countess Panina kindly lent him her Villa Gaspra, near Koreiz, and he spent the winter there.

Soon after his arrival, he caught cold and had two illnesses one after the other, enteric fever and inflammation of the lungs. At one time his condition was so bad that the doctors had hardly any hope that he would ever rise from his bed again. Despite the fact that his temperature went up very high, he was conscious all the time; he dictated some reflections every day, and deliberately prepared for death.

The whole family was with him, and we all took turns in helping to nurse him. I look back with pleasure on the nights when it fell to me to be on duty by him, and I sat in the balcony by the open window, listening to his breathing and every sound in his room. My chief duty, as the strongest of the family, was to lift him up while the sheets were being changed. When they were making the bed, I had to hold him in my arms like a child.

I remember how my muscles quivered one day with the exertion. He looked at me with astonishment and said:
"You surely don't find me heavy? What nonsense!"
I thought of the day when he had given me a bad time at riding in the woods as a boy, and kept asking, "You're not tired?"

Another time during the same illness he wanted me to carry him downstairs in my arms by the winding stone staircase.

"Pick me up as they do a baby and carry me."

He had not a grain of fear that I might stumble and kill him. It was all I could do to insist on his being carried down in an armchair by three of us.

Was my father afraid of death?

It is impossible to answer the question in one word. With his tough

constitution and physical strength, he always instinctively fought not only against death, but against old age. Till the last year of his life he never gave in, but always did everything for himself and even rode on horseback.

To suppose, therefore, that he had no instinctive fear of death is out of the

question. He had that fear, and in a very high degree, but he was constantly

fighting to overcome it.

Did he succeed?

I can answer definitely yes. During his illness he talked a great deal of death and prepared himself for it firmly and deliberately. When he felt that he was getting weaker, he wished to say good-bye to everybody, and he called us all separately to his bedside, one after the other, and gave his last words of advice to each. He was so weak that he spoke in a half-whisper, and when he had said good-bye to one, he had to rest for a while and collect his strength for the rest.

When my turn came, he said as nearly as I can remember:

"You are still young and strong and tossed by storms of passion. You have not therefore yet been able to think over the chief questions of life. But this stage will pass. I am sure of it. When the time comes, believe me, you will find the truth in the teachings of the Gospel. I am dying peacefully simply because I have come to know that teaching and believe in it. May God grant you this knowledge soon! Good-bye."

I kissed his hand and left the room quietly. When I got to the front door, I rushed to a lonely stone tower, and there sobbed my heart out in the darkness like a child. Looking round at last, I saw that some one else was sitting on the staircase near me, also crying.

So I said farewell to my father years before his death, and the memory of it is dear to me, for I know that if I had seen him before his death at Astapova he would have said just the same to me.

To return to the question of death, I will say that so far from being afraid of it, in his last days he often desired it; he was more interested in it than afraid of it. This "greatest of mysteries" interested him to such a degree that his interest came near to love. How eagerly he listened to accounts of the death of his friends, Turgenieff, Gay, Leskof, 23 Zhemtchuzhnikof 24; and others! He inquired after the smallest matters; no detail, however trifling in appearance, was without its interest and importance to him.

His "Circle of Reading," November 7, the day he died, is devoted entirely to thoughts on death.

"Life is a dream, death is an awakening," he wrote, while in expectation of that awakening.

Apropos of the "Circle of Reading," I cannot refrain from relating a characteristic incident which I was told by one of my sisters.

When my father had made up his mind to compile that collection of the sayings of the wise, to which he gave the name of "Circle of Reading," he told one of his friends about it.

A few days afterward this friend came to see him again, and at once told him that he and his wife had been thinking over his scheme for the new book and had come to the conclusion that he ought to call it "For Every Day," instead of "Circle of Reading."

To this my father replied that he preferred the title "Circle of Reading" because the word "circle" suggested the idea of continuous reading, which was what he meant to express by the title.

