WHAT SHALL WE DO by Leo Tolstoy

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CHAPTER 35 To say that the activities of the arts and sciences have co-operated in forwarding the progress of mankind, and by these activities to mean that which is now called by this name, is as to say that an awkward moving of the oars, hindering the progress of a boat going down the stream, is forwarding the progress of the boat; while it only hinders it. The so-called division of labour—that is, the violation of other men's labour which has become in our time a condition of the activity of men of art and science—has been, and still remains, the chief cause of the slowness of the progress of mankind. The proof of it we have in the acknowledgement that the acquisitions of art and science are not accessible to the working-classes because of a wrong distribution of wealth. And the incorrectness of this distribution does not diminish in proportion to the progress of art and science, but rather increases. Nor is it astonishing that such is the case; because the incorrect distribution of wealth proceeds solely from the theory of the division of labour, preached by men of art and science for selfish purposes. Science, defending the division of labour as an unchangeable law, sees that the distribution of wealth based upon this division is incorrect and pernicious, and asserts that its activity, which recognizes the division of labour, will set all right again, and lead men to happiness. It appears, then, that some men utilize the labour of others; but if they will only continue to do this for a long time, and on a still larger scale, then this incorrect

distribution of wealth, that is, utilizing of other men's labour, will vanish. Men are standing by an ever-increasing spring of water, and are busy turning it aside from thirsty men, and then they assert that it is they who produce this water, and that soon there will be so much of it that everybody will have enough and to spare. And this water, which has been running unceasingly, and nourishing all mankind, is not only not the result of the activity of those who, standing at its source, turn it aside, but it runs and spreads itself in spite of the endeavours to stop it from doing so. There has always existed a true church—in other words, men united by the highest truth accessible to them at a certain epoch—but it has never been that church which gave herself out for such; and there have always been real art and science, but they were not those which call themselves now by these names. Men who consider themselves to be the representatives of art and science in a given period of time, always imagine that they have been doing, are doing, and the important fact is that they are on the point of making wonderful things, and that beyond them there has never been any art or science. Thus it seemed to the sophists, to the scholiasts, alchemists, cabalists, Talmudists, and to our own scientific science and to our artistic art.

CHAPTER 36 "But science! art! You repudiate science, art; that is, you repudiate that by which mankind live." I am always hearing this: people choose this way to put aside my arguments altogether without analyzing them. "He repudiates science and art; he wishes to turn men back again to the savage state; why, then, should we listen to him, or argue with him?" But this is unjust. Not only do I not repudiate science—human reasonable activity—and art —the expression of this reasonable activity—but it is actually in the name of this reasonable activity and its expression that I speak what I do, in order that mankind

may avoid the savage state towards which they are rapidly moving, owing to the false teaching of our time. Science and art are as necessary to men as food, drink, and clothes —even still more necessary than these; but they become such, not because we decide that what we call science and art are necessary, but because they are truly necessary to men. Now, if I should prepare hay for the bodily food of men, my idea that hay is food would not make it to be so. I cannot say, Why do you not eat hay when it is your necessary food? Food is, indeed, necessary, but perhaps what I offer is not food at all. This very thing has happened with our science and art. And to us it seems that when we add to a Greek word the termination logy, and call this science, it will be science indeed; and if we call an indecency, like the painting of naked women, by the Greek word “choreography,” and term it art, it will be art indeed. But however much we may say this, the business which we are about, in counting up the insects, and chemically analyzing the contents of the Milky Way, in painting water-nymphs and historical pictures, in writing novels, and in composing symphonies, this, our business, will not become science or art until it is willingly accepted by those for whom it is being done. Till now it has not been accepted. If some men only were allowed to prepare food, and all others were either forbidden to do it, or be rendered incapable of producing it, I daresay that the quality of the food would deteriorate. If the men who had the exclusive privilege of producing food were Russian peasants, then there would be no other food than black bread, kvas, potatoes, and onions, which they are fond of, and which is agreeable to them. The same would be the case with that highest human activity in art and science if their exclusive privilege were appropriated by one caste, with this difference only, that in bodily food there cannot be too great digressions from the natural;—bread as well as onions, though unsavoury food, is still eatable: but in mental food there may be great

digressions; and some men may for a very long time feed upon an unnecessary, or even hurtful and poisonous, mental food; they themselves may slowly kill themselves with opium or with spirits, and this sort of food they may offer to the masses of the people. This very thing has happened to us. And it has happened because men of art and science are in privileged conditions; because art and science in our world are not that mental activity of all mankind, without any exception, who separate their best powers for the service of art and science: but it is the activity of a small company of men having the monopoly of these occupations, and calling themselves scientists and artists; and therefore they have perverted the very conceptions of art and science, and lost the sense of their own calling, and are merely occupied in amusing a small company of parasites and saving them from burdensome dulness. Since men have existed, they have always had science in the plainest and largest sense of the word. Science, as the sum of all human information, has always been in existence; and without it life is not conceivable, and there is no necessity whatever either to attack or to defend it. But the fact is this, that the reason of this knowledge is so various, so much information of all kinds enters into it, from information how to obtain iron up to the knowledge about movements of the celestial bodies, that man would be lost among all this varied information if he had no clew to help him to decide which of all these kinds of information is more important, and which less. Therefore, the highest wisdom of men has always consisted in finding out the clew whereby to arrange the information of men, and to decide what kinds of information are more, and what are less, important. This which has directed all other knowledge, men have always called science in the strictest sense of the word. Such science has always been, up to the present time, in human societies which have left the savage state behind them. Since mankind has existed teachers have

appeared in every nation to form science in this strict sense —the science about what it is most necessary for men to know. The object of this science has always been the inquiry as to what was the destiny, and therefore the true welfare, of each man and of all men. This science has served as a clew to determine the importance and the expression of all other sciences. Such information and art as co-operated with the science of man's destiny and welfare were considered highest in public opinion. Such was the science of Confucius, Buddha, Moses, Socrates, Christ, Mohammed—science such as it has been understood by all men save our own circle of so-called educated people. Such a science has not only always occupied the first place, but it is the one science which has determined the importance of other sciences. And this, not at all because so-called learned men of our time imagine that it is only deceitful priests and teachers of this science who have given it such an importance, but because, as, indeed, everyone can learn by his own inward experience, without the science of man's destiny and welfare, there cannot be any determining of other values, or any choice of art and science for man. And, therefore, there cannot be any study of science, for there are innumerable quantities of subjects to which science may be applied. I italicize the word innumerable, as I use it in its exact value. Without knowledge as to what constitutes the calling and welfare of all men, all other arts and sciences become, as is really the case with us at present, only an idle and pernicious amusement. Mankind have been living long, and they have never been living without a science relative to the calling and welfare of men: it is true that the science of the welfare of men to a superficial observation appears to be different with Buddists, Brahmins, Hebrews, Christians, with the followers of Confucius and those of Laotse, though one need only reflect on these teachings in order to see their essential unity; where men have left the savage state

