

## WHAT SHALL WE DO by Leo Tolstoy

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CHAPTER 23 I saw that the cause of the sufferings and depravity of men lies in the fact that some men are in bondage to others; and therefore I came to the obvious conclusion that if I want to help men I have first of all to leave off causing those very misfortunes which I want to remedy—in other words, I must not share in the enslaving of men. I was led to the enslaving of men by the circumstance that from my infancy I had been accustomed not to work, but to profit by the labour of others, and that I had been living in a society which is not only accustomed to this slavery but which justifies it by all kinds of sophistry, clever and foolish. I came to the following simple conclusion, that, in order to avoid causing the sufferings and depravity of men, I ought to make other men work for me as little as possible and to work myself as much as possible. It was by this roundabout way that I arrived at the inevitable conclusion to which the Chinese arrived some thousand years ago, and which they express thus: “If there is one idle man, there must be another who is starving.” I came to this simple and natural conclusion, that if I pity the exhausted horse on whose back I ride the first thing for me to do if I really pity him is to get off his back and walk. This answer, which gives such complete satisfaction to the moral sense, had always been before my eyes, as it is before the eyes of every one, but we do not all see it, and look aside. In seeking to heal our social diseases we look everywhere—to the governmental, anti-governmental,

scientific, and philanthropic superstitions—and yet we do not see that which meets the eyes of every one. We fill our drains with filth and require other men to clean them, and pretend to be very sorry for them and want to ease their work; and we invent all sorts of devices except one, the simplest; namely, that we should ourselves remove our slops so long as we find it necessary to produce them in our rooms. For him who really suffers from the sufferings of the other men surrounding him, there exists a most clear, simple, and easy means, the only one sufficient to heal this evil and to confer a sense of the lawfulness of one's life. This means is that which John the Baptist recommended when he answered the question, "What shall we do then?" and which was confirmed by Christ: not to have more than one coat, and not to possess money—that is, not to profit by another man's labour. And in order not to profit by another's labour, we must do with our own hands all that we can do. This is so plain and simple! But it is plain and simple and clear only when our wants are also plain, and when we ourselves are still sound and not corrupted to the backbone by idleness and laziness. I live in a village, lie by the stove, and tell my neighbour, who is my debtor, to chop wood and light the stove. It is obvious that I am lazy and take my neighbour away from his own work; and at last I feel ashamed of it; and besides, it grows dull for me to be always lying down when my muscles are strong and accustomed to work—and I go to chop the wood myself. But slavery of all kinds has been going on so long, so many artificial wants have grown about it, so many people with different degrees of familiarity with these wants are interwoven with one another, through so many generations men have been spoiled and made effeminate, such complicated temptations and justifications of luxury and idleness have been invented by men, that for one who stands on the top of the pyramid of idle men, it is not at all so easy to understand his sin as it is for the peasant who

compels his neighbour to light his stove. Men who stand at the top find it most difficult to understand what is required of them. From the height of the structure of lies on which they stand they become giddy when they look at that spot on the earth to which they must descend in order to begin to live, not righteously, but only not quite inhumanly; and that is why this plain and clear truth appears to these men so strange. A man who employs ten servants in livery, coachmen and cooks, who has pictures and pianos, must certainly regard as strange and even ridiculous the simple preliminary duty of, I do not say a good man, but of every man who is not an animal, to hew that wood with which his food is cooked and by which he is warmed; to clean those boots in which he carelessly stepped into the mud; to bring that water with which he keeps himself clean; and to carry away those slops in which he has washed himself. But besides the estrangement of men from the truth, there is another cause which hinders them from seeing the duty of doing the most simple and natural physical work; that is the complication and intermingling of the conditions in which a rich man lives. This morning I entered the corridor in which the stoves are heated. A peasant was heating the stove which warmed my son's room. I entered his bedroom: he was asleep, and it was eleven o'clock in the morning. The excuse was, "To-day is a holiday; no lessons." A stout lad of eighteen years of age, having over-eaten himself the previous night, is sleeping until eleven o'clock; and a peasant of his own age, who had already that morning done a quantity of work, was now lighting the tenth stove. "It would be better, perhaps, if the peasant did not light the stove to warm this stout, lazy fellow!" thought I; but I remembered at once that this stove also warmed the room of our housekeeper, a woman of forty years of age, who had been working the night before till three o'clock in the morning to prepare everything for the supper which my son ate; and then she put away the dishes, and,

notwithstanding this, got up at seven. She cannot heat the stove herself: she has no time for that. The peasant is heating the stove for her, too. And under her name my lazy fellow was being warmed. True, the advantages are all interwoven; but without much consideration the conscience of each will say, On whose side is the labour, and on whose the idleness? But not only does conscience tell this, the account-book also tells it: the more money one spends, the more people work for us. The less one spends, the more one works one's self. "My luxurious life gives means of living to others. Where should my old footman go, if I were to discharge him?" "What! every one must do everything for himself? Make his coat as well as hew his wood? And how about division of labour? And industry and social undertakings?" And, last of all, come the most horrible of words—civilization, science, art!

CHAPTER 24 Last March I was returning home late in the evening. On turning into a bye-lane I perceived on the snow in a distant field some black shadows. I should not have noticed this but for the policeman who stood at the end of the lane and cried in the direction of the shadows, "Vasili, why don't you come along?" "She won't move," answered a voice; and thereupon the shadows came towards the policeman. I stopped and asked him— "What is the matter?" He said, "We have got some girls from Rzhanoﬀ's house, and are taking them to the police-station; and one of them lags behind, and won't come along." A night-watchman in sheepskin coat appeared now driving on a girl who slouched along while he prodded her from behind. I, the watchman and the policeman, were wearing winter coats: she alone had none, having only her gown on. In the dark I could distinguish only a brown dress and a kerchief round her head and neck. She was short, like most starvelings, and had a broad, clumsy figure. "We aren't going to stay here all night for you, you hag! Get on, or I'll

give it you!" shouted the policeman. He was evidently fatigued and tired of her. She walked some paces and stopped again. The old watchman, a good-natured man (I knew him), pulled her by the hand. "I'll wake you up! come along!" said he, pretending to be angry. She staggered, and began to speak with a croaking hoarse voice, "Let me be; don't you push. I'll get on myself." "You'll be frozen to death," he returned. "A girl like me won't be frozen: I've lots of hot blood." She meant it as a joke, but her words sounded like a curse. By a lamp, which stood not far from the gate of my house, she stopped again, leaned back against the paling, and began to seek for something among her petticoats with awkward, frozen hands. They again shouted to her; but she only muttered and continued searching. She held in one hand a crumpled cigarette and matches in the other. I remained behind her: I was ashamed to pass by or to stay and look at her. But I made up my mind and came up to her. She leaned with her shoulder against the paling and vainly tried to light a match on it. I looked narrowly at her face. She was indeed a starveling and appeared to me to be a woman of about thirty. Her complexion was dirty; her eyes small, dim, and bleared with drinking; she had a squat nose; her lips were wry and slaving, with downcast angles; from under her kerchief fell a tuft of dry hair. Her figure was long and flat; her arms and legs short. I stopped in front of her. She looked at me and grinned as if she knew all that I was thinking about. I felt that I ought to say something to her. I wanted to show her that I pitied her. "Have you parents?" I asked. She laughed hoarsely, then suddenly stopped, and, lifting her brows, began to look at me steadfastly. "Have you parents?" I repeated. She smiled with a grimace which seemed to say, "What a question for him to put!" "I have a mother," she said at last; "but what's that to you?" "And how old are you?" "I am over fifteen," she said, at once answering a question she was accustomed to hear. "Come,

