

# The Daily Record

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## TOLSTOY'S EIGHTIETH BIRTH-DAY.

Every preparation is being made to honour in some worthy form the eightieth birthday of Count Tolstoy; and it is to be sincerely hoped that the organizers of the movement will meet with an adequate measure of support. However much Tolstoy himself would deprecate any such recognition of his services to mankind, it is due to the conscience of the civilized world that the recognition should be framed in an unmistakable form. We may not agree with Tolstoy's teaching; we may regard it as too idealistic, too detached from the conditions of actual reform; but we cannot help admitting that it is lofty and sincere. And whatever we think of him as a prophet, we must realize that as a pure man of letters, as a student of human motive and character, he has the true touch of genius. It is not that he fails to see clearly but that he sees too much; and, since the world began to analyze itself, the habit even of the most honest of us has been to shut our eyes to many aspects while intent on a few. Tolstoy's greatness lies not a little in the power of making the world acknowledge its pettiness. Whether or not such an acknowledgement can be taken as a promise of amendment is, after all, another question.

The harsh proverb which tells us that no man is a prophet in his own country, and which is possibly the least true of all proverbs in a general way, finds some measure of justification in Russia. Outside Russia, Tolstoy has no enemies; everywhere his name is honoured; in Russia, those who do not share his views, and those who do not countenance him in spite of them, are his bitter adversaries. They are not a small section, for they are the section which is called the "Union of the Russian People", or, to use their more sinister badge, the "Black Hundred". Again and again it has been demonstrated to the outside world that this Union is no small or feeble one, but that it is a mighty engine in the hands of the bureaucracy. Brutal, remorseless, powerful, secret, it is the Inquisition of the State, and its ultimate tribunal: it is an Inquisition of scurrility and a tribunal of bloodshed. Inspired from official quarters, it is suffered to execute its missions according to the horrible impulses of a mob of ruffians; no inquiries are made, and no punishment is meted out. Once they have achieved their end, the Government care little by what means they have achieved it. We may, at all events, judge the character of the Union by reading what the *Retch*, its official organ, is capable of saying in connection with the Tolstoy celebration. The words are characteristic. "If the Duma persists in the infamous celebration of which

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we hear, it will be committing the greatest possible crime against Russia and all God-fearing Russians... but neither the Duma nor the Holy Synod should demean itself by celebrating the anniversary of this impious scoundrel, who has done more harm to Russia than all the brigands of the past put together." There is more in the same vein; and when such is the pollution at the source of the spring we can understand what gross elements it is likely to absorb in its subterranean course.

The fact of his having been born to such a condition of affairs is sufficient to account for Tolstoy's desertion of literature in favour of dogma. In Russia every great writer is not an exponent of art, but of morality. There are great artists, but the material in which they work is sombre and forbidding; and out of the nature of things they cannot touch on character without trespassing upon politics. These men and women of character are *ipso facto* politicians: it is essential to their personality. The new classes who belong neither to those who have ruled traditionally nor to those who have been ruled, new classes with sensibilities, impulses, and ambitions stimulated by European culture, are denied the atmosphere of freedom; and, as a consequence, every struggle of the soul and intellect becomes also a struggle for political emancipation: the one is not possible without the other. In the case of Tolstoy the logical process is carried further. Looking the facts in the face, he finds that political struggles have led not to emancipation, but to terrible abuse and terrible confusion; that, individually, men grow worse instead of better in the fight for liberty; and he sees the only solution, satisfactory alike to logic and instinct, in the life and teachings of Christ. This is to cut the knot rather than to unravel it; but the knot is cut earnestly and heroically. To many people Tolstoy's teaching is more than a lesson; it is a new gospel, a new inspiration. For this reason, if for no other, it is well that he should be honoured.

## GENERAL NEWS.

### NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

#### KING EDWARD'S TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS.

The programme of King Edward's journey to Scandinavia has now been definitely settled. His Majesty, accompanied by the Queen and Princess Victoria, will arrive at Copenhagen on April 21st; four days later the Royal visitors will arrive in Stockholm, where they will stay some 36 hours prior to leaving for Christiania. There a three days' stay is contemplated. The return journey will be made via Denmark, Germany and Holland. It is noticeable that King Edward will visit Stockholm before King Gustaf of Sweden has paid a visit to the British Court subsequent to his accession.

#### THE NEW "VANGUARD."

The keel plate of the battleship "Vanguard" was laid at Vickers, Sons, and Maxim's yard, Barrow, on Thursday morning, without ceremony. The vessel, which is one of the improved "Dreadnoughts," is to be completed in two years, and will be handed over to the Admiralty ready for placing in commission. It is estimated that a thousand tons of material will be laid on the stocks within ten days.

#### THE NAVAL DISASTER IN THE CHANNEL.

Further details of the terrible naval catastrophe in the English Channel on Thursday night are contained in a telegram from London. It appears that the collision occurred during a sham attack by destroyers on the other ships of the Home Fleet; all the vessels were steaming without lights, there was no moon, and a light rain fell. The destroyer "Tiger" was steaming at 24 knots and suddenly found herself across the bows of the armoured cruiser "Berwick." She held on her course, attempting to pass, but the cruiser's ram caught the frail craft amidships and sheared clean through the hull, cutting the destroyer completely in twain. The forward part, on which were stationed the commander and most of the crew, sank immediately; the after section kept afloat for three minutes. This time was sufficient to enable the men below to come on deck, from whence they were taken on board the rapidly lowered boats of the "Berwick." Other ships also sent out their boats to rescue the men struggling in the water. Official advices, however, confirm the heavy loss of life; thirty-five men in all lost their lives, including the commander, Lieut. William E. Middleton.

(Continued on page 4.)

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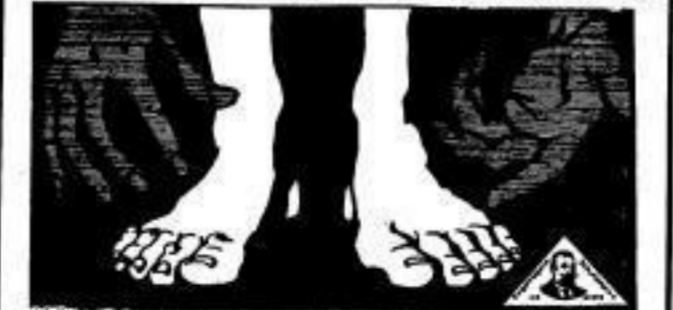
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