behind them, we find this science; and now of a sudden it turns out that modern men have decided that this very science which has been till now the guide of all human information, is the obstacle in the way of everything. Men build houses; one architect makes one estimate, another makes a second, and so on. The estimates are a little different, but they are separately correct; and every one sees that, if each estimate is fulfilled, the house will be erected. Such architects are Confucius, Buddha, Moses, Christ. And now certain men come and assure us that the chief thing to come by is the absence of any estimate, and that men ought to build anyhow according to eyesight. And this “anyhow” these men call the most exact science, as the Pope terms himself the “most holy.” Men deny every science, the most essential science of men’s calling and welfare; and this denial of science they call science. Since men have existed, great intellects have always appeared, which, in the struggle with the demands of their reason and conscience, have put to themselves questions concerning the calling and welfare, not only of themselves individually, but of every man. What does that Power, which created me, require from me and from each man? And what am I to do in order to satisfy the craving ingrafted in me for a personal and a common welfare? They have asked themselves, I am a whole and a part of something unfathomable, infinite: what are to be my relations to other parts similar to me—to men and to the whole? And from the voice of conscience and from reason, and from consideration on what men have said who lived before, and from contemporaries who have asked themselves the same questions, these great teachers have deduced teachings—plain, clear, intelligible to all men, and always such as can be put into practice. Such men were of the first, second, third, and all magnitudes. The world is full of such men. All living men put to themselves the question, How am I to reconcile my own demands for personal life with

conscience and reason, which demand the common good of all men? And out of this common travail new forms of life are evolved slowly, but unceasingly, satisfying more and more the demands of reason and conscience. And of a sudden a new caste of men appears, who say, All these are nonsense, and are to be left behind. This is the deductive way of thinking (though wherein lies the difference between the inductive and the deductive way of thinking, nobody ever has been able to understand), and this is also the method of the theological and metaphysical periods. All that men have understood by inward experience, and have related to each other concerning the consciousness of the law of their own life (functional activity, in their cant phrase); all that from the beginning of the world has been done in this direction by the greatest intellects of mankind —all these are trifles, having no weight whatever. According to this new teaching, you are the cell of an organism, and the problem of your reasonable activity consists in trying to ascertain your functional activity. In order to ascertain this, you must make observations outside yourself. The fact that you are a cell which thinks, suffers, speaks, and understands, and that for that very reason you can inquire of another similar speaking, suffering cell whether he or she suffers and rejoices in the same way as yourself, and that thus you may verify your own experience; and the fact that you may make use of what the speaking cells, who lived and suffered before you wrote on the subject; and your knowledge that millions of cells agreeing with what the past cells have written, confirm your own experience, that you yourself are a living cell, who always, by a direct inward experience, apprehend the correctness or incorrectness of your own functional activity—all this means nothing, we are told: it is all a false and evil method. The true scientific method is this: If you wish to learn in what your functional activity consists, what is your destiny and welfare, and what the destiny of mankind, and of the

whole world, then first you must cease to listen to the voice and demands of your conscience and of your reason, which manifest themselves inwardly to you and to your fellow-men; you must leave off believing all that the great teachers of humanity have said about their own conscience and reason, and you must consider all this to be nonsense, and begin at the beginning. And in order to begin from the beginning, you have to observe through a microscope the movements of amœbæ and the cells of tape-worms; or, still easier, you must believe everything that people with the diploma of infallibility may tell you about them. And observing the movements of these amœbæ and cells, or reading what others have seen, you must ascribe to these cells your own human feelings and calculations as to what they desire, what are their tendencies, their reflections and calculations, their habits; and from these observations (in which each word contains some mistake of thought or of expression), according to analogy, you must deduce what is your own destiny, and what that of other cells similar to you. In order to be able to understand yourself, you must study not merely the tape-worm which you see, but also microscopic animalcules which you cannot see, and the transformation from one set of things into another, which neither you nor anybody else has ever seen, and which you certainly will never see. The same holds good with art. Wherever a true science has existed, it has been expressed by art. Since men have existed they have always separated out of all their activities, from their varied information, the chief expression of science, the knowledge of man’s destination and welfare; and art, in the strict sense of the word, has been the expression of this. Since men have existed, there have always been persons particularly sensitive to the teaching of man’s welfare and destiny, who have expressed in word, and upon psaltery and cymbals, their human struggle with deceit which led them aside from their true destiny, and their sufferings in this struggle,

their hopes about the victory of good, their despair about the triumph of evil, and their raptures in expectation of coming welfare. Since men have existed, the true art, that which has been valued most highly by men, had no other destiny than to be the expression of science on man's destiny and welfare. Always down to the present time art has served the teaching of life (afterwards called religion), and it has only been this art which men have valued so highly. But contemporaneously with the fact that in place of the science of man's destiny and welfare appears the science of universal knowledge—since science lost its own sense and meaning, and true science has been scornfully called religion—true art, as an important activity of men, has disappeared. As long as the church existed, and taught men's calling and welfare, art served the church, and was true; but from the moment it left the church, and began to serve a science which served everything it met, art lost its meaning, and, notwithstanding its old-fashioned claims, and a stupid assertion that art serves merely art itself, and nothing else, it has turned out to be a trade which procures luxuries for men, and unavoidably mixes itself with choreography, culinary art, hair-dressing, and cosmetics, the producers of which may call themselves artists with as much right as the poets, painters, and musicians of our day. Looking back, we see that during thousands of years, from among thousands of millions of men who have lived, there came forth a few like Confucius, Buddha, Solon, Socrates, Solomon, Homer, Isaiah, David. True artist-producers of spiritual food seem to appear seldom among men, notwithstanding the fact that they appear, not from one caste only, but from among all men; and it is not without cause that mankind have always so highly valued them. And now it turns out that we have no longer any need of all these former great factors of art and science. Now, according to the law of the division of labour, it is possible to manufacture scientific and artistic factors almost

mechanically; and in the space of ten years we shall manufacture more great men of art and science than have been born among all men from the beginning of the world. Nowadays there is a trade corporation of learned men and artists, and by an improved way they prepare all the mental food which is wanted by mankind. And they have prepared so much of it, that there need no longer be any remembrance of the old producers, not only of the very ancient, but also of the more recent—all their activity, we are told, was the activity of the theological and metaphysical period: all had to be destroyed, and the true, mental activity began some fifty years ago. And in these fifty years we have manufactured so many great men that in a German university there are more of them than have been in the whole world, and of sciences we have manufactured a great number too; for one need only put to a Greek word the termination logy, and arrange the subject according to ready-made paragraphs, and the science is created: we have thus manufactured so many sciences that not only cannot one man know them all, but he cannot even remember all their names—these names alone would fill a large dictionary; and every day new sciences come into existence. In this respect we are like that Finnish teacher who taught the children of a land-owner the Finnish language instead of the French. He taught very well; but there was one drawback—that nobody, except himself, understood it. We have learned everything very well, but the pity of it is that nobody but ourselves understands it, and that everybody else considers it good-for-nothing nonsense. But to this also there is an explanation: Men do not understand all the utility of the scientific science because they are still under the influence of the theological period of knowledge, that stupid period when all the people of the Hebrew race, as well as the Chinese and Indians and Greeks, understood everything spoken to them by their great teachers. But whatever may be the cause, the fact is

this—that art and science have always existed among mankind; and when they really existed, then they were necessary and intelligible to all men. We are busy about something which we call art and science, and it turns out that what we are busy about is neither necessary nor intelligible to men. So that we have no right to give the name of art or science to our doings.