Half an hour later the friend came across the room to him and repeated exactly the same remark again. This time my father made no reply. In the evening, when the friend was preparing to go home, as he was saying good-bye to my father, he held his hand in his and began once more:

"Still, I must tell you, Lyoff Nikolaievich, that I and my wife have been thinking it over, and we have come to the conclusion," and so on, word for word the same.

"No, no, I want to die—to die as soon as possible," groaned my father when he had seen the friend off.

"Isn't it all the same whether it's 'Circle of Reading' or 'For Every Day'? No, it's time for me to die: I cannot live like this any longer."

And, after all, in the end, one of the editions of the sayings of the wise was called "For Every Day" instead of "Circle of Reading."

"Ah, my dear, ever since this Mr. —— turned up, I really don't know which of Lyoff Nikolaievich's writings are by Lyoff Nikolaievich and which are by Mr. ——!" murmured our old friend, the pure-hearted and far from malicious Marya Alexandrovna Schmidt.

This sort of intrusion into my father's work as an author bore, in the "friend's" language, the modest title of "corrections beforehand," and there is no doubt that Marya Alexandrovna was right, for no one will ever know where what my father wrote ends and where his concessions to Mr. ——'s persistent "corrections beforehand" begin, all the more as this careful adviser had the forethought to arrange that when my father answered his letters he was always to return him the letters they were answers to.²⁵

Besides the desire for death that my father displayed, in the last years of his life he cherished another dream, which he made no secret of his hope of realizing, and that was the desire to suffer for his convictions. The first impulse in this direction was given him by the persecution on the part of the authorities

to which, during his lifetime, many of his friends and fellow-thinkers were subjected.

When he heard of any one being put in jail or deported for disseminating his writings, he was so disturbed about it that one was really sorry for him. I remember my arrival at Yasnaya some days after Gusef's arrest.²⁶ I stayed two days with my father, and heard of nothing but Gusef. As if there were nobody in the world but Gusef! I must confess that, sorry as I was for Gusef, who was shut up at the time in the local prison at Krapivna, I harbored a most wicked feeling of resentment at my father's paying so little attention to me and the rest of those about him and being so absorbed in the thought of Gusef.

I willingly acknowledge that I was wrong in entertaining this narrow-minded feeling. If I had entered fully into what my father was feeling, I should have seen this at the time.

As far back as 1896, in consequence of the arrest of a doctor, Miss N—, in Tula, my father wrote a long letter to Muravyof, the Minister of Justice, in which he spoke of the "unreasonableness, uselessness, and cruelty of the measures taken by the Government against those who disseminate these forbidden writings," and begged him to "direct the measures taken to punish or intimidate the perpetrators of the evil, or to put an end to it, against the man whom you regard as the real instigator of it... all the more, as I assure you beforehand, that I shall continue without ceasing till my death to do what the Government considers evil and what I consider my sacred duty before God." As every one knows, neither this challenge nor the others that followed it led to any result, and the arrests and deportations of those associated with him still went on.

My father felt himself morally responsible toward all those who suffered on his account, and every year new burdens were laid on his conscience.

MASHA'S DEATH

As I reach the description of the last days of my father's life, I must once more make it clear that what I write is based only on the personal impressions I received in my periodical visits to Yasnaya Polyana.

Unfortunately, I have no rich shorthand material to rely on, such as Gusef and Bulgakof had for their memoirs, and more especially Dushan Petrovitch Makowicki, who is preparing, I am told, a big and conscientious work, full of truth and interest.

In November, 1906, my sister Masha died of inflammation of the lungs. It is a curious thing that she vanished out of life with just as little commotion as she had passed through it. Evidently this is the lot of all the pure in heart.

No one was particularly astonished by her death. I remember that when I received the telegram, I felt no surprise. It seemed perfectly natural to me. Masha had married a kinsman of ours, Prince Obolenski; she lived on her own estate at Pirogovo, twenty-one miles from us, and spent half the year with her husband at Yasnaya. She was very delicate and had constant illnesses.

When I arrived at Yasnaya the day after her death, I was aware of an atmosphere of exaltation and prayerful emotion about the whole family, and it was then I think for the first time that I realized the full grandeur and beauty of death.