come! go on; we shall all be frozen for you, the deuce take you!" shouted the policeman; and she edged off from the paling and staggered along the lane to the police-station: and I turned to the gate and entered my house, and asked whether my daughters were at home. I was told that they had been to an evening party, had enjoyed themselves much, and now were asleep. The next morning I was about to go to the police-station to enquire what had become of this unhappy girl. I was ready to start early enough, when one of those unfortunate men called, who from weakness have dropped out of the gentlemanly line of life to which they have been accustomed, and who rise and fall by turns. I had been acquainted with him three years. During this time he had several times sold every thing he had—even his clothes; and, having just done so again, he passed his nights temporarily in Rzhanoff's house, and his days at my lodgings. He met me as I was going out, and, without listening to me, began at once to relate what had happened at Rzhanoff's house the night before. He began to relate it, yet had not got through one-half when, all of a sudden, he, an old man, who had gone through much in his life, began to sob, and, ceasing to speak, turned his face away from me. This was what he related. I ascertained the truth of his story on the spot, where I learned some new particulars, which I shall relate too. A washerwoman thirty years of age, fair, quiet, good-looking, but delicate, passed her nights in the same lodging-house, the ground-floor of No. 32 where my friend slept among various shifting night-lodgers, men and women, who for five kopeks slept with each other. The landlady at this lodging was the mistress of a boatman. In summer her lover kept a boat; and in winter they earned their living by letting lodgings to night-lodgers at three kopeks without a pillow, and at five kopeks with one. The washerwoman had been living here some months, and was a quiet woman; but lately they began to object to her because she coughed, and prevented the other lodgers

from sleeping. An old woman in particular, eighty years old, half silly, and a permanent inmate of this lodging, began to dislike the washerwoman and kept annoying her because she disturbed her sleep; for all night she coughed like a sheep. The washerwoman said nothing. She owed for rent, and felt herself guilty, and was therefore compelled to endure. She began to work less and less, for her strength failed her; and that was why she was unable to pay her rent. She had not been to work at all the whole of the last week; and she had been making the lives of all, and particularly of the old woman, miserable by her cough. Four days ago the landlady gave her notice to leave. She already owed sixty kopeks, and could not pay them, and there was no hope of doing so; and other lodgers complained of her cough. When the landlady gave the washerwoman notice, and told her she must go away if she did not pay the rent, the old woman was glad, and pushed her out into the yard. The washerwoman went away, but came back again in an hour, and the landlady had not the heart to send her away again.... During the second and the third day the landlady left her there. "Where shall I go?" she kept saying. On the third day the landlady's lover, a Moscow man, who knew all the rules and regulations, went for a policeman. The policeman, with a sword and a pistol slung on a red cord, came into the lodging and quietly and politely turned the washerwoman out into the street. It was a bright, sunny, but frosty day in March. The melting snow ran down in streams, the house-porters were breaking the ice. The hackney sledges bumped on the ice-glazed snow, and creaked over the stones. The washerwoman went up the hill on the sunny side, got to the church, and sat down in the sun at the church-porch. But when the sun began to go down behind the houses and the pools of water began to be covered with a thin sheet of ice, the washerwoman felt chilly and terrified. She got up and slowly walked on.... Where? Home—to the only house in which she had been

living lately. While she was walking there, several times resting herself, it began to get dark. She approached the gate, turned into it, her foot slipped, she gave a shriek, and fell down. One man passed by, then another. "She must be drunk," they thought. Another man passed, and stumbled up against her, and said to the house-porter, "Some tipsy woman is lying at the gate. I very nearly broke my neck over her. Won't you take her away?" The house-porter came. The washerwoman was dead. This was what my friend related to me. The reader will perhaps fancy I have picked out particular cases in the prostitute of fifteen years of age and the story of this washerwoman; but let him not think so: this really happened in one and the same night. I do not exactly remember the date, only it was in March, 1884. Having heard my friend's story I went to the police-station, intending from there to go to Rzhanoff's house to learn all the particulars of the washerwoman's story. The weather was fine and sunny; and again under the ice of the previous night, in the shade, you could see the water running; and in the sun, in the square, everything was melting fast. The trees of the garden appeared blue from over the river; the sparrows that were reddish in winter, and unnoticed then, now attracted people's attention by their merriness; men also tried to be merry, but they all had too many cares. The bells of the churches sounded; and blending with them were heard sounds of shooting from the barracks—the hiss of the rifle balls, and the crack when they struck the target. I entered the police-station. There some armed men—policemen—led me to their chief. He, also armed with a sword, sabre, and pistol, was busy giving some orders about a ragged, trembling old man who was standing before him, and from weakness could not clearly answer what was asked of him. Having done with the old man, he turned to me. I inquired about the prostitute of last night. He first listened to me attentively, then he smiled, not only because I did not know why they were taken to the



police-station, but more particularly at my astonishment at her youth. "Goodness! there are some of twelve, thirteen, and fourteen years of age often," said he, in a lively tone. To my question about the girl of yesterday, he told me that she had probably been already sent to the committee (if I understood him right). To my question where such women passed the night, he gave a vague answer. The one about whom I spoke he did not remember. There were so many of them every day. At Rzhanoff's house, in No. 32, I already found the sacristan reading prayers over the dead washerwoman. She had been brought in and laid on her former pallet; and the lodgers, all starvelings themselves, contributed money for the prayers, the coffin, and the shroud; the old woman had dressed her, and laid her out. The clerk was reading something in the dark; a woman in a cloak stood holding a wax taper; and with a similar wax taper stood a man (a gentleman, it is fair to state), in a nice great-coat, trimmed with an astrachan collar, in bright goloshes, and with a starched shirt. That was her brother. He had been hunted up. I passed by the dead woman to the landlady's room in order to ask her all the particulars. She was afraid of my questions—afraid probably of being charged with something; but by and by she grew talkative and told me all. On passing by again, I looked at the dead body. All the dead are beautiful; but this one was particularly beautiful and touching in her coffin, with her clear, pale face, with closed, prominent eyes, sunken cheeks, and fair, soft hair over her high forehead; her face looked weary, but kind, and not sad at all, but rather astonished. And indeed, if the living do not see, the dead may well be astonished. On the day I wrote this there was a great ball in Moscow. On the same night I left home after eight o'clock. I live in a locality surrounded by factories; and I left home after the factory whistle had sounded, and when, after a week of incessant work, the people were freed for their holiday. Factory-men passed by me, and I by