CHAPTER 37 But it is said to me, “You only give another narrower definition of art and science, which science does not agree with; but even this does not exclude them, and notwithstanding all you say, there still remains the scientific and art activities of men like Galileo, Bruno, Homer, Michael Angelo, Beethoven, Wagner, and other learned men and artists of lesser magnitude who have devoted all their lives to art and science.” Usually this is said in the endeavour to establish a link, which in other cases they disown, to connect the activity of the former learned men and artists with the modern ones, trying to forget that new principle of the division of labour by reason of which art and science now occupy a privileged position. First of all, it is not possible to establish any such connection between the former factors and the modern ones, even as the holy life of the first Christian has nothing in common with the lives of popes: thus, the activity of men like Galileo, Shakespeare, Beethoven, has nothing in common with the activities of men like Tyndal, Hugo, and Wagner. As the Holy Fathers would have denied any connection with the Popes, so the ancient factors of science would have denied any relationship with the modern ones. Secondly, owing to that importance which art and science ascribe to themselves, they have established a very clear standard by means of which we are able to determine whether they do, or do not, fulfil their destiny; and we therefore decide, not without proofs, but according to their own standard, whether that activity which calls itself art

and science has, or has not, any right thus to call itself. Though the Egyptians or Greek priests performed mysteries known to none but themselves, and said that these mysteries included all art and science, I could not, on the ground of the asserted utility of these to the people, ascertain the reality of their science, because this said science, according to their ipse dixit, was a supernatural one: but now we all have a very clear and plain standard, excluding everything supernatural; art and science promise to fulfil the mental activity of mankind, for the welfare of society, or even of the whole of mankind. Therefore we have a right to call only such activity, art and science, which has this aim in view, and attains it. And therefore, however those learned men and artists may call themselves, who excogitate the theory of penal laws, of state laws, and of the laws of nations, who invent new guns and explosive substances, who compose obscene operas and operettas, or similarly obscene novels, we have no right to call such activity the activity of art and science, because this activity has not in view the welfare of the society or of mankind, but on the contrary is directed to the harm of men. In like manner, however these learned men may call themselves, who in their simplicity are occupied during all their lives with the investigations of the microscopical animalcule and of telescopical and spectral phenomena; or those artists who, after having carefully investigated the monuments of old times, are busy writing historical novels, making pictures, concocting symphonies and beautiful verses, all these men, notwithstanding all their zeal, cannot, according to the definition of their own science, be called men of science or art, first because their activity in science for the sake of science, and of art for art, has not in view man’s welfare; and secondly, because we do not see any results of these activities for the welfare of society or mankind. The fact that sometimes something useful or agreeable for some men comes of their activities,

by no means gives us any right, according to their own scientific definition, to consider them to be men of art and science. In like manner, however those men may call themselves who excogitate the application of electricity to lighting, heating, and motion; or who invent some new chemical combinations, producing dynamite or fine colours; men who correctly play Beethoven's symphonies; who act on the stage, or paint portraits well, domestic pictures, landscapes, and other pictures; who compose interesting novels, the object of which is merely to amuse rich people—the activity of these men cannot be called art and science, because this activity is not directed, like the activity of the brain in the organism, to the welfare of the whole, but is guided merely by personal gain, privileges, money, which one obtains for the inventing and producing of so-called art. Therefore this activity cannot possibly be separated from other covetous, personal activity, which adds agreeable things to life, as the activity of innkeepers, jockeys, milliners, prostitutes, and so on, because the activity of the first, the second, and the last, do not come under the definition of art and science, on the ground of the division of labour, which promises to serve for the welfare of all mankind. The scientific definition of art and science is a correct one; but unluckily, the activity of modern art and science does not come under it. Some produce directly hurtful things, others useless things; and a third party invents trifles fit only for the use of rich people. They may all be very good persons, but they do not fulfil what they have taken upon themselves to fulfil, according to their own definition; and therefore they have as little right to call themselves men of art and science as the modern clergy, who do not fulfil their duties, have right to consider themselves the bearers and teachers of divine truth. It is not difficult to understand why the factors of modern art and science have not fulfilled their calling, and cannot fulfil it. They do not fulfil it, because they have converted their

duty into a right. The scientific and art activities, in their true sense, are fruitful only when they ignore their rights, and know only their duties. Mankind value this activity so highly, only because it is a self-denying one. If men are really called to serve others by mental labour, they will have to suffer in performing this labour, because it is only by suffering that spiritual fruit is produced. Selfdenying and suffering are the lot and portion of a thinker and an artist, because their object is the welfare of men. Men are wretched: they suffer and go to ruin. One cannot wait and lose one's time. A thinker and an artist will never sit on the heights of Olympus, as we are apt to imagine: he must suffer in company with men in order to find salvation or consolation. He will suffer because he is constantly in anxiety and agitation; he might have found out and told what would give happiness to men, might have saved them from suffering; and he has neither found it out nor said it, and to-morrow it may be too late—he may die. And therefore suffering and self-sacrifice will always be the lot of the thinker and the artist. He who is brought up in an establishment where learned men and artists are created (but, in reality, they create only destroyers of art and science), and who obtains a diploma, and is well provided for, for life, will not become a thinker or an artist, but he who would gladly abstain from thinking, and from expressing that which is ingrafted in his soul, but which he dare not overlook, being drawn to it by two irresistible powers—his own inward impulse and the wants of men. Thinkers and artists cannot be sleek, fat men, enjoying themselves in self-conceit. Spiritual and mental activity and their expressions are really necessary for others, and are the most difficult of men's callings—a cross, as it is called in the gospel. The only one certain characteristic of the presence of a calling is this self-denying—the sacrifice of one's self in order to manifest the power ingrafted in man for the benefit of others. To teach how many insects there