I definitely felt that by her death Masha, so far from having gone away from us, had come nearer to us, and had been, as it were, welded to us forever in a way that she never could have been during her lifetime.

I observed the same frame of mind in my father. He went about silent and woebegone, summoning all his strength to battle with his own

sorrow; but I never heard him utter a murmur of a complaint, only words of tender emotion. When the coffin was carried to the church he changed his clothes and went with the cortege.

When he reached the stone pillars he stopped us, said farewell to the departed, and walked home along the avenue. I looked after him and watched him walk away across the wet, thawing snow with his short, quick old man's steps, turning his toes out at a sharp angle, as he always did, and never once looking round.

My sister Masha had held a position of great importance in my father's life and in the life of the whole family. Many a time in the last few years have we had occasion to think of her and to murmur sadly: "If only Masha had been with us! If only Masha had not died!"

In order to explain the relations between Masha and my father I must turn back a considerable way. There was one distinguishing and, at first sight, peculiar trait in my father's character, due perhaps to the fact that he grew up without a mother, and that was that all exhibitions of tenderness were entirely foreign to him.

I say "tenderness" in contradistinction to heartiness. Heartiness he had and in a very high degree.

His description of the death of my Uncle Nikolai is characteristic in this connection. In a letter to his other brother, Sergei Nikolayevitch, in which he described the last day of his brother's life, my father tells how he helped him to undress.

"He submitted, and became a different man.... He had a word of praise for everybody, and said to me, 'Thanks, my friend.' You understand the significance of the words as between us two."

It is evident that in the language of the Tolstoy brothers the phrase "my friend" was an expression of tenderness beyond which imagination could not go. The words astonished my father even on the lips of his dying brother.

During all his lifetime I never received any mark of tenderness from him whatever.

He was not fond of kissing children, and when he did so in saying good morning or good night, he did it merely as a duty.

It is therefore easy to understand that he did not provoke any display of tenderness toward himself, and that nearness and dearness with him were never accompanied by any outward manifestations.

It would never have come into my head, for instance, to walk up to my father and kiss him or to stroke his hand. I was partly prevented also from that by the fact that I always looked up to him with awe, and his spiritual power, his greatness, prevented me from seeing in him the mere man—the man who was so plaintive and weary at times, the feeble old man who so much needed warmth and rest.

The only person who could give him that warmth was Masha. She would go up to him, stroke his hand, caress him, and say something affectionate, and you could see that he liked it, was happy, and even responded in kind. It was as if he became a different man with her. Why was it that Masha was able to do this, while no one else even dared to try? If any other of us had done it, it would have seemed unnatural, but Masha could do it with perfect simplicity and sincerity.

I do not mean to say that others about my father loved him less than Masha; not at all; but the display of love for him was never so warm and at the same time so natural with any one else as with her.

So that with Masha's death my father was deprived of this natural source of warmth, which, with advancing years, had become more and more of a necessity for him.

Another and still greater power that she possessed was her remarkably delicate and sensitive conscience. This trait in her was still dearer to my father than her caresses.

How good she was at smoothing away all misunderstandings! How she always stood up for those who were found any fault with, justly or unjustly! It was all the same to her. Masha could reconcile everybody and everything.

During the last years of his life my father's health perceptibly grew worse. Several times he had the most sudden and inexplicable sort of fainting fits, from

which he used to recover the next day, but completely lost his memory for a time.

Seeing my brother Andrei's children, who were staying at Yasnaya, in the zala one day, he asked with some surprise, "Whose children are these?" Meeting my wife, he said, "Don't be offended, my dear; I know that I am very fond of you, but I have quite forgotten who you are"; and when he went up to the zala after one of these fainting fits, he looked round with an astonished air and said, "Where's my brother Nitenka." Nitenka had died fifty years before.

The day following all traces of the attack would disappear.

During one of these fainting fits my brother Sergei, in undressing my father, found a little notebook on him. He put it in his own pocket, and next day, when he came to see my father, he handed it back to him, telling him that he had not read it.

"There would have been no harm in YOUR seeing it," said my father, as he took it back.