them, all turning their steps to the public-houses and inns. Many were already tipsy: many were with women. Every morning at five I hear each of the whistles, which means that the labour of women, children, and old people has begun. At eight o'clock another whistle—this means half an hour's rest; at twelve the third whistle—this means an hour for dinner. At eight o'clock the fourth whistle, indicating cessation from work. By a strange coincidence, all the three factories in my neighbourhood produce only the articles necessary for balls. In one factory—the one nearest to me—they make nothing but stockings; in the other opposite, silk stuffs; in the third, perfumes and pomades. One may, on hearing these whistles, attach to them no other meaning than that of the indication of time. "There, the whistle has sounded: it is time to go out for a walk." But one may associate with them also the meaning they have in reality—that at the first whistle at five o'clock in the morning, men and women, who have slept side by side in a damp cellar, get up in the dark, and hurry away into the noisy building to take their part in a work of which they see neither cessation nor utility for themselves, and work often so in the heat, in suffocating exhalations, with very rare intervals of rest, for one, two, or three, or even twelve or more hours. They fall asleep, and get up again, and again do this work, meaningless for themselves, to which they are goaded only by want. So it goes on from one week to another, interrupted only by holidays. And now I see these working-people freed for one of these holidays. They go out into the street: everywhere there are inns, public-houses, and gay women. And they, in a drunken state, pull each other by the arms, and carry along with them girls like the one whom I saw conducted to the police-station: they hire hackney-coaches, and ride and walk from one inn to another, and abuse each other, and totter about, and say they know not what. Formerly when I saw the factory people knocking about in this way I used to turn aside with

disgust, and almost reproached them; but since I hear these daily whistles, and know what they mean, I am only astonished that all these men do not come into the condition of the utter beggars with whom Moscow is filled, and the women into the position of the girl whom I had met near my house. Thus I walked on, looking at these men, observing how they went about the streets, till eleven o'clock. Then their movements became quieter: there remained here and there a few tipsy people, and I met some men and women who were being conducted to the police-station. And now, from every side, carriages appeared, all going in one direction. On the coach-box sat a coachman, sometimes in a sheepskin coat, and a footman—a dandy with a cockade. Well-fed horses, covered with cloth, trotted at the rate of fifteen miles an hour. In the carriages sat ladies wrapped in shawls, taking great care not to spoil their flowers and their toilets. All, beginning with the harness on the horses, the carriages, indiarubber wheels, the cloth of the coachman's coat, down to the stockings, shoes, flowers, velvet, gloves, scents—all these articles have been made by those men, some of whom fell asleep on their own pallets in their mean rooms, some in night-houses with prostitutes, and others in the police-station. The ball-goers drive past these men, in and with things made by them; and it does not even enter into their minds that there could possibly be any connection between the ball they are going to, and these tipsy people to whom their coachmen shout out so angrily. With easy minds and assurance that they are doing nothing wrong, but something very good, they enjoy themselves at the ball. Enjoy themselves! From eleven o'clock in the evening till six in the morning, in the very depth of the night; while with empty stomachs men are lying in night-lodgings, or dying as the washer-woman had done! The enjoyment of the ball consists in women and girls uncovering their bosoms, putting on artificial protuberances at the back, and

altogether getting themselves up as no girl and no woman who is not yet depraved would, on any account, appear before men; and in this half-naked condition, with uncovered bosoms, and arms bare up to the shoulders, with dresses puffed behind and tight round the hips, in the brightest light, women and girls, whose first virtue has always been modesty, appear among strange men, who are also dressed in indecently tight-fitting clothes, embrace each other, and pivot round and round to the sound of exciting music. Old women, often also half naked like the younger ones, are sitting looking on, and eating and drinking: the old men do the same. No wonder it is done at night when everyone else is sleeping, so that no one may see it! But it is not done at night in order to hide it; there is nothing indeed to hide; all is very nice and good; and by this enjoyment, in which is swallowed up the painful labour of thousands, not only is nobody harmed, but by this very thing poor people are fed! The ball goes on very merrily, may be, but how did it come to do so? When we see in society or among ourselves one who has not eaten, or is cold, we are ashamed to enjoy ourselves, and cannot begin to be merry until he is fed, to say nothing of the fact that we cannot even imagine that there are people who can enjoy themselves by means of anything which produces the sufferings of others. We are disgusted with and do not understand the enjoyment of brutal boys who have squeezed a dog's tail into a piece of split wood. How is it, then, that in our enjoyment we become blind, and do not see the cleft in which we have pinched those men who suffer for our enjoyment. We know that each woman at this ball whose dress costs a hundred and fifty rubles was not born at the ball, but has lived in the country, has seen peasants, is acquainted with a nurse and maid whose fathers and brothers are poor, for whom the earning of a hundred and fifty rubles to build a cottage with is the end and aim of a long, laborious life. She knows all this; how

can she, then, enjoy herself, knowing that on her half-naked body she is wearing the cottage which is the dream of her housemaid's brother? But let us suppose she has not thought about this: still she cannot help knowing that velvet and silk, sweetmeats and flowers, and laces and dresses, do not grow of themselves, but are made by men. One would think she could not help knowing that men make all these things, and under what circumstances, and why. She cannot help knowing that her dressmaker, whom she scolded to-day, made this dress not at all out of love to her, therefore she cannot help knowing that all these things—her laces, flowers, and velvet—were made from sheer want. But perhaps she is so blinded that she does not think of this. Well, but, at all events, she could not help knowing that five people, old, respectable, often delicate men and women, have not slept all night, and have been busy on her account. She saw their tired, gloomy faces. This, also, she could not help knowing—that on this night there were twenty-eight degrees of frost, and that her coachman—an old man—was sitting in this frost all night on his coach-box. But I know that they do not really see this. If from the hypnotic influence of the ball these young women and girls fail to see all this, we cannot judge them. Poor things! They consider all to be good which is pronounced so by their elders. How do these elders explain their cruelty? They, indeed, always answer in the same way: "I compel no one; what I have, I have bought; footmen, chambermaids, coachman, I hire. There is no harm in engaging and in buying. I compel none; I hire; what wrong is there in that?" Some days ago I called on a friend. Passing through the first room I wondered at seeing two women at a table, for I knew my acquaintance was a bachelor. A skinny yellow, old-looking woman, about thirty, with a kerchief thrown over her shoulders, was briskly doing something over the table with her hands, jerking nervously, as if in a fit. Opposite to her sat a young girl, who was also doing

something and jerking in the same way. They both seemed to be suffering from St. Vitus's dance. I came nearer and looked closer to see what they were about. They glanced up at me and then continued their work as attentively as before. Before them were spread tobacco and cigarettes. They were making cigarettes. The woman rubbed the tobacco fine between the palms of her hands, caught it up by a machine, put on the tubes, and threw them to the girl. The girl folded the papers, put them over the cigarette, threw it aside, and took up another. All this was performed with such speed, with such dexterity, that it was impossible to describe it. I expressed my wonder at their quickness. "I have been at this business fourteen years," said the woman. "Is it hard work?" "Yes: my chest aches, and the air is choky with tobacco." But it was not necessary for her to have said so: you need only have looked at her or at the girl. The latter had been at this business three years; but anyone not seeing her at this work would have said that she had a strong constitution which was already beginning to be broken. My acquaintance, a kind-hearted man of liberal views, hired these women to make him cigarettes at two rubles and a half (5s.) a thousand. He has money, and he pays it away for this work: what harm is there in it? My acquaintance gets up at twelve. His evenings, from six to two, he spends at cards or at the piano; he eats and drinks well; other people do all the work for him. He has devised for himself a new pleasure—smoking. I can remember when he began to smoke. Here are a woman and a girl who can scarcely earn their living by transforming themselves into machines, and who pass all their lives in breathing tobacco, thus ruining their lives. He has money which he has not earned, and he prefers playing at cards to making cigarettes for himself. He gives these women money only on condition that they continue to live as miserably as they lived before in making cigarettes for him. I am fond of cleanliness; and I give money on condition that the