are in the world, and to observe the spots on the sun, to write novels and operas, can be done without suffering; but to teach men their welfare, which entirely consists in self denial and in serving others, and to express this teaching powerfully, cannot be done without self-denial. The Church existed in her purity as long as her teachers endured patiently and suffered; but as soon as they became fat and sleek, their teaching activity ended. “Formerly,” say the people, “priests were of gold, and chalices of wood; now chalices are of gold, and priests of wood.” It was not in vain that Jesus Christ died on a cross: it is not in vain that sacrifice and suffering conquer every thing. As for our art and sciences, they are provided for: they have diplomas, and everybody only thinks about how to provide still better for them; that is, to make it impossible for them to serve men. A true art and a true science have two unmistakable characteristics—the first, an interior one, that a minister of art or science fulfils his calling, not for the sake of gain, but with self-denial; and the second, an exterior one, that his productions are intelligible to all men, whose welfare he is aiming at. Whatever men may consider to be their destiny and welfare, science will be the teacher of this destiny and welfare, and art the expression of this teaching. The laws of Solon, of Confucius, are science; the teachings of Moses, of Christ, are science; the temples in Athens, the psalms of David, church worship, are art: but finding out the fourth dimension of matter, and tabulating chemical combinations, and so on, have never been, and never will be, science. The place of true science is occupied, in our time, by theology and law; the place of true art is occupied by the church and state ceremonies, in which nobody believes, and which are not considered seriously by anybody; while that which with us is called art and science, is only the production of idle minds and feelings desirous to stimulate similarly idle minds and feelings, and unintelligible and dumb for the people, because they have

not their welfare in view. Since we have known the lives of men, we have always and everywhere found a ruling false doctrine, calling itself science, which does not show men the true meaning of life, but rather hides it from them. So it was among the Egyptians, the Indians, the Chinese, and partially among the Greeks (sophists); and among the mystics, Gnostics, and cabalists; in the Middle Ages, in theology, scholasticism, alchemy; and so on down to our days. How fortunate indeed we are to be living in such a peculiar time, when that mental activity which calls itself science is not only free from errors, but, we are assured, is in a state of peculiar progress! Does not this good fortune come from the fact that man can not and will not see his own deformities? While of the sciences of theologians, and that of cabalists, nothing is left but empty words, why should we be so particularly fortunate? The characteristics of our times and of former times are quite similar; there is the same self-conceit and blind assurance that we only are on the true way, and that only with us true knowledge begins; there are the same expectations that we shall presently discover something very wonderful; and there is the same exposure of our error, in the fact that all our wisdom remains with us, while the masses of the people do not understand it, and neither accept nor need it. Our position is a very difficult one, but why should we not look it in the face? It is time to come to our senses, and to look more closely to ourselves. We are, indeed, nothing but scribes and Pharisees, who, sitting in Moses' seat, and having the key of the kingdom of God, do not enter themselves, and refuse entrance to others. We, priests of art and science, are most wretched deceivers, who have much less right to our position than the most cunning and depraved priests ever had. For our privileged position, there is no excuse whatever: we have taken up this position by a kind of swindling, and we retain it by deceit. Pagan priests, the clergy, Russian as well as Roman Catholic,

however depraved they may have been, had rights to their position, because they professed to teach men about life and salvation. And we, who have cut the ground from under their feet, and proved to men that they were deceivers, we have taken their place, and not only do not teach men about life, we even acknowledge that there is no necessity for them to learn. We suck the blood of the people, and for this we teach our children Greek and Latin grammars so that they also may continue the same parasitic life which we are living. We say, There have been castes, we will abolish them. But what means the fact that some men and their children work, and other men and their children do not work? Bring a Hindu who does not know our language, and show him the Russian and the European lives of many generations, and he will recognize the existence of two important definite castes of working-people and of non-working people as they are in existence in his own country. As in his country, so also among us, the right of not working is acquired through a peculiar initiation which we call art and science, and education generally. It is this education, and the perversions of reason associated with it, that have brought to us this wonderful folly, whence it has come to pass that we do not see what is so plain and certain. We are eating up the lives of our brethren, and consider ourselves to be Christians, humane, educated, and quite in the right.

CHAPTER 38 What is to be done? What must we do? This question, which includes acknowledgment of the fact that our life is bad and unrighteous, and at the same time hints that there is no possibility of changing it—this question I hear everywhere, and therefore I chose it for the title of my work. I have described my own sufferings, my search, and the answer which I have found to this question. I am a man like others; and if I distinguish myself from an average man of my own circle in any thing, it is chiefly in the fact that I,

more than this average man, have served and indulged the false teaching of our world, that I have been more praised by the men of the prevalent school of teaching, and that therefore I am more depraved, and have gone farther astray, than most of my fellows. Therefore I think that the answer to this question which I have found for myself will do for all sincere persons who will put the same question to themselves. First of all, to the question, “What is to be done?” I answer that I must neither deceive other men nor myself; that I must not be afraid of the truth, whatever the result may be. We all know what it is to deceive other men; and notwithstanding this, we do deceive from morning to evening—“Not at home,” when I am in; “Very glad,” when I am not at all glad; “Esteemed,” when I do not esteem; “I have no money,” when I have it, and so on. We consider the deception of others to be evil, particularly a certain kind of deception, but we are not afraid to deceive ourselves: yet the worst direct lie to men, seeing its result, is nothing in comparison with that lie to ourselves according to which we shape our lives. Now, this very lie we must avoid if we wish to be able to answer the question, “What is to be done?” Indeed, how am I to answer the question as to what is to be done, when every thing I do, all my life, is based upon a lie and I carefully give out this lie to others and to myself as truth? Not to lie in this sense means to be not afraid of truth; not to invent excuses, and not to accept excuses invented by others, in order to hide from one’s self the deductions of reason and conscience; not to be afraid of contradicting all our surroundings, and of being left alone with reason and conscience; not to be afraid of that condition to which truth and conscience lead us: however dreadful it may be, it cannot be worse than that which is based upon deceit. To avoid lying, for men in our privileged position of mental labour, means not to be afraid of truth. Perhaps we owe so much that we should never be able to pay it all; but however much we may owe, we must make

out our bill: however far we have gone astray, it is better to return than to continue straying. Lying to our fellows is always disadvantageous. Every business is always more directly done by truth than by lies, and more quickly too. Lying to other men makes matters only more complicated, and retards the decision; but lying to one's self, which is given out to be the truth, entirely ruins the life of man. If a man considers a wrong road to be a right one, then his every step leads him only farther from his aim: a man who has been walking for a long time on a wrong road may find out for himself, or be told by others, that his road is a wrong one; but if he, being afraid of the thought how far he has gone astray, tries to assure himself that he may, by following this wrong course, still come across the right one, then he will certainly never find it. If a man becomes afraid of the truth, and, on seeing it, will not acknowledge it, but accepts falsehood for truth, then this man will never learn what is to be done. We, not only rich men, but men in privileged position, so-called educated men, have gone so far astray that we require either a firm resolution or very great sufferings on our false way to bring us to our senses again, and to recognize the lie by which we live. I became aware of the lie of our life, thanks to those sufferings to which my wrong road led me; and, having acknowledged the error of the way on which I was bent, I had the boldness to go, first in theory, then in reality, wherever my reason and conscience led me, without any deliberation as to whither they were tending. I was rewarded for this boldness. All the complex, disjointed, intricate, and meaningless phenomena of life surrounding me became of a sudden clear; and my position among these phenomena, formerly so strange and vile, became of a sudden natural and easy. In this new position my activity has exactly determined itself, but it is quite a different activity from that which appeared possible to me before: it is a new activity, far more quiet, affectionate, and joyous. The very

