to their entrance into the university of Kazan. Outside the hours of study Tolstoy spent his days either in solitary rambles, during which he reflected on the problems of life, or in violent exercise at the gymnasium (the only form of athletics enjoyed by boys of his position in Russia). Thus the physical and philosophical impulses of his nature were developed in equal measure, and these two conflicting forces began their lifelong duel. Only in later years has the philosopher sometimes seemed to outweigh the man of action in Tolstoy’s vigorous personality.

In 1843, at the age of fifteen, he entered the university of Kazan, and gained with his college cap and uniform what he prized most, his independence. The lax rule of the university—which was of no high scholastic repute, giving ready admittance to the sons of the rich and noble— enabled him at the same time to enter the world of society and study its complex problems at leisure. Kazan was in those days a real paradise for such as sought happiness in social excitement, dining and dancing. No city in Russia was so given up to the pursuit of pleasure. Among these scenes of luxury and licence the students played a prominent part. Amid such influences the boy soon ripened into the man. The constant succession of balls, picnics and parties wearied and disgusted him. The pages of *Youth* are eloquent of deadly ennui. He is for ever seeking “ Her,” engaged in an undefined “ pursuit of the Well-beloved,” with a half spiritual, half physical longing. At intervals in this quest of the unknown he devoured the novelists of his day, chiefly Dumas and Eugène Sue. He already thought deeply on the object of existence; forming new ideals, aspiring to noble deeds, seeing himself in imagination now a passionate lover, now a leader of men. He was always trying to be original, and to tread unbeaten tracks. Partly in consequence of this feeling, he determined to enter the school of Eastern languages. His first attempt was unsuccessful, but finally passing in through the medium of a supplemental examination, he took up Arabic and Turkish. These studies, however, proved uncongenial to his versatile nature, and failing to distinguish himself in them, he turned his attention in 1845 to the school of law. Here he met with equal discouragement. The professors—all Ger­mans, and many of them not knowing enough Russian to make themselves understood—were favourite butts for the students’ wit. There was practically no serious teaching, nor any per­sonal interest shown in the pupils. Tolstoy’s evil genius had once more cast him in stony places and left him to work out his own salvation. History, religion and law now claimed his attention in his final efforts to gain the university diploma. In religion his opinions had undergone a great change. From the child’s unthinking acquiescence in a hereditary faith had sprung absolute unbelief. History he held a useless form of knowledge. “Of what avail,” he said, “ to know what happened a thousand years ago ? ” Hence he neglected the lectures on these subjects, absented himself from the examinations, was confined in the university gaol for irregular attendance, and ended by coming out but moderately well in the yearly ex­amination. The conviction that he was wasting his time forced itself upon him. An idle, dissipated life had told upon his health, and early in 1847 Tolstoy asked permission to go down, “ on account of ill health and private reasons.” Thus ended his college life, which from an educational point of view he had treated as a jest. Somewhat of an enigma as he was to his companions, with his alternate fits of feverish gaiety and melan­choly abstraction, aristocratic hauteur and liberal views, there was yet found a little band of students to accompany him on the first stage of his journey homewards. While probably admiring the original bent of his mind, they little dreamed their late comrade would one day be acclaimed as Russia’s greatest thinker and novelist.

Tolstoy went back to his estates with fresh hope and energy, determined to ameliorate the condition of his peasantry and fulfil the duties of a landlord. Rumours had reached him at Kazan from time to time of the recurring famines, revolts and miseries of the serfs. In 1847, as often before, the crops failed to suffice for the needs of the starving people, and whole districts set forth to petition the tsar for food. Here was a vital problem requiring prompt solution. In the course of desultory reading at the university he had studied the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and the Frenchman’s plea for Nature, honest work and simplicity of life, had impressed him greatly. Fired with enthusiasm, he now entered heart and soul on the task of realizing this ideal. Unfortunately, he was as yet without sufficient moral stamina to withstand recurring disappointments and to combat the suspicions of the serfs. The youthful reformer lacked the patience necessary to deal with the deep-rooted mistrust engendered by years of oppression and neglect. After six months of struggle with this discouraging state of things he temporarily gave up the attempt, and we find him in St Petersburg taking up for a time the broken threads of his education. But with the restlessness of transition strong upon him he soon returned to country life, and in company with his brother Sergius gave himself up to hunting, gambling, carousing with Zigani dancers, and throwing all serious thoughts to the winds. *The Landlord’s Morning* may be taken as a picture of this stage of Tolstoy’s life. The inevitable reaction soon came. Op­pressed by debts and difficulties, in the spring of 1851 he betook himself to the Caucasus, where his eldest brother Nicholas was stationed with his regiment. At Pyatigorsk, at the foot of the mountains, he rented a cottage for about twelve shillings a month, and lived there with the utmost frugality.

Finally his brother’s persuasions, aided by the influence of relations in high places, led him to enter the army. He passed the necessary examination at Tiflis, and joined the artillery in the autumn of the year. At that time Russia was much disturbed by the lawlessness of the Caucasian races. Bands of Circassians were constantly on the move, plundering and looting. The punitive expeditions in which Tolstoy took part were his first taste of warfare. Neither his military duties nor his love of sport entirely absorbed him, however. The great power which had hitherto lain dormant now awoke. He began to write, and within the next few years produced some of his finest works. Nekrassov, the editor of the Russian *Contemporary,* accepted *Childhood,* the young author’s maiden effort. In accordance with the common practice, he received nothing for the MSS. Publication of a first attempt was considered ample payment in those days. Tolstoy was now twenty-four years of age. *Child­hood* was followed by *The Landlord’s Morning, Boyhood* and *Youth,* in quick succession. His early aspirations were revived in these pages, which reflect the doctrines of Rousseau. “ You neither know what happiness is nor what life is,” he writes to expostulating friends. “ Once taste life in all its natural beauty, happiness will consist in being with Nature, seeing her, commun­ing with her.” His philosophy notwithstanding, Tolstoy felt a pardonable desire for promotion, which was slow in coming to him. Some verses ascribed to him (an authorship never denied) making fun of the general during the siege of Sebastopol, which appeared in print, may possibly have had something to answer for. Be that as it may, the spirit of unrest and dissatisfac­tion was moving Tolstoy to return home, when rumours of hostilities arose, and the Crimean War burst into flame. He promptly volunteered for active service, and asked to be allowed to join the army on the Danube, under the command of Prince Gortchakov.

In the early part of 1854 we find him encamped before the walls of Silistria, a town of Bulgaria, which Gortchakov had invested. At the very height of the bombardment, however, Austrian intervention prevailed, and the siege was raised. The din of battle was hushed and revelry took its place. At the ball which promptly celebrated the event Tolstoy felt ill at ease. The joyous music and babel of tongues jarred on his sensitive ear, fresh from the moans of the wounded and dying. He went up to the prince and asked leave to start for Sebastopol. Permission being granted, he hastened from the ballroom, and left Silistria without delay.