washerwoman washes my shirts, which I change twice a day; and the washing of these shirts having taxed the utmost strength of the washerwoman, she has died. What is wrong in this? Men who buy and hire will continue doing so whether I do or do not; they will force other people to make velvets and dainties, and will buy them whether I do or do not; so also they will hire people to make cigarettes and to wash shirts. Why should I, then, deprive myself of velvets, sweetmeats, cigarettes, and clean shirts, when their production is already set in going. Often—almost constantly I hear this reasoning. This is the very reasoning which a crowd, maddened with the passion of destruction, will employ. It is the same reasoning which leads a pack of dogs, when one of their number runs against another and knocks it down, the rest attack it and tear it to pieces. Others have already begun, have done a little mischief; why shouldn't I, too, do the same? What can it possibly signify if I wear a dirty shirt and make my cigarettes myself? could that help any one? men ask who desire to justify themselves. Had we not wandered so far from truth one would be ashamed to answer this question; but we are so entangled that such a question seems natural to us, and, therefore, though I feel ashamed, I must answer it. What difference would it be if I should wear my shirt a week instead of a day, and make my cigarettes myself, or leave off smoking altogether? The difference would be this—that a certain washerwoman, and a certain cigarette-maker, would exert themselves less, and what I gave formerly for the washing of my shirt, and for the making of my cigarettes, I may give now to that or to another woman; and working-people who are tired by their work, instead of overworking themselves, will be able to rest and to have tea. But I have heard objections to this, so ashamed are the rich and luxurious to understand their position. They reply, "If I should wear dirty linen, leave off smoking, and give this money away to the poor, then this money would be all

the same taken away from them, and my drop will not help to swell the sea." I am still more ashamed to answer such a reply, but at the same time I must do so. If I came among savages who gave me chops which I thought delicious, but the next day I learned (perhaps saw myself) that these delicious chops were made of a human prisoner who had been slain in order to make them; and if I think it bad to eat men, however delicious the cutlets may be, and however general the custom to eat men among the persons with whom I live, and however small the utility of my refusal to eat them may be—to the prisoners who have been prepared for food—I shall not and cannot eat them. It may be that I shall eat human flesh when urged by hunger; but I shall not make a feast of it, and shall not take part in feasts with human flesh, and shall not seek such feasts, nor be proud of my partaking of them.

CHAPTER 25 But what is to be done, then? We did not do it, did we? And if not we, who did? We say, "It is not we who have done all this; it has been done of itself"; as children say when they break anything, that "it broke itself." We say that, as towns are already in existence, we, who are living there, must feed men by buying their labour. But that is not true. It need only be observed how we live in the country, and how we feed people there. Winter is over: Easter is coming. In the town the same orgies of the rich go on—on the boulevards, in gardens, in the parks, on the river; music, theatres, riding, illuminations, fire-works. But in the country it is still better—the air is purer; the trees, the meadows, the flowers, are fresher. We must go where all is budding and blooming. And now we, the majority of rich people, who live by other men's labour, go into the country to breathe the purer air, to look at the meadows and woods. Here in the country among humble villagers who feed on bread and onions, work eighteen hours every day, and have neither sufficient sleep nor clothes, rich



people take up their abode. No one tempts these people: here are no factories, and no idle hands, of which there are so many in town, whom we may imagine we feed by giving them work to do. Here people never can do their own work in time during the summer; and not only are there no idle hands, but much property is lost for want of hands; and an immense number of men, children, and old people, and women with child, overwork themselves. How, then, do rich people order their lives here in the country? Thus: if there happens to be an old mansion, built in the time of the serfs, then this house is renovated and re-decorated: if there is not, one is built of two or three stories. The rooms, which are from twelve to twenty and more in number, are all about sixteen feet high. The floors are inlaid; in the windows are put whole panes of glass, costly carpets on the floors; expensive furniture is procured—a sideboard, for instance, costing from twenty to sixty pounds. Near the mansion, roads are made; flower-beds are laid out; there are croquet-lawns, giant-strides, reflecting globes, conservatories, and hot-houses, and always luxurious stables. All is painted in colours, prepared with the very oil which the old people and children lack for their porridge. If a rich man can afford it he buys such a house for himself; if he cannot he hires one: but however poor and however liberal a man of our circle may be, he always takes up his abode in the country in such a house, for building and keeping which it is necessary to take away dozens of working-people who have not enough time to do their own business in the field to earn their living. Here we cannot say that factories are already in existence and will continue so whether we make use of their work or no; we cannot say that we are feeding idle hands; here we plainly establish the factories for making things necessary for us, and simply make use of the surrounding people; we divert the people from work necessary for them, as for us and for all, and by such system deprave some, and ruin the lives and the

health of others. There lives, let us say, in a village, an educated and respectable family of the upper class, or that of a government officer. All its members and the visitors assemble towards the middle of June, because up to June they had been studying and passing their examinations: they assemble when mowing begins, and they stay until September, until the harvest and sowing time. The members of the family (as almost all men of this class) remain in the country from the beginning of the urgent work—hay-making—not to the end of it, indeed, because in September the sowing goes on, and the digging up of potatoes, but till labour begins to slacken. During the whole time of the stay, around them and close by the peasants' summer work has been proceeding, the strain of which, however much we may have heard or read of it, however much we may have looked at it, we can form no adequate idea without having experienced it ourselves. The members of the family, about ten persons have been living as they did in town, if possible still worse than in town, because here in the village they are supposed to be resting (after doing nothing), and offer no pretence in the way of work, and no excuse for their idleness. In the midsummer-lent, when people are forced from want to feed on kvas [kvas refers to a home-made, cheap fermented drink] and bread and onions, begins the mowing time. Gentlefolk who live in the country see this labour, partly order it, partly admire it; enjoy the smell of the drying hay, the sound of women's songs, the noise of the scythes, and the sight of the rows of mowers, and of the women raking. They see this near their house as well as when they, with young people and children who do nothing all the day long, drive well-fed horses a distance of a few hundred yards to the bathing-place. The work of mowing is one of the most important in the world. Nearly every year, from want of hands and of time, the meadows remain half uncut and may remain so till the rains begin; so that the degree of intensity of the labour