thing which frightened me before, now attracts me. Therefore, I think that every one who sincerely puts to himself the question, “What is to be done?” and in answering this question, does not lie or deceive himself, but goes wherever his reason and conscience may lead him, that man has already answered the question. If he will only avoid deceiving himself, he will find out what to do, where to go, and how to act. There is only one thing which may hinder him in finding an answer—that is too high an estimate of himself, and of his own position. So it was with me; and therefore the second answer to the question, “What is to be done?” resulting from the first, consisted for me in repenting, in the full meaning of this word: that is, entirely changing the estimate of my own position and activity. Instead of considering such to be useful and of importance, we must come to acknowledge it to be harmful and trifling; instead of considering ourselves educated, we must come to see our ignorance; instead of imagining ourselves to be kind and moral, we must acknowledge that we are immoral and cruel; instead of seeing our importance, we must see our own insignificance. I say, that besides avoiding lying to myself, I had moreover to repent, because, though the one results from the other, the wrong idea about my great importance was so much a part of my own nature, that until I had sincerely repented, and had put aside that wrong estimate of myself, I did not see the enormity of the lie of which I had been guilty. It was only when I repented—that is, left off considering myself to be a peculiar man, and began to consider myself to be like all other men—it was then that my way became clear to me. Before this I was not able to answer the question, “What is to be done?” because the very question itself was put incorrectly. Before I repented, I had put the question thus: “What activity should I choose, I, the man with the education and talents I have acquired? How can I compensate by this education and these talents for what I

have been taking away from the people?" This question was a false one, because it included the wrong idea of my not being like other men, but a peculiar man, called to serve other men with those talents and that education which I had acquired in forty years. I had put the question to myself, but in reality I had already answered it in advance by having determined beforehand that I was called upon to serve men by the kind of activity agreeable to myself. I really asked myself, "How can I, so fine a writer, one so very well informed, and with such talents, how can I utilize those talents for the benefit of mankind?" But the question ought to have been put thus—as it would have to be put to a learned rabbi who had studied all the Talmud, and knew the exact number of letters in the Holy Scripture, and all the subtleties of his science: "What can I do, who, from unlucky circumstances, have lost my best years in study instead of accommodating myself to labour—in learning the French language, the piano, grammar, geography, law, poetry; in reading novels, romances, philosophical theories, and in performing military exercises? what can I do, who have passed the best years of my life in idle occupations, depraving the soul? what can I do, notwithstanding these unlucky conditions of the past, in order to requite those men, who, during all this time, have fed and clothed me, and who still continue to feed and to clothe me?" If the question had been put thus, after I had repented, "What can I, so ruined a man, do?" the answer would have been easy: First of all, I must try to get my living honestly—that is, learn not to live upon the shoulders of others; and while learning this, and after I have learned it, to try on every occasion to be of use to men with my hands and with my feet, as well as with my brain and my heart, and with all of me that is wanted by men. Therefore I say that for one of my own circle, besides avoiding lying to others and ourselves, it is further necessary to repent, to lay aside pride about our education, refinement, and talents, not

considering ourselves to be benefactors of the people, advanced men, who are ready to share our useful acquirements with the people, but acknowledging ourselves to be entirely guilty, ruined, good-for-nothing men, who desire to turn over a new leaf, and not to be benefactors of the people, but to cease to offend and to humiliate them. Very often good young people, who sympathise with the negative part of my writings, put to me the question, “What must I do then? What have I, who have finished my study in the university or in some other high establishment—what have I to do in order to be useful?” These young people ask the question; but in the depths of their souls they have already decided that the education which they have received is their great advantage, and that they wish to serve the people by this very advantage. Therefore, there is one thing which they do not do—honestly and critically examine what they call their education, asking themselves whether it is a good or a bad thing. If they do this, they will be unavoidably led to decry their education, and to begin to learn anew; and this alone is what is wanted. They will never be able to answer the question, as to what there is to be done, while they put it wrongly. The question should be put thus: “How can I, a helpless, useless man, recognizing the misfortune of having lost my best years in studying the scientific Talmud, pernicious for soul and body, how can I rectify this mistake, and learn to serve men?” But the question is always put thus: “How can I, who have acquired so much fine information, how can I be useful to men with this my information?” Therefore, a man can never answer the question, “What is to be done?” until he leaves off deceiving himself and repents. And repentance is not dreadful, even as truth is not dreadful, but it is equally beneficent and fruitful of good. We need only accept the whole truth and fully repent in order to understand that in life no one has any rights or privileges, and that there is no

end of duties, and no limits to them, and that the first and unquestionable duty of a man is to take part in the struggle with nature for his own life and for the lives of other men. And this acknowledgment of men's duty forms the essence of the third answer to the question, "What is to be done?" I have tried to avoid deceiving myself. I have endeavoured to extirpate the last remnant of the false estimate of the importance of my education and talents, and to repent; but before answering the question, What is to be done? there stands a new difficulty. There are so many things to be done, that one requires to know what is to be done in particular? And the answer to this question has been given me by the sincere repentance of the evil in which I have been living. What is to be done? What is there exactly to be done? everybody keeps asking; and I, too, kept asking this, while, under the influence of a high opinion of my own calling, I had not seen that my first and unquestionable business is to earn my living, clothing, heating, building, and so forth, and in doing this to serve others as well as myself, because, since the world has existed, the first and unquestionable duty of every man has been comprised in this. In this one business, man receives—if he has already begun to take part in it—the full satisfaction of all the bodily and mental wants of his nature; to feed, clothe, take care of himself and of his family, will satisfy his bodily wants; to do the same for others, will satisfy his spiritual. Every other activity of man is only lawful when these have first been satisfied. In whatever department a man thinks his calling lies, whether in governing the people, in protecting his countrymen, in officiating at divine services, in teaching, in inventing the means of increasing the delights of life, in discovering the laws of the universe, in incorporating eternal truths in artistic images, the first and most unquestionable duty of a reasonable man will always consist in taking part in the struggle with nature for preserving his own life and the lives of other men. This duty