This little diary in which he wrote down his most secret thoughts and prayers was kept "for himself alone," and he never showed it to any one. I saw it after my father's death. It is impossible to read it without tears.

It is curious that the sudden decay of my father's memory displayed itself only in the matter of real facts and people. He was entirely unaffected in his literary work, and everything that he wrote down to the last days of his life is marked by his characteristic logicalness and

force. It may be that the reason he forgot the details of real life was because he was too deeply absorbed in his abstract work.

My wife was at Yasnaya Polyana in October, and when she came home she told me that there was something wrong there. "Your mother is nervous and hysterical; your father is in a silent and gloomy frame of mind."

I was very busy with my office work, but made up my mind to devote my first free day to going and seeing my father and mother. When I got to Yasnaya, my father had already left it.

I paid Aunt Masha a visit some little time after my father's funeral. We sat together in her comfortable little cell, and she repeated to me once more in detail the oft-repeated story of my father's last visit to her.

"He sat in that very armchair where you are sitting now, and how he cried!" she said.

"When Sasha arrived with her girl friend, they set to work studying this map of Russia and planning out a route to the Caucasus. Lyovotchka sat there thoughtful and melancholy.

"'Never mind, Papa; it'll be all right,' said Sasha, trying to encourage him.

"'Ah, you women, you women!' answered her father, bitterly. 'How can it ever be all right?'

"I so much hoped that he would settle down here; it would just have suited him. And it was his own idea, too; he had even taken a cottage in the village," Aunt Masha sadly recalled.

"When he left me to go back to the hotel where he was staying, it seemed to me that he was rather calmer.

"When he said good-by, he even made some joke about his having come to the wrong door.

"I certainly would never have imagined that he would go away again that same night."

It was a grievous trial for Aunt Masha when the old confessor Iosif, who was her spiritual director, forbade her to pray for her dead brother because he had been excommunicated. She was too broad-minded to be able to reconcile herself to the harsh intolerance of the church, and for a time she was honestly indignant. Another priest to whom she applied also refused her request.

Marya Nikolayevna could not bring herself to disobey her spiritual fathers, but at the same time she felt that she was not really obeying their injunction, for she prayed for him all the same, in thought, if not in words.

There is no knowing how her internal discord would have ended if her father confessor, evidently understanding the moral torment she was suffering, had not given her permission to pray for her brother, but only in her cell and in solitude, so as not to lead others astray.

MY FATHER'S WILL. CONCLUSION

ALTHOUGH my father had long since renounced the copyright in all his works written after 1883, and although, after having made all his real estate over to his children, he had, as a matter of fact, no property left, still he could not but be aware that his life was far from corresponding to his principles, and this consciousness perpetually preyed upon his mind. One has only to read some of his posthumous works attentively to see that the idea of leaving home and radically altering his whole way of life had presented itself to him long since and was a continual temptation to him.

This was the cherished dream that always allured him, but which he did not think himself justified in putting into practice.

The life of the Christian must be a "reasonable and happy life IN ALL POSSIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES," he used to say as he struggled with the temptation to go away, and gave up his own soul for others.

I remember reading in Gusef's memoirs how my father once, in conversation with Gusoryof, the peasant, who had made up his mind to leave his home for religious reasons, said, "My life is a hundred thousand times more loathsome than yours, but yet I cannot leave it."

I shall not enumerate all the letters of abuse and amazement which my father received from all sides, upbraiding him with luxury, with inconsistency, and even with torturing his peasants. It is easy to imagine what an impression they made on him.

He said there was good reason to revile him; he called their abuse "a bath for the soul," but internally he suffered from the "bath," and saw no way out of his difficulties. He bore his cross, and it was in this self-renunciation that his power consisted, though many either could not or would not understand it. He alone, despite all those about him, knew that this cross was laid on him not of man, but of God; and while he was strong, he loved his burden and shared it with none.

Just as thirty years before he had been haunted by the temptation to suicide, so now he struggled with a new and more powerful temptation, that of flight.

