



BOYHOOD

LEO TOLSTOY

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BY
LEO TOLSTOY

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Boyhood by Leo Tolstoy.

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and taking my hand with a smile. "I propose (and I feel sure that it would benefit us mutually) that we should pledge our word to one another to tell each other EVERYTHING. We should then really know each other, and never have anything on our consciences. And, to guard against outsiders, let us also agree never to speak of one another to a third person. Suppose we do that?"

"I agree," I replied. And we did it. What the result was shall be told hereafter.

Kerr has said that every attachment has two sides: one loves, and the other allows himself to be loved; one kisses, and the other surrenders his cheek. That is perfectly true. In the case of our own attachment it was I who kissed, and Dimitri who surrendered his cheek—though he, in his turn, was ready to pay me a similar salute. We loved equally because we knew and appreciated each other thoroughly, but this did not prevent him from exercising an influence over me, nor myself from rendering him adoration.

It will readily be understood that Nechudoff's influence caused me to adopt his bent of mind, the essence of which lay in an enthusiastic reverence for ideal virtue and a firm belief in man's vocation to perpetual perfection. To raise mankind, to abolish vice and misery, seemed at that time a task offering no difficulties. To educate oneself to every virtue, and so to achieve happiness, seemed a simple and easy matter.

Only God Himself knows whether those blessed dreams of youth were ridiculous, or whose the fault was that they never became realised.