must always rank first, because the most necessary thing for men is life: and therefore, in order to protect and to teach men, and to make their lives more agreeable, it is necessary to keep this very life; while by not taking part in the struggle, and by swallowing up the labour of others, other lives are destroyed. And it is folly and impossible to endeavour to serve men while destroying their lives. Man's duty to acquire the means of living through the struggle with nature will always be unquestionably the very first of all duties, because it is the law of life, the violation of which unavoidably brings with it a punishment by destroying the bodily or mental life of man. If a man, living alone, free himself from the duty of struggling with nature, he will be at once punished by the perishing of his body. But if a man free himself from this duty by compelling other men to fulfil it for him, in ruining their lives, he will be at once punished by the destruction of his reasonable life; that is, of the life which has a reasonable sense in it. I had been so perverted by my antecedents, and this first and unquestionable law of God or nature is so hidden in our present world, that the fulfilling of it had seemed to me strange, and I was afraid and ashamed of it, as if the fulfilment, and not the violation, of this eternal and unquestionable law were strange, unnatural, and shameful. At first it seemed to me, that, in order to fulfil this law, some sort of accommodation was necessary, some established association of fellow-thinkers, the consent of the family, and life in the country (not in town): then I felt ashamed, as if I were putting myself forward in performing things so unusual to our life as bodily labour, and I did not know how to begin. But I needed only to understand that this was not some exclusive activity, which I have to invent and arrange, but that it was merely returning from the false condition in which I had lived to a natural one, merely rectifying that lie in which I had been living—I had only to acknowledge all this, and all the difficulties vanished. It was not at all necessary to

arrange and accommodate any thing, nor to wait for the consent of other people, because everywhere, in whatever condition I was, there were men who fed, dressed, and warmed me as well as themselves; and everywhere, under all circumstances, if I had sufficient time and strength, I was able to do these things for myself and for them. Nor could I feel a false shame in performing actions unusual and strange to me, because, in not doing so, I already experienced, not a false, but a real, shame. Having come to this conclusion, and to the practical deduction from it, I have been fully rewarded for not having been afraid of the deductions of reason, and for having gone where they led me. Having come to this practical conclusion, I was struck by the facility and simplicity of the solution of all those problems which had formerly seemed to me so difficult and complicated. To the question, “What have we to do?” I received a very plain answer: Do first what is necessary for yourself; arrange all you can do by yourself—your tea-urn, stove, water, and clothes. To the question, “Would not this seem strange to those who had been accustomed to do all this for me?” it appeared that it was strange only for about a week, and after a week it seemed more strange for me to return to my former condition. In answer to the question, “Is it necessary to organize this physical labour, to establish a society in a village upon this basis?” it appeared that it was not at all necessary to do all this; that if the labour does not aim at rendering idleness possible, and at utilizing other men’s labour—as is the case with men who save up money—but merely the satisfying of necessities, then such labour will naturally induce people to leave towns for the country, where this labour is most agreeable and productive. There was also no need to establish a society, because a workingman will naturally associate with other working-people. In answer to the question, “Would not this labour take up all my time, and would it not deprive me of the possibility of that mental activity which I

am so fond of, and to which I have become accustomed, and which in moments of doubt I consider to be useful?" the answer will be quite an unexpected one. The energy of my mental activity increased in proportion to bodily exercise, being freed from all that was superfluous. In fact, having spent eight hours in physical labour—half a day—which formerly I used to spend in endeavouring to struggle with dulness, there still remained for me eight hours, out of which in my circumstances I required five for mental labour; and if I, a very prolific writer, who had been doing nothing but write during forty years, and who had written three hundred printed sheets, then if during these forty years I had been doing ordinary work along with working-people, and, not taking into consideration winter evenings and holidays, had been reading and learning during the five hours a day, and had written only on holidays two pages a day (and I have sometimes written sixteen pages a day), I should have written the same three hundred printed sheets in fourteen years. A wonderful thing: a most simple arithmetical calculation which every boy of seven years of age may do, but which I had never done. Day and night have together twenty-four hours; we sleep eight hours; there remain sixteen hours. If any man labour mentally five hours a day, he will do a vast amount of business; what do we, then, do during the remaining eleven hours? So it appears that physical labour not only does not exclude the possibility of mental activity, but improves and stimulates it. In answer to the question, whether this physical labour would deprive me of many innocent enjoyments proper to man, such as enjoyment of art, acquirement of knowledge, of social intercourse, and, generally, of the happiness of life, it was really quite the reverse: the more intense my physical labour, the more it approached that labour which is considered the hardest, to wit, agricultural labour, the more I acquired enjoyments, and knowledge, and the closer and more affectionate was my intercourse with mankind,

and the more happiness did I feel in life. In answer to the question (which I hear so often from men who are not quite sincere), “What result can there be from such an awfully small drop in the sea? what is all my personal physical labour in comparison with the sea of labour which I swallow up?” To this question I also received a very unexpected answer. It appeared that as soon as I had made physical labour the ordinary condition of my life, at once the greatest part of the false and expensive habits and wants which I had while I had been physically idle, ceased of themselves, without any endeavour on my part. To say nothing of the habit of turning day into night, and vice versa, of my bedding, clothes, my conventional cleanliness, which all became impossible and embarrassing when I began to labour physically, both the quantity and the quality of my food was totally changed. Instead of the sweet, rich, delicate, complicated, and highly spiced food, which I formerly liked, I now required and obtained plain food as being the most agreeable—sour cabbage soup, porridge, black bread, tea with a bit of sugar. So that, apart from the example of common workingmen satisfied with little, with whom I came in closer intercourse, my very wants themselves were gradually changed by my life of labour; so that in proportion to my growing accustomed to this labour and acquiring the ways of it, my drop of physical labour became indeed more perceptible in the ocean of common labour; and in proportion as my labour grew more fruitful, my demands for other men’s labour grew less and less, and, without effort or privation, my life naturally came nearer to that simple life of which I could not even have dreamed without fulfilling the law of labour. It became apparent that my former most expensive demands—the demands of vanity and amusement—were the direct result of an idle life. With physical labour, there was no room for vanity, and no need for amusement, because my time was agreeably occupied; and after weariness, simple rest while

