

### CHAPTER III.

Division of labor is the law of all existing things, and, therefore, it should be present in human societies. It is very possible that this is so; but still the question remains, Of what nature is that division of labor which I behold in my human society? is it that division of labor which should exist? And if people regard a certain division of labor as unreasonable and unjust, then no science whatever can convince men that that should exist which they regard as unreasonable and unjust.

Division of labor is the condition of existence of organisms, and of human societies; but what, in these human societies, is to be regarded as an organic division of labor? And, to whatever extent science may have investigated the division of labor in the cells of worms, all these observations do not compel a man to acknowledge that division of labor to be correct which his own sense and conscience do not recognize as correct. No matter how convincing may be the proofs of the division of labor of the cells in the organisms studied, man, if he has not parted with his judgment, will say, nevertheless, that a man should not weave calico all his life, and that this is not division of labor, but persecution of the people. Spencer and others say that there is a whole community of weavers, and that the profession of weaving is an organic division of labor. There are weavers; so, of course, there is such a division of labor. It would be well enough to speak thus if the colony of weavers had arisen by the free will of its member's; but we know that

it is not thus formed of their initiative, but that we make it. Hence it is necessary to find out whether we have made these weavers in accordance with an organic law, or with some other.

Men live. They support themselves by agriculture, as is natural to all men. One man has set up a blacksmith's forge, and repaired his plough; his neighbor comes to him, and asks him to mend his also, and promises him in return either work or money. A third comes, and a fourth; and in the community formed by these men, there arises the following division of labor,--a blacksmith is created. Another man has instructed his children well; his neighbor brings his children to him, and requests him to teach them also, and a teacher is created. But both blacksmith and teacher have been created, and continue to be such, merely because they have been asked; and they remain such as long as they are requested to be blacksmith and teacher. If it should come to pass that many blacksmiths and teachers should set themselves up, or that their work is not required, they will immediately, as common-sense demands and as always happens when there is no occasion for disturbing the regular course of division of labor,--they will immediately abandon their trade, and betake themselves once more to agriculture.

Men who behave thus are guided by their sense, their conscience; and hence we, the men endowed with sense and conscience, all assert that such a division of labor is right. But if it should chance that the blacksmiths were able to compel other people to work for them, and should continue to make horse-shoes when they were not wanted, and if the

teachers should go on teaching when there was no one to teach, then it is obvious to every sane man, as a man, i.e., as a being endowed with reason and conscience, that this would not be division, but appropriation, of labor. And yet precisely that sort of activity is what is called division of labor by scientific science. People do that which others do not think of requiring, and demand that they shall be supported for so doing, and say that this is just because it is division of labor.

That which constitutes the cause of the economical poverty of our age is what the English call over-production (which means that a mass of things are made which are of no use to anybody, and with which nothing can be done).

It would be odd to see a shoemaker, who should consider that people were bound to feed him because he incessantly made boots which had been of no use to any one for a long time; but what shall we say of those men who make nothing,--who not only produce nothing that is visible, but nothing that is of use for people at large,--for whose wares there are no customers, and who yet demand, with the same boldness, on the ground of division of labor, that they shall be supplied with fine food and drink, and that they shall be dressed well? There may be, and there are, sorcerers for whose services a demand makes itself felt, and for this purpose there are brought to them pancakes and flasks; but it is difficult to imagine the existence of sorcerers whose spells are useless to every one, and who boldly demand that they shall be luxuriously supported because they exercise sorcery. And it is the same in our

world. And all this comes about on the basis of that false conception of the division of labor, which is defined not by reason and conscience, but by observation, which men of science avow with such unanimity.

Division of labor has, in reality, always existed, and still exists; but it is right only when man decides with his reason and his conscience that it should be so, and not when he merely investigates it. And reason and conscience decide the question for all men very simply, unanimously, and in a manner not to be doubted. They always decide it thus: that division of labor is right only when a special branch of man's activity is so needful to men, that they, entreating him to serve them, voluntarily propose to support him in requital for that which he shall do for them. But, when a man can live from infancy to the age of thirty years on the necks of others, promising to do, when he shall have been taught, something extremely useful, for which no one asks him; and when, from the age of thirty until his death, he can live in the same manner, still merely on the promise to do something, for which there has been no request, this will not be division of labor (and, as a matter of fact, there is no such thing in our society), but it will be what it already is,--merely the appropriation, by force, of the toil of others; that same appropriation by force of the toil of others which the philosophers formerly designated by various names,--for instance, as indispensable forms of life,--but which scientific science now calls the organic division of labor.