decides the question whether twenty or more per cent will be added to the stores of the world, or whether this hay will be left to rot or spoil while yet uncut. And if there is more hay, there will be also more meat for old people and milk for children; thus matters stand in general; but in particular for each mower here is decided the question of bread and milk for himself, and for his children during the winter. Each of the working-people, male and female, knows this: even the children know that this is an important business and that one ought to work with all one's strength, carry a jug with kvas for the father to the mowing-place, and, shifting it from one hand to another, run barefoot as quickly as possible, a distance of perhaps a mile and a half from the village, in order to be in time for dinner, that father may not grumble. Every one knows, that, from the mowing to the harvest, there will be no cessation of labour, and no time for rest. And besides mowing, each has some other business to do—to plough up new land and harrow it; the women have the linen to make, bread to bake, and the washing to do; and the peasants must drive to the mill and to market; they have the official affairs of their community to attend to; they have also to provide the local government officials with means of locomotion, and to pass the night in the fields with the pastured horses. All, old and young and sick, work with all their strength. The peasants work in such a way, that, when cutting the last rows, the mowers, some of them weak people, growing youths, and old men, are so tired, that, having rested a little, it is with great pain they begin anew; the women, often with child, work hard too. It is a strained, incessant labour. All work to the utmost of their strength, and use not only all their provisions but what they have in store. During harvest-time all the peasants grow thinner although they never were very stout. There is a small company labouring in the hayfield; three peasants—one an old man, another his married nephew, and the third the

village cobbler, a thin, wiry man. Their mowing this morning decides their fate for the coming winter, whether they will be able to keep a cow and pay their taxes. This is their second weeks' work. The rain hindered them for a while. After the rain had left off and the water had dried up they decided to make hayricks; and in order to do it quicker they decided that two women must rake to each scythe. With the old man came out his wife, fifty years of age, worn out with labour and the bearing of eleven children; deaf, but still strong enough for work; and his daughter, thirteen years of age, a short but brisk and strong little girl. With the nephew came his wife—a tall woman, as strong as a peasant, and his sister in law—a soldier's wife, who was with child. With the cobbler came his wife—a strong working-woman, and her mother—an old woman about eighty, who for the rest of the year used to beg. They all draw up in a line, and work from morning to evening in the burning sun of June. It is steaming hot and a thunder-shower is threatening. Every moment of work is precious. They have not wished to leave off working even to fetch water or kvas. A small boy, the grandson of the old woman, brings them water. The old woman is evidently anxious only on one point—not to be sent away from work. She does not let the rake out of her hands, and moves about with great difficulty. The little boy, quite bent under the jug with water, heavier than himself, walks with short steps on his bare feet, and carries the jug with many shifts. The little girl takes on her shoulders a load of hay which is also heavier than herself; walks a few paces, and stops, then throws it down, having no strength to carry it farther. The old man's wife rakes together unceasingly, her kerchief loosened from her disordered hair; she carries the hay, breathing heavily and staggering under the burden: the cobbler's mother is only raking, but this is also beyond her strength; she slowly drags her feet, in baste shoes, and looks gloomily before her, like one very ill, or at the point of

death. The old man purposely sends her far away from the others, to rake about the ricks, in order that she may not attempt to compete with them; but she does not leave off working, but continues with the same dead gloomy face as long as the others. The sun is already setting behind the wood and the ricks are not yet in order: there is much still to be done. All feel that it is time to leave off working but no one says so; each waiting for the other to suggest it. At last, the cobbler, realizing that he has no more strength left, proposes to the old man to leave the ricks till tomorrow, and the old man agrees to it; and at once the women go to fetch their clothes, their jugs, their pitchforks; and the old woman sits down where she was standing, and then lays herself down with the same fixed stare on her face. But as the women go away she gets up groaning, and, crawling along, follows them. Let us turn to the country-house. The same evening, when from the side of the village were heard the rattle of the scythes of the toil-worn mowers who were returning from work, the sounds of the hammer against the anvil, the cries of women and girls who had just had time to put away their rakes, and were already running to drive the cattle in—with those blend other sounds from the country-house. Rattle, rattle, goes the piano; a Hungarian song is heard through the noise of the croquet-balls; before the stable an open carriage is standing harnessed with four fat horses, which has been hired for twenty shillings to bring some guests a distance of ten miles. Horses standing by the carriage rattle their little bells. Before them hay has been thrown, which they are scattering with their hoofs, the same hay which the peasants have been gathering with such hard labour. In the yard of this mansion there is movement; a healthy, well-fed fellow in a pink shirt, presented to him for his service as a house-porter, is calling the coachmen and telling them to harness and saddle some horses. Two peasants who live here as coachmen come out of their room, and go in an

easy manner, swinging their arms, to saddle horses for the ladies and gentlemen. Still nearer to the house the sounds of another piano are heard. It is the music-mistress—who lives in the family to teach the children—practising her Schumann. The sounds of one piano jangle with those of another. Quite near the house walk two nurses; one is young, another old; they lead and carry children to bed; these children are of the same age as those who ran from the village with jugs. One nurse is English: she cannot speak Russian. She was engaged to come from England, not from being distinguished by some peculiar qualities but simply because she does not speak Russian. Farther on is another person, a French woman, who is also engaged because she does not know Russian. Farther on a peasant, with two women, is watering flowers near the house: another is cleaning a gun for one of the young gentlemen. Here two women are carrying a basket with clean linen—they have been washing for all these gentlefolks. In the house two women have scarcely time to wash the plates and dishes after the company, who have just done eating; and two peasants in evening clothes are running up and down the stairs, serving coffee, tea, wine, seltzer-water, etc. Up-stairs a table is spread. One meal has just ended, and another will soon begin, to continue till cock-crow and often till morning dawns. Some are sitting smoking, playing cards; others are sitting and smoking, engaged in discussing liberal ideas of reform; and others, again, walk to and fro, eat, smoke, and, not knowing what to do, have made up their mind to take a drive. The household consists of fifteen persons, healthy men and women; and thirty persons, healthy working-people, male and female, labour for them. And this takes place there, where every hour, and each little boy, are precious. This will be so, also, in July, when the peasants, not having had their sleep out, will mow the oats at night in order that it may not be lost, and the women will get up before dawn in order to finish their

threshing in time; when this old woman, who had been exhausted during the harvest, and the women with child, and the little children will again all overwork themselves, and when there is a great want of hands, horses, carts, in order to house this corn upon which all men feed, of which millions of bushels are necessary in Russia in order that men should not die: during even such a time, the idle lives of ladies and gentlemen will go on. There will be private theatricals, picnics, hunting, drinking, eating, piano-playing, singing, dancing—in fact, incessant orgies. Here, at least, it is impossible to find any excuse from the fact that all this had been going on before: nothing of the kind had been in existence. We ourselves carefully create such a life, taking bread and labour away from the work-worn people. We live sumptuously, as if there were no connection whatever between the dying washerwoman, child-prostitute, women worn out by making cigarettes and all the intense labour around us to which their unnourished strength is inadequate. We do not want to see the fact that if there were not our idle, luxurious, depraved lives, there would not be this labour, disproportioned to the strength of people, and that if there were not this labour we could not go on living in the same way. It appears to us that their sufferings are one thing and our lives another, and that we, living as we do, are innocent and pure as doves. We read the description of the lives of the Romans, and wonder at the inhumanity of a heartless Lucullus, who gorged himself with fine dishes and delicious wines while people were starving: we shake our heads and wonder at the barbarism of our grandfathers—the serf-owners—who provided themselves with orchestras and theatres, and employed whole villages to keep up their gardens. From the height of our greatness we wonder at their inhumanity. We read the words of Isaiah 5: 8— Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land. Woe unto

them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them! The harp, and the lute, the tabret, the pipe, and wine are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither have they considered the operation of his hands. Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him." We read these words, and it seems to us that they have nothing to do with us. We read in the Gospel, Matthew 3: 10— "And even now is the axe laid unto the root of the tree: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire," and we are quite sure that the good tree bearing good fruit is we ourselves, and that those words are said, not to us, but to some other bad men. We read the words of Isaiah 6: 10— Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste. We read, and are quite assured that this wonderful thing has not happened to us, but to some other people. For this very reason we do not see that this has happened to us, and is taking place with us. We do not hear, we do not see, and do not understand with our heart. But why has it so happened?

