

Manifestly, it will not be possible, in the brief time at my disposal, to give more than a bare outline of the remarkable career of a remarkable man. Leo Tolstoy was born on 28th August, 1828, at Yasmaya, Polyana the now world-renowned estate, situated about 150 miles south of Moscow. His ancestry is highly aristocratic, he being descended at several removes from St. Michael, Prince of Montenegro; his father was Count Nicolai Tolstoy, and his mother Princess Volonskaya. The family of Tolstoy's father had rendered great service to the Russian Government, and had held high official positions. When Tolstoy was two years of age his mother died, and he, with his brothers and sisters, was handed over to the care of a distant relative, a maiden lady—Tatyana Yergotskaya. Seven years later, in 1837, Count Nickolai removed to Moscow to give his eldest son the opportunity to enter the university. But in that very year the Count died suddenly. In 1843, when he was fifteen years of age, Leo entered Kazan University, but rebelling under its discipline, he left suddenly three years later, having spent one year at oriental languages, and two at law, and returned to Yasnaya Polyana, which he inherited under his father's will. To rightly understand Tolstoy's character, and the impulses and environments which went to make him what he is to-day, a careful study of "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth," is essential. The first of these three stories, "Childhood," to be shortly followed by "Boyhood," was contributed by Tolstoy in 1852, when he was but 24 years of age. This marked the commencement of Tolstoy's career as a writer. The stories were a great success. They were essentially biographical, and in them the reader may gather the remarkable evolution of a remarkable temperament,

Young Tolstoy's type of mind was a strange mixture of passion, intimidation and idealism. Instances of all three qualities are to be found in abundance in the self-revealing pages of this book. His childhood was a tragedy, consequent upon his introspectiveness and compunction, and he was particularly sensitive in regard to his personal appearance. This comes out in almost all his novels, for every character which claims to be autobiographical is depicted as uncouth, ungainly, and awkward in the extreme. He was unhappy because he was misunderstood, he chafed against his artificial environment,

and yearned for a life of freedom. Especially did he rebel under the discipline of school and university, since his instincts demanded that he should follow his own desultory fashion of picking up learning. Each and all of these characteristics may be traced in their fuller evolution in the subsequent phases of his after life. His almost uncontrollable passion, with its inevitable reaction, led him to indite a violent protest against modern love and marriage; his morbidity and introspection caused him to explore the sphere of religion and ask, and endeavour to answer the question: "What is Life?" His dissatisfaction with existing educational methods impelled him to experiment with school teaching among the peasants; his love of nature caused him eventually to adopt the cult of the simple life.

The dominant note of "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth," is its severe simplicity. The following brief extracts instance this, and, in addition, reveal something of Tolstoy's sensitiveness and morbidity:—"I remember very well how once—I was six years old at the time—they were discussing my looks at dinner, and mamma was trying to discover something handsome about my face. She said I had intelligent eyes, an agreeable smile, and, at last yielding to papa's arguments and to ocular evidence, she was forced to confess that I was homely; and then, when I thanked her for the dinner, she tapped my cheek and said: 'You know, Nikolinka, that no one will love you for your face; therefore you must endeavour to be a good and sensible boy.' These words not only convinced me that I was not a beauty, but also that I should without fail become a good, sensible boy. In spite of this, moments of despair often visited me. I fancied there was no happiness on earth for a person with such a wide nose, such thick lips, and such small, grey eyes as I had. I besought God to work a miracle to turn me into a beauty, and all I had in the present or might have in the future I would give in exchange for a handsome face."

The boy's mind was full of fancies, his imagination was a vivid one. He had been punished for some slight offence by his French tutor, St. Jerome, and the iron of the disgrace had entered into the sensitive soul. Under the heading of "Fancies," Tolstoy indulges in the following strange soliloquy:—"It occurs to me that there must exist some cause for the general dislike and even hatred