

him saw him reading, and in order to open a conversation mentioned that he himself always used to be well informed in history, and could give the names and years of any president, and of the kings of England too, for that matter. The young foreigner, grasping the opportunity to secure information, asked him to please outline the differences between the ideas of Jefferson and Lincoln, who, he understood, were the founders of the two great parties of the country.

"Eh," said the well-informed historian, "in fact, I never bothered about politics. But any historical information I would be glad to give you."

E. O.

BOOKS

A LIFE OF TOLSTOY.

Leo Tolstoy, *His Life and Work*. Volume I. Childhood and Early Manhood. Published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Price \$1.50 net.

It must be rather trying to have your life written by a man who thinks you are absolutely perfect,—who worships the very ground you stand on,—and who has not the slightest sense of humor. This is the ordeal to which Count Tolstoy is subjected in the new biography by his disciple, Paul Birukoff, the first volume of which (there will be three) has just been published by the Scribners. M. Birukoff has had access to all the material extant on the subject, and he has collected his facts with simple-minded sincerity and devotion. In his preface he modestly calls his book a mere "Collection of material for the Biography of Leo Tolstoy," and his judgment is correct, for there is little method in his arrangement, and it is a pity that he did not have sufficient mastery of his raw material and sufficient artistic talent to make an organic work of it. But when all allowance has been made for these drawbacks, the fact remains that M. Birukoff has given us an extremely interesting book, full of attraction for anyone who admires Tolstoy or who wishes to know something of Russian society.

The environment of Tolstoy's childhood is as remote from our civilization as is that of the Odyssey. The picture, for instance, of the blind peasant storyteller reciting the Arabian Nights to Tolstoy's grandmother, a princess of distinguished family, while she was going to bed, takes us into another world. Tolstoy himself is shown to us as an impetuous, impressionable child. As a young man he takes all that life can give him,—a bold gambler, a narrow-minded professional soldier, a social snob, dictatorial, egotistic, dissipated, yet every now and then thoroughly disgusted with himself and indulging in outbursts of affection for his family, his friends, mankind and nature. It is easy to deprecate Tolstoy's ethical teaching upon the ground that he did not follow it in his youth, but is it not true that if he had not drunk the pleasures of life to the dregs,—if he had always been an ascetic and a puritan,—we might even more justly reproach him with ignorance of the things which he now condemns?

Tolstoy's religion of love did not come naturally

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to him. It was the result of a great struggle and of a conquest over his own selfish and self-indulgent nature. If loving had come easy to him, he would never have made such a fuss about it. It is the things which we have not got,—the things that come hard,—the things which we only win by fighting,—that we prize and make much of. A man's religion represents his wants, his needs, the things which he craves and for which he hungers and thirsts, and we only hunger and thirst for that of which we are destitute. The strength of a man's religion is measured by the suction of the vacuum within him, and it is often from the emptiness of his heart that the prophet speaketh. And so it is that the reserved, self-sufficient, rude warriors of northern Europe fell readily under the sway of the religion of love-to-neighbor, while the pliant, gregarious, apologetic, deprecatory, and courteous Oriental finds salvation only in harsh self-discipline, in bloody wars of propaganda, or in the prospect of the triumph of stern justice hereafter. Religion is an impulse toward perfection, and the road to a man's perfection lies across the region of his defects.

The first volume of Tolstoy's life is full of incident. It includes his youth in the country, his university days at Kazan, his campaigns in the Caucasus and the Crimea, his first literary successes, his journeys abroad, his work as a magistrate and a school-teacher, and finally his courtship and marriage. Much of the story is told in Tolstoy's own words, collected from his books, his diaries and letters, and these portions have all the charm of his artistic genius. The book is full of most interesting illustrations and portraits of Tolstoy himself and of places and persons associated with him. Those who read this volume will wait with impatience for the two that are to follow.

ERNEST CROSBY.

* * *

THE GOD OF THIS WORLD.

The God of This World. A story of the times. By John B. Middleton. Published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London.

This has been called a "single tax story." It is hardly that, although its author is plainly sympathetic with the ethical principles of the single tax theory of social life. As a satire or a story with a purpose it is more distinctly than anything else a Christian story; for it pictures society as it would be were the materialistic and the mammonistic tendencies of the present time to persist until the New Testament had been forgotten and the worship of Mammon (the God of this world) been firmly established as a species of organized religion.

The period of the story is the latter part of the present century. Society is separated into two instead of many classes. The leisure class of London live on one side of the Thames, while the working class both work and live on the other, and the gulf between them is as impassable as that between whites and Negroes in the United States to-day. And so it is all over the world. "The same malign influence which rendered Christianity helpless" has become "triumphantly established." When the church of Mammon is at its strongest, and points

Announcements

MEETINGS, LECTURES, DEBATES, ETC.

Brooklyn, N. Y.—The Rev. Quincy Ewing, of Birmingham, Ala., will preach at the Church of the Holy Trinity on all the Sunday mornings of July.

New York.—The Manhattan Single Tax Club holds open air meetings on Tuesdays and Fridays weekly during the summer at 8 o'clock p. m., at 125th Street and 7th Avenue.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO SINGLE TAXERS OF CHICAGO

The Single Taxers of Chicago and vicinity, and their friends, will dine at the **Washington Restaurant, N. W. Corner Wabash Avenue and Adams Street, Chicago**, on the first Friday evening of each month, at 6 p. m. The dinner on **July 6th** will be table d'hôte. For further particulars communicate with the committee at 1202 Ashland Block, Chicago. (Telephone, Central 925)

NELLIE CARLIN,
U. A. H. GREENE,
H. W. McFARLANE,
FRANK D. BUTLER,
Committee.

A Picnic for Single Taxers

The Committee in charge of the monthly dinners of the single taxers of Chicago and vicinity and their friends, have determined to arrange for a picnic in or near Chicago sometime during the month of July. The date and place will be announced in the next issue of THE PUBLIC.

FORTY SINGLE-TAXERS

wanted in a reservoir proposition in Southwestern Colorado. For further information, address

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