A few days before he left Yasnaya he called on Marya Alexandrovna Schmidt at Ovsyanniki and confessed to her that he wanted to go away. The old lady held up her hands in horror and said: "Gracious Heavens, Lyoff Nikolaievich, have you come to such a pitch of weakness?"

When I learned, on October 28, 1910, that my father had left Yasnaya, the same idea occurred to me, and I even put it into words in a letter I sent to him at Shamerdino by my sister Sasha.

I did not know at the time about certain circumstances which have since made a great deal clear to me that was obscure before.

From the moment of my father's death till now I have been racking my brains to discover what could have given him the impulse to take that last step. What power could compel him to yield in the struggle in which he had held firmly and tenaciously for many years? What was the last drop, the last grain of sand that turned the scales, and sent him forth to search for a new life on the very edge of the grave?

Could he really have fled from home because the wife that he had lived with for forty-eight years had developed neurasthenia and at one time showed certain abnormalities characteristic of that malady? Was that like the man who so loved his fellows and so well knew the human heart? Or did he suddenly desire, when he was eighty-three, and weak and helpless, to realize the idea of a pilgrim's life? If so, why did he take my sister Sasha and Dr. Makowicki with him?

He could not but know that in their company he would be just as well provided with all the necessaries of life as he would have been at Yasnaya Polyana. It would have been the most palpable self-deception.

Knowing my father as I did, I felt that the question of his flight was not so simple as it seemed to others, and the problem lay long unsolved before me until it was suddenly made clear by the will that he left behind him.

I remember how, after N. S. Leskof's death, my father read me his posthumous instructions with regard to a pauper funeral, with no speeches at the grave, and so on, and how the idea of writing his own will then came into his head for the first time.

His first will was written in his diary, on March 27, 1895. 27
The fourth paragraph, to which I wish to call particular attention, contains a request to his next of kin to transfer the right of publishing his writings to society at large, or, in other words, to renounce the copyright of them.

"But I only request it, and do not direct it. It is a good thing to do. And it will be good for you to do it; but if you do not do it, that is your affair. It means that you are not yet ready to do it. The fact that my writings have been bought and sold during these last ten years has been the most painful thing in my whole life to me."

Three copies were made of this will, and they were kept by my sister Masha, my brother Sergei, and Tchertkof.

I knew of its existence, but I never saw it till after my father's death, and I never inquired of anybody about the details.

I knew my father's views about copyright, and no will of his could have added anything to what I knew. I knew, moreover, that this will was not properly executed according to the forms of law, and personally I was glad of that, for I saw in it another proof of my father's confidence in his family. I need hardly add that I never doubted that my father's wishes would be carried out.

My sister Masha, with whom I once had a conversation on the subject, was of the same opinion.

In 1909 my father stayed with Mr. Tchertkof at Krekshin, and there for the first time he wrote a formal will, attested by the signature of witnesses. How this will came to be written I do not know, and I do not intend to discuss it. It afterward appeared that it also was imperfect from a legal point of view, and in October, 1909, it had all to be done again.

As to the writing of the third we are fully informed by Mr. F. Strakhof in an article which he published in the St. Petersburg "Gazette" on November 6, 1911.

Mr. Strakhof left Moscow at night. He had calculated on Sofya Andreyevna, 28 whose presence at Yasnaya Polyana was highly inexpedient for the business

on which he was bound, being still in Moscow.

The business in question, as was made clear in the preliminary consultation which V. G. Tchertkof held with N. K. Muravyof, the solicitor, consisted in getting fresh signatures from Lyoff Nikolaievich, whose great age made it desirable to make sure, without delay, of his wishes being carried out by means of a more unassailable legal document. Strakhof brought the draft of the will with him, and laid it before Lyoff Nikolaievich. After reading the paper through, he at once wrote under it that he agreed with its purport, and then added, after a pause:

"All this business is very disagreeable to me, and it is unnecessary. To insure the propagation of my ideas by taking all sorts of measures— why, no word can perish without leaving its trace, if it expresses a truth, and if the man who utters it believes profoundly in its truth. But all these outward means for insuring it only come of our disbelief in what we utter."