CHAPTER 26 How can a man who considers himself to be— we will not say a Christian or an educated and humane man



—but simply a man not entirely devoid of reason and of conscience—how can he, I say, live in such a way, taking no part in the struggle of all mankind for life, only swallowing up the labour of others struggling for existence, and by his own claims increasing the labour of those who struggle and the number of those who perish in the struggle? Such men abound in our so-called Christian and cultured world; and not only do they abound in our world but the very ideal of the men of our Christian, cultured world, is to get the largest amount of property—that is, wealth—which secures all comforts and idleness of life by freeing its possessors from the struggle for existence, and enabling them, as much as possible, to profit by the labour of those brothers of theirs who perish in that struggle. How could men have fallen into such astounding error? How could they have come to such a state that they can neither see nor hear nor understand with their heart what is so clear, obvious, and certain? One need only think for a moment in order to be terrified at the way our lives contradict what we profess to believe, whether we be Christian or only humane educated people. Whether it be God or a law of nature that governs the world and men, good or bad, the position of men in this world, so long as we know it has always been such that naked men—without wool on their bodies, without holes in which to take refuge, without food which they might find in the field like Robinson Crusoe on his island—are put into a position of continual and incessant struggle with nature in order to cover their bodies by making clothes for themselves, to protect themselves by a roof over their heads, and to earn food in order twice or thrice a day to satisfy their hunger and that of their children and their parents. Wherever and whenever and to whatever extent we observe the lives of men, whether in Europe, America, China, or Russia; whether we take into consideration all mankind or a small portion, whether in olden times in a nomad state, or in modern times with steam-engines,

steam-ploughs, sewing-machines, and electric light—we shall see one and the same thing going on—that men, working constantly and incessantly, are not able to get clothes, shelter, and food for themselves, their little ones, and the old, and that the greatest number of men in olden times as well as now, perish slowly from want of the necessaries of life and from overwork. Wherever we may live, if we draw a circle around us of a hundred thousand, or a thousand or ten, or even one mile's circumference, and look at the lives of those men who are inside our circle, we shall find half-starved children, old people male and female, pregnant women, sick and weak persons, working beyond their strength, who have neither food nor rest enough to support them, and who, for this reason, die before their time: we shall see others full-grown who are even being killed by dangerous and hurtful tasks. Since the world has existed we find that with great efforts, sufferings, and privations men have been struggling for their common wants, and have not been able to overcome the difficulty. Besides, we also know that every one of us, wherever and however he may live, nolens volens, is every day, and every hour of the day, absorbing for himself a part of the labour performed by mankind. Wherever and however a man lives, the roof over his head did not grow of itself; the firewood in his stove did not get there of itself; the water did not come of itself either; and the baked bread does not fall down from the sky; his dinner, his clothes, and the covering for his feet, all this has been made for him, not only by men of past generations, long dead, but it is being done for him now by those men of whom hundreds and thousands are fainting away and dying in vain efforts to get for themselves and for their children sufficient shelter, food, and clothes—means to save themselves and their children from suffering and a premature death. All men are struggling with want. They are struggling so intensely that around them always their brethren, fathers, mothers,

children, are perishing. Men in this world are like those on a dismantled or water-logged ship with a short allowance of food; all are put by God, or by nature, in such a position that they must husband their food and unceasingly war with want. Each interruption in this work of every one of us, each absorption of the labour of others which is useless for the common welfare, is ruinous, alike for us and them. How is it that the majority of educated people, without labouring, are quietly absorbing the labours of others which are necessary for their own lives, and are considering such an existence quite natural and reasonable? If we are to free ourselves from the labour proper and natural to all and lay it on others, and yet not at the same time consider ourselves traitors and thieves, we can do so only by two suppositions—first, that we (the men who take no part in common labour) are different beings from working-men and have a peculiar destiny to fulfil in society (like drone-bees, or queen-bees, which have a different function from the working-bees); or secondly, that the business which we (the men freed from the struggle for existence) are doing for other men is so useful for all that it undoubtedly compensates for that harm which we do to others in overburdening them. In olden times men who lived by the labour of others asserted, first, that they belonged to a different race; and secondly, that they had from God a peculiar mission—caring for the welfare of others; in other words, to govern and teach them: and therefore, they assured others, and partly believed themselves, that the business they did was more useful and more important for the people than those labours by which they profit. This justification was sufficient so long as the direct interference of God in human affairs, and the inequality of human races, was not doubted. But with Christianity and that consciousness of the equality and unity of all men which proceeds from it, this justification could no longer be expressed in its previous form. It was no

longer possible to assert that men are born of different kind and quality and have a different destiny; and the old justification, though still held by some, has been little by little destroyed and has now almost entirely disappeared. But though the justification disappeared, the fact itself—of the freeing of some men from labour, and the appropriation by them of other men's labour, remained the same for those who had the power to enforce it. For this existing fact new excuses have constantly been invented, in order that without asserting the difference of human beings, men might be able with apparent justice to free themselves from personal labour. A great many justifications have been invented. However strange it may seem, the main object of all that has been called science, and the ruling tendency of science, has been to seek out such excuses. This has been the object of the theological sciences and of the science of law: this was the object of so-called philosophy, and this became lately the object of modern rationalistic science, however strange it appears to us, the contemporaries, who use this justification. All the theological subtleties which aimed at proving that a certain church is the only true successor of Christ, and that, therefore, she alone has full and uncontrolled power over the souls and bodies of men, had in view this very object. All the legal sciences—those of state law, penal law, civil law, and international law—have this sole aim. The majority of philosophical theories, especially that of Hegel, which reigned over the minds of men for such a long time, and maintained the assertion that everything which exists is reasonable, and that the state is a necessary form of the development of human personality, had only this one object in view. Comte's positive philosophy and its outcome, the doctrine that mankind is an organism; Darwin's doctrine of the struggle for existence, directing life and its conclusion, the theory of the diversity of human races, the anthropology now so popular, biology, and sociology—all have the same aim. These sciences have

