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FENELON FALLS, ONTARIO, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH, 1908.

No. 53.

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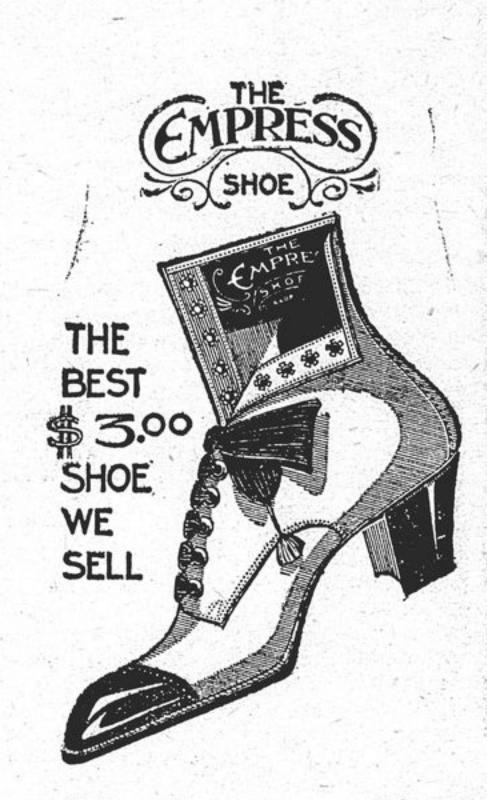
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"I Cannot be Silent."

BY HILDEGARDE HAWTHORNE.

"I cannot be silent!" It is with these words that Count Leo Tolstoi heads an arraignment of the Russian Government and its rule by murder, that is terrible in its simple statement of conditions almost too awful to believe in. Thousands of men, women and children are being tortured, imprisoned, hanged, every year. Where there was in all Russia, a few years ago, but one executioner, there is now one in every hamlet, wherever there are a few men who may be suffering and are therefore to be killed lest they may become dangerous. Spies and betrayers are everywhere, and man looks into his brother's eyes with suspicion. The lists of executions are hardly read over in the newspapers, so common have they become. And this reign of murder is pursued with the acknowledged purpose of crushing the feeling of discontent, the irritation of the people. It is to calm the people's souls that their bodies are outraged and slain. It is to bring peace that every man lies to his fellow, that each betrays the other. A fearful debasement of the Russian nation is in progress, says Tolstoi. Everything that makes for manhood-liberty, gentleness, thought for neighbors, horror of sin, respect for the life of man, love -all these are being driven from the Russian spirit. The peasant sees that those above him indulge iin the most horrible crimes, all the while throwing around these crimes the glamor of the law. He hears them called proper, lawful, necessary. The aristocracy must be preserved, at whatever cost of blood and tears. Little children must hang beside their fathers, dozens of peasants must be murdered in as many moments, that the ruling order may be maintained in its present happy and useful state.

But, Comrades, how is it with our own country, with our own attitude play, can we be silent while thousands living, as it now does.

burden of long hours of toil in the mills, the mines and the factories? Every hour of the day, while we go' about our occupations, while we work, rest, play, do nothing, every hour small, pale and tired children are keeping in motion the wheels that create profit for those who are maintaining the present state of things. Can we sit silent here in our country, where we may speak out the thoughts of our hearts, while young girls overwork their strength day in and day out to maintain these same profits for the rulers; while they sink under the hopeless burden, catching at straws only to sink the deeper? Can we sit silent while men tramp miles and days in vain to find work, that they may save themselves and their families from starvation? Can we sit silent when we read the reports of the suicide of these whose hope has given way under the terrible burden? Suicides! Might we not say murders? And how about those who are maimed and killed in factories and railroad wrecks, because it is cheaper to kill and maim than to safeguard? And what of those mines and factories whose air is poison, and whose unhealthy condition is no better than a death sentence? Are these no concern of ours? If we benefit under this system that is grounded inthe suffering and despair of children, women and men; if we are easier because a child of six wears out its brief existence in bitter toil away from the sunlight and the green world; if our clothing is softer, our food better, because a young girl has gone to perdition through suffering and destitution; if we know something of luxury because some man, looking for work, has sunk down dying with hunger; if we accept this state of affairs in silence, making no effort to change a state of society in which such conditions are possible, why then, we, here in America, also stand under Tolstoi's arraignment. We, too, preserve the present conditions by tears and blood. Tolstoi. welcomes his own possible execution with joy, rather than bear any longer the terrible burden of the least responsibility for his country's shame. He cannot be silent while the poor suffer at the hands of the rich, and we, can we, then, be silent?

To say that you cannot help is to say a foolish thing. The world is what it is because of the human beings in it. You are one of them, and no one is more than that. You do not need to sit silent. You can speak if you can do nothing more; even as, from the depths of Russia, Tolstoi has spoken to the world. "Remember," he says, 4 that you are men, and what it means to be men." Let us no longer acquiere, by our silence, in a state of things that brings a surplusage of wealth to the few at the expense of the suffering of the many, even though we chance to be among the few. If we are not ourselves guilty of this suffering, yet when we remain silent before it we share in that guilt. America is not Russia, and what we determine upon, we people, men and women of America, that we can do. The change must come. But every year that passes before it comes, delayed by our inactivity, our selfishness, our ignorance, every such year with its measure of despair, its budren of disease and of death, is to be laid at our doors. Let us no longer be silent!

The greatest friend of marriage in to those who suffer here! Can we, the world is Socialism, because it will then, be silent, while little children make conditions so that marriage will like those that have stirred under our no longer mean scrubbing and strughearts and smiled up at us from their gjing in hopeless poverty for a bare

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