And with these words Lyoff Nikolaievich left the study.

Thereupon Mr. Strakhof began to consider what he must do next, whether he should go back with empty hands, or whether he should argue it out.

He decided to argue it out, and endeavored to explain to my father how painful it would be for his friends after his death to hear people blaming him for not having taken any steps, despite his strong opinion on the subject, to see that his wishes were carried out, and for having thereby helped to transfer his copyrights to the members of his family.

Tolstoy promised to think it over, and left the room again.

At dinner Sofya Andreyevna "was evidently far from having any suspicions." When Tolstoy was not by, however, she asked Mr. Strakhof what he had come down about. Inasmuch as Mr. Strakhof had other affairs in hand besides the will, he told her about one thing and another with an easy conscience.

Mr. Strakhof described a second visit to Yasnaya, when he came to attest the same will as a witness.

When he arrived, he said: "The countess had not yet come down. I breathed again."

Of his departure, he said:

As I said good-by to Sofya Andreyevna, I examined her countenance attentively. Such complete tranquillity and cordiality toward her departing guests were written on it that I had not the smallest doubt of her complete ignorance of what was going on.... I left the house with the pleasing consciousness of a work well done—a work that was destined to have a considerable historic consequence. I only felt some little twinge within, certain qualms of conscience about the conspiratorial character of the transaction.

But even this text of the will did not quite satisfy my father's "friends and advisers"; it was redrafted for the fourth and last time in July, 1910.

This last draft was written by my father himself in the Limonovski Forest, two miles from the house, not far from Mr. Tchertkof's estate.

Such is the melancholy history of this document, which was destined to have historic consequences. "All this business is very disagreeable to me, and it is unnecessary," my father said when he signed the paper that was thrust before him. That was his real opinion about his will, and it never altered to the end of his days.

Is there any need of proof for that? I think one need know very little of his convictions to have no doubt about it.

Was Lyoff Nikolaievich Tolstoy likely of his own accord to have recourse to the protection of the law? And, if he did, was he likely to conceal it from his wife and children?

He had been put into a position from which there was absolutely no way out. To tell his wife was out of the question; it would have grievously offended his friends. To have destroyed the will would have

been worse still; for his friends had suffered for his principles morally, and some of them materially, and had been exiled from Russia. He felt himself bound to them.

And on the top of all this were his fainting fits, his increasing loss of memory, the clear consciousness of the approach of death, and the continually growing nervousness of his wife, who felt in her heart of hearts the unnatural estrangement of her husband, and could not understand it. If she asked him what it was that he was concealing from her, he would either have to say nothing or to tell her the truth. But that was impossible.

So it came about that the long-cherished dream of leaving Yasnaya Polyana presented itself as the only means of escape. It was certainly not in order to enjoy the full realization of his dream that he left his home; he went away only as a choice of evils.

"I am too feeble and too old to begin a new life," he had said to my brother Sergei only a few days before his departure.

Harassed, ill in body and in mind, he started forth without any object in view, without any thought-out plan, merely in order to hide himself somewhere, wherever it might be, and get some rest from the moral tortures which had become insupportable to him.

"To fly, to fly!" he said in his deathbed delirium as he lay at Astapova. "Has papa considered that mama may not survive the separation from him?" I asked my sister Sasha on October 29, when she was on the point of going to join him at Shamerdino.

"Yes, he has considered all that, and still made up his mind to go, because he thinks that nothing could be worse than the state that things have come to here," she answered.

I confess that my explanation of my father's flight by no means exhausts the question. Life is complex and every explanation of a man's conduct is bound to suffer from one-sidedness.

Besides, there are circumstances of which I do not care to speak at the present moment, in order not to cause unnecessary pain to people still living. It may be that if those who were about my father during the last years of his life had known what they were doing, things would have turned out differently.

The years will pass. The accumulated incrustations which hide the truth will pass away. Much will be wiped out and forgotten. Among other things my father's will will be forgotten—that will which he himself looked upon as an "unnecessary outward means." And men will see more clearly that legacy of love and truth in which he believed deeply, and which, according to his own words, "cannot perish without a trace."