become favourites, because they all serve for the justification of the existing fact of some men being able to free themselves from the human duty of labour, and to consume other men's labour. All these theories, as is always the case, are worked out in the mysterious sanctums of augurs, and in vague, unintelligible expressions are spread abroad among the masses and adopted by them. As in olden times the subtleties of theology, which justified violence in church and state, were the special property of priests; and among the masses of the people, the conclusions, taken by faith, and ready made for them, were circulated, that the power of kings, clergy and nobility was sacred: so afterwards, the philosophical and legal subtleties of so-called science became the property of the priests of science; and through the masses only the ready-made conclusion, accepted by faith—that social order (the organization of society) must be such as it is, and cannot be otherwise—was diffused. So it is now. It is only in the sanctuaries of the modern sages that the laws of life and the development of organisms are analyzed. Whereas in the crowd, the ready-made conclusion, accepted on trust—that division of labour is a law confirmed by science, and therefore it must be that some starve and toil and others eternally feast, and that this very ruin of some and feasting of others is the undoubted law of man's life, to which we must submit—is circulated. The current justification of their idleness by all so-called educated people, with their various activities, from the railway proprietor down to the author or artist, is this: We men who have freed ourselves from the common human duty of taking part in the struggle for existence, are furthering progress, and so we are of great use to all human society, of such use that we counterbalance all the harm we do the people by consuming their labour. This reasoning seems to the men of our day to be not at all like the reasoning by which the former non-workers justified

themselves; just as the reasoning of the Roman emperors and citizens, that but for them the civilized world would go to ruin, seemed to them to be of quite another order from that of the Egyptians and Persians; and so also an exactly similar kind of reasoning seemed in turn to the knights and clergy of the Middle Ages totally different from that of the Romans. But it only seems. One need only reflect on the justification of our time in order to ascertain that there is nothing new in it. It is only a little differently dressed up, but it is the same because it is based on the same principle. Every justification of one man's consumption of the labour of others, while producing none himself, as with Pharaoh and his soothsayers, the emperors of Rome and those of the Middle Ages and their citizens, knights, priests, and clergy, always consists in these two assertions: First, we take the labour of the masses because we are different from others, people called by God to govern them and to teach them divine truths: Secondly, those who compose the masses cannot be judges of the measure of labour which we take from them for the good we do for them, because, as it has been said by the Pharisees, "This multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed" (John 7: 49). The people do not understand what is for their good, and therefore they cannot be judges of the benefits done to them. The justification of our time, notwithstanding all apparent originality, consists in facts of the same fundamental assertions: First, we are a different people—we are an educated people—we further progress and civilization, and by this fact we procure for the masses a great advantage. Secondly, the uneducated crowd does not understand the advantages we procure for them, and therefore cannot be judges of them. The fundamental assertions are the same. We free ourselves from labour, appropriate the labour of others, and by this increase the burden of our fellows; and then assert that in compensation for this we bring them a great advantage, of which they, owing to ignorance, cannot

be judges. Is it not, then, the same thing? The only difference lies in this: that formerly the claims on other men's labour were made by citizens, Roman priests, knights, and nobility, and now these claims are put forward by a caste who term themselves educated. The lie is the same, because the men who justify themselves are in the same false position. The lie consists in the fact, that, before beginning to reason about the advantages conferred on the workers by people who have freed themselves from labour —certain men, Pharaohs, priests, or we ourselves, educated people, assume this position first, and only afterwards manufacture a justification for it. The very position universally serves as a basis for the justification. The difference of our justification from the ancient ones consists merely in the fact that it is more false and less well grounded. The old emperors and popes, if they themselves, and the people, believed in their divine calling, could easily explain why they were to control the labour of others: they asserted that they were appointed by God himself for this very thing, and from God they had a commandment to teach the people divine truths revealed to them, and to govern them. But modern, educated men, who do not labour with their hands, and who acknowledge the equality of all men, cannot explain why they and their children (for education is only by money; that is, by power) should be those lucky persons called to an easy, idle life, out of those millions who by hundreds and thousands are perishing to make it possible for them to be educated. Their only justification consists in this, that, just as they are, instead of doing harm to the workers by freeing themselves from labour, and by swallowing up labour, they bring to the people some advantages, unintelligible to them, which compensate for all the evil they perpetrate.

CHAPTER 27 The theory by which men who have freed themselves from personal labour justify themselves, is, in

its simplest and most exact form, this: "We men, having freed ourselves from work, and having by violence appropriated the labour of others, we find ourselves better able to benefit them." In other words, certain men, for doing the people a palpable and comprehensible harm—utilizing their labour by violence, and thereby increasing the difficulty of their struggles with nature—do to them an impalpable and incomprehensible good. This is a very strange proposition; but the men, both of former as well of modern times, who have lived on the labour of workmen, believe it, and calm their conscience by it. Let us see in what way it is justified, in different classes of men who have freed themselves from labour in our own days. "I serve men by my activity in church or state—as king, minister, archbishop; I serve men by my trading or by industry; I serve men by my activity in the departments of science or art. By our activities we are all as necessary to the people as they are to us." So say various men of to-day who have freed themselves from labour. Let us consider seriatim the principles upon which they base the usefulness of their activity. There are only two indications of the usefulness of any activity of one man for another: (1) an exterior indication—the acknowledgement of the utility of the activity by those to whom it is applied; and (2) an interior indication—the desire to be of use to others lying at the root of the activity of the one who is trying to be of use. Statesmen (I include the Church dignitaries appointed by the government in the category of statesmen) are, it is said, of use to those whom they govern. The emperor, the king, the president of a republic, the prime minister, the minister of justice, the minister of war, the minister of public instruction, the bishop, and all under them who serve the state, all live free from the struggle of mankind for existence, having laid all the burden of this struggle on someone else, on the ground that their non-activity compensates for this. Let us apply the first indication to



those for whose welfare the activity of statesmen is bestowed. Do they, I ask, recognize the usefulness of this activity? Yes, it is recognized. Most men consider statesmanship necessary to them. The majority recognize the usefulness of this activity in principle; but in all its manifestations known to us, in all particular cases known to us, the usefulness of each of the institutions and of each of the manifestations of this activity is not only denied by those for whose advantage it is performed, but they assert that it is even pernicious and hurtful. There is no state function or social activity which is not considered by many men to be hurtful: there is no institution which is not considered pernicious—courts of justice, banks, local self-government, police, clergy. Every state activity, from the minister down to the policeman, from the bishop to the sexton, is considered by some men to be useful and by others to be pernicious. And this is the case not only in Russia but throughout the world; in France as well as in America. The activity of the republican party is considered pernicious by the radical party, and vice versa: the activity of the radical party, if the power is in their hands, is considered bad by the republican and other parties. But not only is it a fact that the activity of statesmen is never considered by all men to be useful, this activity has, besides, this peculiarity, that it must always be carried out by violence, and that, to attain its end, murders, executions, prisons, taxes raised by force, and so on, became necessary. It appears therefore that besides the fact that the usefulness of state activity is not recognized by all men, and is always denied by one portion of men, this usefulness has the peculiarity of vindicating itself always by violence. Therefore the usefulness of state activity cannot be confirmed by the first indication—i.e., the fact that it is recognized by those men for whom it is said to be performed. Let us apply the second test. Let us ask statesmen themselves, from the Tsar down to the