drinking tea, or reading a book, or conversing with the members of my family, was far more agreeable than the theatre, playing at cards, concerts, or large parties. In answer to the question, “Would not this unusual labour be hurtful to health, which is necessary in order that I may serve men?” it appeared that, despite the positive assurance of eminent doctors that hard physical labour, especially at my age, might have the worst results (and that Swedish gymnastics, riding, and other expedients intended to supply the natural conditions of man, would be far better), the harder I worked, the sounder, more cheerful, and kinder, I felt myself. It became undoubtedly certain that even as all those inventions of the human mind, such as newspapers, theatres, concerts, parties, balls, cards, magazines, novels, are nothing but means to sustain the spiritual life of men outside its natural condition of labour for others, so in the same way all the hygienic and medical inventions of the human mind for the provision of food, drink, dwelling, ventilation, warming of rooms, clothes, medicines, mineral water, gymnastics, electric and other cures, are all merely means to sustain the bodily life of man outside of its natural conditions of labour; and all these are nothing else than an establishment hermetically closed, in which, by means of chemical apparatus, the evaporation of water for the plants is arranged, when you need only to open the window, and do that which is natural, not for men alone but to beasts too; in other words, having absorbed the food, and thus produced a charge of energy, to discharge it by muscular labour. All the profound study of hygiene and of the art of healing for the men of our circle are like the efforts of a mechanic, who, having stopped all the valves of an overheated engine, should invent something to prevent this engine from bursting. When I had plainly understood all this, it seemed to me ridiculous, that I, through a long series of doubt, research, and much thinking, had arrived at this extraordinary truth, that if

man has eyes, they are to be seen through; ears, to hear by; feet to walk with, and hands and back to work with—and that if man will not use these, his members, for what they are meant, then it will be the worse for him. I came to this conclusion, that with us, privileged people, the same thing has happened which happened to the horses of a friend of mine: The steward, who was not fond of horses, and did not understand any thing about them, having received from his masters orders to prepare the best cobs for sale, chose the best out of the drove of horses, put them into the stable, fed them upon oats; but being over-anxious, he trusted them to nobody, neither rode them himself, nor drove nor led them. Of course, all these horses became good for nothing. The same has happened to us with this difference —that you cannot deceive horses, and, in order not to let them out, they must be fastened in; while we are kept in unnatural and hurtful conditions by all sorts of temptations, which fasten and hold us as with chains. We have arranged for ourselves a life which is against the moral and physical nature of man, and we use all the powers of our mind in order to assure men that this life is the real one. All that we call culture—our science and arts for improving the delights of life—all these are only meant to deceive man’s natural moral requirements: all that we call hygiene, and the art of healing, are endeavours to deceive the natural physical want of human nature. But these deceits have their limits, and we are come to these limits. “If such be real human life, then it is better not to live at all,” says the fashionable philosophy of Schopenhauer and Hartman. “If such is life, then it is better not to live at all,” is the witness borne by the increasing number of suicides among the privileged classes. “If such be life, it is better for future generations, too, not to live,” says the indulgent healing art, and invents means to destroy women’s fecundity. In the Bible the law to human beings is expressed thus: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,” and “In sorrow thou

shall bring forth children." The peasant Bondaref, who wrote an article about this, threw great light upon the wisdom of this sentence. During the whole of my life, two thinking men—Russians—have exercised a great influence over me: they have enriched my thoughts, and enlightened my contemplation of the world. These men were neither poets, nor learned men, nor preachers: they were two remarkable men, both now living, peasants—Sutaief and Bondaref. But "nous avons changé tout ça," as says one of Molière's personages, talking at random about the healing art, and saying that the liver is on the left side, "we have changed all that." Men need not work—all work will be done by machines; and women need not bring forth children. The healing art will teach different means of avoiding this, for there are already too many people in the world. In the Krapivensky district [in which Tolstoy's village of Yasnaya Polyana is situated] there wanders a ragged peasant, who during the war was a purchaser of bread for a commissary of stores. Having become acquainted with this functionary, and having seen his comfortable life, he became mad, and now thinks that he, too, can live as gentlemen do, without work, being provided for by the Emperor. This peasant now calls himself "the Most Serene Marshal Prince Blokhin, purveyor of war-stores of all kinds." He says of himself that he has gone through all ranks, and for his services during the war he has to receive from the Emperor an unlimited bank-account, clothes, uniforms, horses, carriages, tea, servants, and all kinds of provision. When anybody asks him whether he would like to work a little, he only answers, "Thanks: the peasants will attend to all that." When we say to him that the peasants also may not be disposed to work, he answers, "Machines have been invented to ease the labour of peasants. They have no difficulty in their business." When we ask him what he is living for, he answers, "To pass away the time." I always consider this man as a mirror. I see in

him myself and all my class. To pass through all ranks in order to live to pass away the time, and to receive an unlimited bank-account, while peasants attend to every thing, and find it easy to do so, because of the invention of machines. This is the exact form of the foolish belief of men of our class. When we ask what have we particularly to do, we are in reality asking nothing, but only asserting—not so sincerely indeed as the Most Serene Marshal Prince Blokhin, who had passed through all ranks, and lost his mind—that we do not wish to do anything. He who has come to his senses cannot ask this, because from one side all that he makes use of has been done, and is being done, by the hands of men; on the other side, as soon as a healthy man has got up and breakfasted, he feels the inclination to work, as well with his feet as with his hands and brain. In order to find work, he has only not to restrain himself from labour. Only he who considers labour to be a shame—like the lady who asked her guest not to trouble herself to open the door, but to wait till she called a servant to do it—only such persons can ask what is there to be done in particular. The difficulty is not in inventing work—every one has enough to do for himself and for others—but in losing this criminal view of life, that we eat and sleep for our own pleasure, and in gaining that simple and correct view in which every working-person grows up, that man first of all is a machine which is charged with food, and that therefore it is shameful, difficult, and impossible to eat and not to work; that to eat and not to work is a most dangerous state, and as bad as incendiarism. It is necessary only to have this consciousness, and we shall find work and this work will always be pleasant, and capable of satisfying all the wants of our soul and body. I picture to myself the whole matter thus: Every man’s day is divided by his meals into four parts, or four stages as it is called by the peasants: First, before breakfast; secondly, from breakfast to dinner; thirdly, from dinner to poldnik (a slight evening meal

between dinner and supper); and fourthly, from poldnik to night. The activity of man to which he is drawn, is also divided into four kinds: First, the activity of the muscles, the labour of the hands, feet, shoulders, back—hard labour by which one perspires; secondly, the activity of the fingers and wrists, the activity of skill and handicraft; thirdly, the activity of the intellect and imagination; fourthly, the activity of intercourse with other men. The goods which man makes use of may also be divided into four kinds: First, every man makes use of the productions of hard labour—bread, cattle, buildings, wells, bridges, and so on; secondly, the productions of handicraft—clothes, boots, hardware, and so on; thirdly, the productions of mental activity—science, art; and fourthly, the intercourse with men, acquaintanceship, societies. I thought that it would be the best thing so to arrange the occupations of the day that one might be able to exercise all these four faculties, and to return all the four kinds of production of labour, which one makes use of; so that the four parts of the day were devoted, first, to hard labour; secondly, to mental labour; thirdly, to handicraft; fourthly, to the intercourse with men. It would be good if one could so arrange his labour; but if it is not possible to arrange thus, one thing is important—to acknowledge the duty of labouring, the duty of making a good use of each part of the day. I thought that it would be only then that the false division of labour which now rules our society would disappear, and a just division would be established which should not interfere with the happiness of mankind. I, for instance, have all my life been busy with mental work. I had said to myself that I have thus divided the labour: that my special work is writing; that is, mental labour: and all other works necessary for me, I left to be done by other men, or rather compelled them to do it. But this arrangement, seemingly so convenient for mental labour, though unjust, became most inconvenient, especially for mental labour. I have been writing all my life,

