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The Modern Library of Thw World's Best Books. Redemption: And Two Other Plays by Leo Tolstoy & Arthur Hopkins

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LEO TOLSTOY & ARTHUR HOPKINS

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REDEMPTION
AND TWO OTHER PLAYS

By **LEO TOLSTOY**

Introduction by **ARTHUR HOPKINS**

Tolstoi, Leon Nikolaevich



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INTRODUCTION

After making a production of *Redemption*, the chief feeling of the producer is one of deep regret that Tolstoi did not make more use of the theatre as a medium. His was the rare gift of vitalization: the ability to breathe life into word-people which survives in them so long as there is any one left to turn up the pages they have made their abode.

In the world of writing, many terms that should be illuminative have become meaningless. So often has the barren been called "pregnant," the chill of death "the breath of life," the atrophied "pulsating," that when we really come upon a work with beating heart we find it difficult to give it place that has not already been stuffed to suffocation with misplaced dummies.

We seat it at table with staring wax figures and bid it to join the feast. There is no exclusion act in art, no passport bureau, not even hygienic segregation.

In writing the briefest introduction to Tolstoi's work, I am appointed by the publisher, a sort of reception committee of one to escort the work to some fitting place where it may enjoy the surroundings and deference it deserves.

The place to which I escort it is built of words, but what words have been left me by the long procession of previous committees? Where they have been truthfully used they have been glorified, and offer all the rarer material for my structure, but how often have they been subjected to base use. Perhaps some day we will learn the proper respect of such simple words as love and truth and life, and then when we meet them in books we shall know how to greet them.

The study of *Redemption* is so simple that it needs no illumination from me. The characters may walk in