In conclusion I cannot refrain from quoting the opinion of one of my kinsmen, who, after my father's death, read the diaries kept both by my father and my mother during the autumn before Lyoff Nikolaievich left Yasnaya Polyana.

"What a terrible misunderstanding!" he said. "Each loved the other with such poignant affection, each was suffering all the time on the other's behalf, and then this terrible ending!... I see the hand of fate in this."

FOOTNOTES:

1 [The name we gave to the stone annex.]

2 [The instinct for lime, necessary to feed their bones, drives Russian children to nibble pieces of chalk or the whitewash off the wall. In this case the boy was running to one of the grownups in the house, and whom he called uncle, as Russian children call everybody uncle or aunt, to get a piece of the chalk that he had for writing on the blackboard. "Us," he said to some one when the boy was gone. Which of us would have expressed himself like that? You see, he did not say to "get" or to "break off," but to "bite off," which was right, because they did literally "bite" off the chalk from the lump with their teeth, and not break it off.]

3 [About \$3000.]

4 [The zala is the chief room of a house, corresponding to the English drawingroom, but on a grand scale. The gostinaya—literally guest-room, usually translated as drawingroom—is a place for more intimate receptions. At Yasnaya Polyana meals were taken in the zala, but this is not the general Russian custom, houses being provided also with a stolovaya, or dining-room.]

5 [Kaftan, a long coat of various cuts, including military and naval frockcoat, and the long gown worn by coachmen.]

6 [Afanasyi Shenshin, the poet, who adopted his mother's name, Fet, for a time, owing to official difficulties about his birth-certificate. An intimate friend of Tolstoy's.]

7 ["Sovremennik," or "Contemporary Review," edited by the poet Mekrasof, was the rallying-place for the "men of the forties," the new school of realists. Ostrovsky is the dramatist; Gontcharof the novelist, author of "Oblomof"; Grigorovitch wrote tales about peasant life, and was the discoverer of Tchekhof's talent as a serious writer.]

8 [The balks are the banks dividing the fields of different owners or crops. Hedges are not used for this purpose in Russia.]

9 [Pazanki, tracks of a hare, name given to the last joint of the hind legs.]

10 [A Moscow monthly, founded by Katkof, who somehow managed to edit both this and the daily "Moskovskiya Vyedomosti," on which "Uncle Kostya" worked at the same time.]

11 [Dmitry. My father's brother Dmitry died in 1856; Nikolai died September 20, 1860.]

12 [That is to say, his eyes went always on the straightest road to attain satisfaction for himself.]

13 [Khamsvniki, a street in Moscow.]

14 [Maria Mikhailovna, his wife.]

15 [Tolstoy's sister. She became a nun after her husband's death and the marriage of her three daughters.]

16 [Tolstoy was in the artillery, and commanded a battery in the Crimea.]

17 [Fet, at whose house the quarrel took place, tells all about it in his memoirs. Tolstoy dogmatized about lady-like charity, apropos of

Turgenieff's daughter. Turgenieff, in a fit of nerves, threatened to box his ears. Tolstoy challenged him to a duel, and Turgenieff apologized.]

18 [Turgenieff was ten years older than Tolstoy.]

19 [I had written to my father that my fiancee's mother would not let me marry for two years.]

20 [My father took Griboyehof's PRINCESS MARYA ALEXEVNA as a type. The allusion here is to the last words of Griboyehof's famous comedy, "The Misfortune of Cleverness," "What will PRINCESS MARYA ALEXEVNA say?"]

21 [Be loved by them.]

22 [His wife's.]

23 [A novelist, died 1895.]

24 [One of the authors of "Junker Schmidt."]

25 [The curious may be disposed to trace to some such "corrections beforehand" the remarkable discrepancy of style and matter which distinguishes some of Tolstoy's later works, published after his death by Mr. Tchertkof and his literary executors.]

26 [Tolstoy's private secretary, arrested and banished in 1908.]

27 [Five weeks after Leskof's death.]

28 [The Countess Tolstoy.]

The End