have accommodated my food, sleep, amusements, with reference to this special labour, and besides this work I did nothing. The results of which were, first, that I had been narrowing the circle of my observation and information, and often I had not any object to study, and therefore, having had to describe the life of men (the life of men is a continual problem of every mental activity), I felt my ignorance, and had to learn and to ask about such things, which everyone not occupied with a special work knows; secondly, it happened that when I sat down to write, I often had no inward inclination to write, and nobody wanted my writing for itself, that is, for my thoughts, but people merely wanted my name for profits in the magazines. I made great efforts to write what I could; sometimes I did not succeed at all; sometimes succeeded in writing something very bad, and I felt dissatisfied and miserable. So often and often weeks passed, during which I would eat, drink, sleep, warm myself, and do nothing—or do something of no use to anybody—i.e., commit the worst and meanest crime, scarcely ever committed by a man of the working class. But since I have acknowledged the necessity of physical labour as well as hard labour, and also that of handicraft, everything is quite different: my time is occupied however humbly, but certainly in a useful way, and pleasantly and instructively for me. Therefore I, for the sake of my speciality, leave off this undoubtedly useful and pleasant occupation, only when I feel an inward want, or see a direct demand for my literary work. And this caused the quality, and therefore the usefulness and pleasantness, of my special labour to improve. Thus it has happened that my occupation with those physical works, which are necessary for me as well as for every man, not only do not interfere with my special activity, but are a necessary condition of the utility, quality, and pleasantness of this activity. A bird is so created that it is necessary for it to fly, to walk, to peck, to consider; and when it does all this, it is

satisfied and happy; then it is a bird. Exactly so with a man when he walks, turns over heavy things, lifts them up, carries them, works with his fingers, eyes, ears, tongue, brain, then only is he satisfied, then only is he a man. A man who has come to recognise his calling to labour will be naturally inclined to that change of labour which is proper for him for the satisfying of his outward and inward wants, and he will reverse this order only when he feels an irresistible impulse to some special labour, and when other men require this labour from him. The nature of labour is such that the satisfying of all men's wants requires that very alternation of different kinds of labour which renders labour easy and pleasant. Only the erroneous idea that labour is a curse could lead men to free themselves from some kinds of labour, that is, to seize other men's labour, requiring from other men that forced occupation with a special labour which is called nowadays the division of labour. We have become so accustomed to our false conception of the arrangement of labour that it seems to us that for a boot-maker, a machinist, a writer, a musician, it would be better to be freed from the labour proper to man. Where there is no violence over other men's labour, nor a false belief in the pleasure of idleness, no man will for the sake of his special labour free himself from physical labour necessary for the satisfying of his wants, because special occupation is not a privilege, but a sacrifice to a man's inclination and for the sake of his brethren. A boot-maker in a village having torn himself from his usual pleasant labour in the field, and having begun his labour of mending or making boots for his neighbours, deprives himself of a pleasant, useful labour in the field for the sake of others, only because he is fond of sewing, and knows that nobody will do it better than he does, and that people will be thankful to him. But he cannot wish to deprive himself of the pleasant alternation of labour for all his life. The same with the starosta, the machinist, the writer, the learned

man. It is only to our perverted ideas, that it seems, when the master sends his clerk to be a peasant, or government sentences one of its ministers to deportation, that they are punished and have been dealt with hardly. In reality they have had a great good done to them; that is, they have exchanged their heavy special work for a pleasant alternation of labour. In a natural society all is different. I know a commune where the people earn their living themselves. One of the members of this community was more educated than the rest; and they require him to deliver lectures, for which he has to prepare himself during the day, that he may be able to deliver them in the evening. He does it joyfully, feeling that he is useful to others, and that he can do it well. But he grows tired of the exclusive mental labour, and his health suffers accordingly. The members of the community therefore pity him, and ask him to come and labour in the field again. For men who consider labour to be the essential thing and the joy of life, the ground, the basis, of it will always be the struggle with nature—not only in agricultural labour, but also in that of handicraft, mental work, and intercourse with men. The divergence from one or many of these kinds of labour, and specialities of labour, will be performed only when a man of special gifts, being fond of this work, and knowing that he performs it better than anybody else, will sacrifice his own advantage in order to fulfil the demands which others put directly to him. Only with such a view of labour and the natural division of labour resulting from it, will that curse disappear which in our imagination we have put upon labour; and every labour will always be a joy, because man will do either an unquestionably useful, pleasant, and easy work, or will be conscious that he makes a sacrifice by performing a more difficult special labour for the good of others. But the division of labour is, it is said, more advantageous. Advantageous for whom? Is it more advantageous to make with all speed as many boots and

cotton-prints as possible? But who will make these boots and cotton-prints? Men who from generation to generation have been making only pin-heads? How, then, can it be more advantageous for people? If the object were to make as many cotton-prints and pins as possible, it would be so; but the question is, how to make people happy? The happiness of men consists in life. And life is in labour. How, then, can the necessity of painful, oppressing work be advantageous for men? If the question were only for the advantage of some men without any consideration of the welfare of all, then it might be most advantageous for some men to eat others. They say it is savoury! The thing most advantageous for all men is what I wish for myself—the greatest welfare and the satisfying of all my wants which are ingrafted in me, those of body as well as those of soul, of conscience, and of reason. Now, for myself I have found, that for my welfare and for the satisfying of these wants, I need only to be cured of the folly in which I (as well as the Krapivensky madman) have lived, consisting in the idea that gentlefolk need not work, and that all must be done for them by others, and that, producing nothing, I have to do only what is proper to man—satisfy my own wants. Having discovered this, I became persuaded that this labour for the satisfying of my own wants, is divisible into various kinds of labour, each of which has its own charm, and is not only no burden, but serves as rest after some other labour. I have roughly divided labour, not in the least insisting on the propriety of such a division, into four parts parallel to the four parts of the labourer’s day’s work, divided by his meals; and thus I try to satisfy my wants. These are, then, the answers to the question, “What shall we do?” which I have found for myself. First, Not to lie to myself. However far I have gone astray from that road of life which my reason shows to me, I must not be afraid of the truth. Secondly, To renounce my own righteousness, my own advantages, peculiarities, distinguishing me from others,

and to own my guilt. Thirdly, To fulfil the eternal, unquestionable law of man—by labouring with all my being to struggle with nature, to sustain my own life, and the lives of others.