

Count Tolstoi.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF WAR.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

UNIFORM WITH THIS SERIES.

**A RUSSIAN PROPRIETOR.
THE COSSACKS.
IVAN ILYITCH.
THE INVADERS.
MY RELIGION.
LIFE.
MY CONFESSION.
CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD, YOUTH.**

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF WAR

NAPOLEON

AND THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

AND

POWER AND LIBERTY

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

WHAT has led to the significant and rapid rise into popular esteem of Count Tolstoi? It was felt at once that he had a message to deliver, a message worth hearing, and the world has shown itself ready to hear. The utterance of this message began in his earliest writings, and it has gone on, swelling in volume and power with each succeeding production of his pen. As we look back now in the light of later revelation, we can see the thread of ethical purpose running through all his writings, growing more and more plain with each one of them, and at length woven into a complete pattern in the book which is his most characteristic, because his most outspoken work, the book which reveals most clearly his own mental attitude toward his fellows, and his conception

of man's part in the universe. I allude, of course, to Count Tolstoï's *My Religion*, a work which, perhaps more than any other production of its author, has excited wide speculation and discussion.

The message may be summed up very briefly; it expresses the essential dignity of manhood, and declares the most crying need in the world to-day to be love of man to man.

It is not a new message. It has been preached before—among others, by the Christians who condemn Tolstoï as a fanatic and a dreamer; but Count Tolstoï is the first among moderns to show in a large way how the preaching may be carried into practice. The message may be, as some say it is, socialism or communism in disguise, but every thoughtful person will agree that it is a very harmless sort of communism, that it is, at any rate, better than anarchy, and that its influence upon mankind, for the present at least, cannot result in serious harm. The time may come when, as several pulpit orators have declared, the practice of the Golden Rule will subvert

civilization, but the danger of such a social transformation is not pressing; we may safely leave it to posterity with several other problems concerning which we are perplexing ourselves to-day.

In the book now before us, we have still another polemical work. Taking that most dramatic and terrible manifestation of the war-like spirit, Napoleon's campaign in Russia, as an example, he undertakes to lay bare *The Physiology of War*.

We do not need to read far in the volume before getting at his purpose. He vindicates once more the essential dignity of manhood. He would show that war is something more than a game on the part of sovereigns and diplomatists, that it lies deeper down in the very nature of things, that it is an expression of popular expansion, and that emperors, kings, commanders, generals, and what not, are so many figure-heads, the toys of circumstance, passive instruments in the hands of destiny.

It will be seen at once that Count Tolstor's philosophy of history takes a wide range and

goes deep. It is the modern, the democratic spirit applied to the most terrible of human problems—war. It regards the common soldier as more than the general, and it sets forth with convincing eloquence the contrast between the ostensible leaders in a great struggle, the men who stand at the head and think they are directing the progress of events, and the real actors in those events, the men who do the work and bear the suffering,—the common soldiers.

In the course of this exposition, Count Tolstoj does indeed reveal the very physiology of war. No one knows better than he how a war is conducted, what are the conditions of a battle; but the vital interest of this book is in its portrayal of that mysterious force slowly generated in the heart of Europe during the revolutionary period, breaking out now and then in random explosions, and at length bursting all bounds, like a wave of fire bearing Napoleon on its crest, rushing towards the East, to Moscow, and to destruction,—extinguished as it were in the frost and snow of Russia.

With regard to Napoleon, the hero-worshipper of the Carlylean stamp will find little in this book to please him. The Man of Destiny cuts here a most disreputable figure. His glorious plumes have been stripped from him ere this, but never yet has he come forth from the pitiless hands of criticism so featherless, naked, and contemptible a biped. "This," Count Tolstor seems to say to us, "is your great man. I show you great men." He will have no talk of isolated genius guiding humanity to predetermined ends. Genius is to him not the guider, but the guided, the exponent of fate, the bit of steel that follows the invisible magnet of destiny and indicates upon the dial of history the course of what is and is to be. And then, in the parable of the bee, Count Tolstor sets forth the conclusion of the whole matter, a conclusion old as the Book of Job,—*"Touching the Eternal, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in power."*

M. Michel Delines, whose French interpretation I have followed, is an author of repute,

and I hope that, in keeping as closely as possible in his footsteps, I have not strayed far from the proper path. If this version of *The Physiology of War* shall receive the approval given by Count Tolstoy to the writer's translation of *My Religion*, I shall have reason to be more than content.

HUNTINGTON SMITH.