policeman, from the president to the secretary, from the patriarch to the sexton, begging for a sincere answer, whether, in occupying their respective positions they have in view the good which they wish to do for men or something else. In their desire to fill the situation of a Tsar, a president, a minister, a police-sergeant, a sexton, a teacher, are they moved by the desire of being useful to men or for their own personal advantage? And the answer of sincere men would be that their chief motive is their own personal advantage. So it appears that one class of men, who live by the labour of some others who are perishing by these labours, compensate for this indubitable evil by an activity which is always considered by a great many men to be not only useless, but pernicious; which cannot be accepted voluntarily, but to which men must always be compelled, and the aim of which is not the benefit of others but the personal advantage of the men who perform it. What is it, then, that confirms the theory that state activity is useful for humanity? Only the fact that the men who perform it firmly profess to believe it to be useful, and that it has been always in existence. But so some not only useless, but very pernicious institutions, like slavery, prostitution, and wars, have always been in existence. Business people (merchants, manufacturers, railway proprietors, bankers, land-owners) believe that they do a good which compensates for the harm undoubtedly done by them. On what grounds do they believe this? To the question, By whom is the usefulness of their activity recognized? men in church and in state are able to point to the thousands and millions of working-people who in principle recognize the usefulness of state and church activity. But to whom will bankers, distillers, manufacturers of velvet, of bronzes, of looking-glasses, to say nothing of guns—to whom will they point when we ask them, Is their usefulness recognized by public opinion? If men can be found who recognize the usefulness of manufacturing

chintzes, rails, beer, and such like things, there will be found also a still greater number of men who consider the manufacture of these articles pernicious. As for the merchants whose activity is confined to prices, and land-owners, nobody would even attempt to justify them. Besides, this activity is always associated with harm to working-people, and with violence, which, if less direct than that of the state, is yet just as cruel in its consequences. For the activities displayed in industry and in trade are entirely based on taking advantage of the wants of working-people in every form in order to compel them to hard and hated labour; to buying cheap, and to selling necessaries at the highest possible price and to raising the interest on money. From whatever point we consider this activity we can see that the usefulness of business-men is not recognised by those for whom it is expended, neither generally nor in particular cases; and by the majority their activity is considered to be directly pernicious. If we were to apply the second test and to ask, What is the chief motive of the activity of business-men? we should receive a still more determinate answer than that on the activity of statesmen. If a statesman says that besides a personal advantage he has in view the common benefit, we cannot help believing him, and each of us knows such men. But a business-man, from the very nature of his occupations cannot have in view a common advantage, and would be ridiculous in the sight of his fellows if he were in his business aiming at something besides increasing his wealth and keeping it. And, therefore, working-people do not consider the activity of business-men of any advantage to them. Their activity is associated with violence; and its object is not their good but always and only personal advantage; and yet, strange to say, these business-men are so assured of their own usefulness that they boldly, for the sake of their imaginary good, do an undoubted, obvious harm to workmen by extricating themselves from labour,

and consuming the produce of the working-classes. Scientists and artists have also freed themselves from labour by putting it on others, and live with a quiet conscience believing that they bring sufficient advantages to other men to compensate for it. On what is this assurance based? Let us ask them as we have done statesmen and business-men. Is the utility of the arts and sciences recognized by all, or even by the majority, of working-people? We shall receive a very sad answer. The activity of men in the State Church and government offices is recognized to be useful in theory by almost all, and in application by the majority of those for whom it is performed. The activity of business-men is recognized only by those who are engaged in it or who desire to practise it. Those who bear on their shoulders all the labour of life and who feed and clothe the scientists and artists cannot recognize the usefulness of the activity of these men because they cannot even form an idea about an activity which always appears to workmen useless and even depraving. Thus, without any exception, working-people think the same about universities, libraries, conservatories, picture and statue galleries, and theatres, which are built at their expense. A workman considers this activity so decidedly pernicious that he does not send his children to be taught; and in order to compel people to accept this activity it has everywhere been found necessary to introduce a law compelling parents to send the children to school. A workman always looks at this activity with ill-will, and only ceases to look at it so when he ceases to be a workman, and through gain and so-called education passes out of the class of working-people into the class of men who live on the neck of others. Notwithstanding the fact that the usefulness of the activity of scientists and artists is not recognized and even cannot be recognized by any workman, these men are, all the same, compelled to make sacrifices for such an activity. A statesman simply sends

another to the guillotine or to prison; a business-man, utilizing the labour of someone else, takes from him his last resource, leaving him the alternative of starvation or labour destructive to his health and life: but a man of science or of art seemingly compels nobody to do anything; he merely offers the good he has done to those who are willing to take it; but, to be able to make his productions undesirable to the working-people, he takes away from them by violence, through the statesmen, a great part of their labour for the building and keeping open of academies, universities, colleges, schools, museums, libraries, conservatories, and for the wages for himself and his fellows. But if we were to ask the scientists and artists the object which they are pursuing in their activity, we should receive the most astonishing replies. A statesman would answer that his aim was the common welfare; and in his answer, there would be an admixture of truth confirmed by public opinion. In the answer of the business-man, there would be less probability; but we could admit even this also. But the answer of the scientists and artists strikes one at once by its want of proof and by its effrontery. Such men say, without bringing any proofs (just as priests used to do in olden times) that their activity is the most important of all, and that without it mankind would go to ruin. They assert that it is so, notwithstanding the fact that nobody except themselves either understands or acknowledges their activity, and notwithstanding the fact that, according to their own definition, true science and true art should not have a utilitarian aim. These men are occupied with the matter they like, without troubling themselves what advantage will come out of it to men; and they are always assured that they are doing the most important and the most necessary thing for all mankind. So that while a sincere statesman, acknowledging that the chief motive of his activity is a personal one, tries to be as useful as possible to the working-people; while a business-man,

acknowledging the egotism of his activity, tries to give it an appearance of being one of universal utility—men of science and art do not consider it necessary even to seem to shelter themselves under a pretence of usefulness, they deny even the object of usefulness, so sure are they, not only of the usefulness but even of the sacredness of their own business. So it turns out that the third class of men who have freed themselves from labour and laid it on others, are occupied with things which are totally incomprehensible to the working-people, and which these people consider trifles and often very pernicious trifles; and are occupied with these things without any consideration of their usefulness but merely for the gratification of their own pleasure: it turns out that these men are, from some reason or other, quite assured that their activity will always produce that without which the work-people would never be able to exist. Men have freed themselves from labouring for their living and have thrown the work upon others who perish under it: they utilize this labour and assert that their occupations, which are incomprehensible to all other men, and which are not directed to useful aims, compensate for all the evil they are doing to men by freeing themselves from the trouble of earning their livelihood and by swallowing up the labour of others. The statesman, to compensate for the undoubted and obvious evil which he does to man by freeing himself from the struggle with nature and by appropriating the labour of others, does men another obvious and undoubted harm by countenancing all sorts of violence. The business-man, to compensate for the undoubted and obvious harm which he does to men by using up their labour, tries to earn for himself as much wealth as possible; that is, as much of other men's labour as possible. The man of science and art, in compensating for the same undoubted and obvious harm which he does to working-people, is occupied with matters to which he feels attracted and which are quite incomprehensible to work-

people, and which, according to his own assertion, in order to be true, ought not to aim at usefulness. Therefore, all these men are quite sure that their right of utilizing other men's labour is secure. Yet it seems obvious that all those men who have freed themselves from the labour of earning their livelihood have no justification for doing so. But, strange to say, these men firmly believe in their own righteousness, and live as they do with an easy conscience. There must be some plausible ground, some false belief, at the bottom of such a profound error.

