A MESSAGE TO YOUNG INDIA*

By COUNT LEO TOLSTOI

"All that exists is One; people only call this One by different names."

—*Veddas.*

"God is Love, and he that abideth in Love abideth in God, and God abideth in him."

—*1 John IV., 16.*

"God is one whole; we are the parts."

—*Vivekananda.*

I.

"Do not seek rest in that plane where the earthly gives birth to thoughts and desires, for if thou dost, thou wilt be dragged through the rough wilderness of life, which is not of Me. Whenever thou feelest that thy feet are becoming entangled in the interlaced roots of life, know then that thou hast strayed from the path to which I beckon thee, for I have placed thee in broad, smooth paths, which are strewn with flowers.

"I have put a light before thee, which thou can'st follow and thus run without stumbling."

—*Krishna.*

I RECEIVED your letter and the two issues of the magazine. Both were intensely interesting to me; indeed, the oppression of a majority is a phenomenon which has always occupied my mind and at present is entirely occupying my attention. I will endeavor to convey to you what I think, both in a particular and a general way, about these causes from which those dreadful calamities have arisen and do arise, of which you write in your letter and which are also mentioned in the two numbers of the Hindoo magazine you sent me.

The causes, owing to which this astonishing spectacle arises, of the majority of the laboring classes submitting to a mere handful of idlers whom it permits to dispose not only of its labor but also of its very life, are always and everywhere the same; whether the oppressors and the oppressed belong to the same or, as in the case in India and in other countries, where the dominant class belongs to an entirely different nation from those oppressed.

It appears especially strange of India, for here we have a people of two hundred millions of individuals highly endowed with spiritual and physical powers in absolute subjection to a small clique, composed of persons utterly alien in though and aspiration and altogether inferior to those whom they enslave.

These causes, as one can easily see from your letter, from the articles in *Free Hindustan,* from the highly interesting writings of the Hindoo Swami Vivekananda and others, are in accord with that which causes the distress of all the peoples of our time; in the absence of a rational religious teaching, which, while uniformly elucidating for mankind the meaning of life, would also define the supreme law for the guidance of conduct, and in the substitution for the one and the other of the more than dubious propositions of a false religion and a false science, and in the immoral conclusions called civilization derived from both.

One has already seen, not only from your letter and from the articles in *Free Hindustan,* but also from the entire Hindoo political literature of our time,

*This extremely interesting message, one of the last that in all human probability will come from the pen of the great prophet of peace of Russia, is printed now for the first time. It was written some months ago to Mr. Taraknath Das, editor of "Free Hindustan," in response to a letter from the editor asking for the Count's views in regard to the struggle that Young India is making for constitutional government. As will be seen, Count Tolstoi takes the extreme position of non-resistance which he has consistently maintained since his renunciation of the life of a worldly, frivolous Russian noble. The second and concluding half of the Count's appeal will appear in our April issue, and it will be followed by Young India's reply, written by Mr. Das, in which the author presents the cause of Young India in an exceptionally strong paper. The Editor.