The whole significance of scientific science lies in this alone. It has

now become a distributor of diplomas for idleness; for it alone, in its sanctuaries, selects and determines what is parasitical, and what is organic activity, in the social organism. Just as though every man could not find this out for himself much more accurately and more speedily, by taking counsel of his reason and his conscience. It seems to men of scientific science, that there can be no doubt of this, and that their activity is also indubitably organic; they, the scientific and artistic workers, are the brain cells, and the most precious cells in the whole organism.

Ever since men--reasoning beings--have existed, they have distinguished good from evil, and have profited by the fact that men have made this distinction before them; they have warred against evil, and have sought the good, and have slowly but uninterruptedly advanced in that path. And divers delusions have always stood before men, hemming in this path, and having for their object to demonstrate to them, that it was not necessary to do this, and that it was not necessary to live as they were living. With fearful conflict and difficulty, men have freed themselves from many delusions. And behold, a new and a still more evil delusion has sprung up in the path of mankind,--the scientific delusion.

This new delusion is precisely the same in nature as the old ones; its gist lies in secretly leading astray the activity of our reason and conscience, and of those who have lived before us, by something external. In scientific science, this external thing is--investigation.

The cunning of this science consists in this,--that, after pointing out to men the coarsest false interpretations of the activity of the reason and conscience of man, it destroys in them faith in their own reason and conscience, and assures them that every thing which their reason and conscience say to them, that all that these have said to the loftiest representatives of man heretofore, ever since the world has existed,--that all this is conventional and subjective. "All this must be abandoned," they say; "it is impossible to understand the truth by the reason, for we may be mistaken. But there exists another unerring and almost mechanical path: it is necessary to investigate facts."

But facts must be investigated on the foundation of scientific science, i.e., of the two hypotheses of positivism and evolution, which are not borne out by any thing, and which give themselves out as undoubted truths. And the reigning science announces, with delusive solemnity, that the solution of all problems of life is possible only through the study of facts, of nature, and, in particular, of organisms. The credulous mass of young people, overwhelmed by the novelty of this authority, which has not yet been overthrown or even touched by criticism, flings itself into the study of natural sciences, into that sole path, which, according to the assertion of the reigning science, can lead to the elucidation of the problems of life.

But the farther the disciples proceed in this study, the farther and farther does not only the possibility, but even the very idea, of the solution of the problems of life withdraw from them, and the more and

more do they become accustomed, not so much to investigate, as to believe in the assertions of other investigators (to believe in cells, in protoplasm, in the fourth condition of bodies, and so forth); the more and more does the form veil the contents from them; the more and more do they lose the consciousness of good and evil, and the capacity of understanding those expressions and definitions of good and evil which have been elaborated through the whole foregoing life of mankind; and the more and more do they appropriate to themselves the special scientific jargon of conventional expressions, which possesses no universally human significance; and the deeper and deeper do they plunge into the debris of utterly unilluminated investigations; the more and more do they lose the power, not only of independent thought, but even of understanding the fresh human thought of others, which lies beyond the bounds of their Talmud. But the principal thing is, that they pass their best years in getting disused to life; they grow accustomed to consider their position as justifiable; and they convert themselves physically into utterly useless parasites, and mentally they dislocate their brains and become mental eunuchs. And in precisely the same manner, according to the measure of their folly, do they acquire self-conceit, which deprives them forever of all possibility of return to a simple life of toil, to a simple, clear, and universally human train of reasoning.

Division of labor always has existed in human communities, and will probably always exist; but the question for us lies not in the fact that it has existed, and that it will exist, but in this,--how are we to govern ourselves so that this division shall be right? But if we take

investigation as our rule of action, we by this very act repudiate all rule; then in that case we shall regard as right every division of labor which we shall descry among men, and which appears to us to be right--to which conclusion the prevailing scientific science also leads.

Division of labor!

Some are busied in mental or moral, others in muscular or physical, labor. With what confidence people enunciate this! They wish to think so, and it seems to them that, in point of fact, a perfectly regular exchange of services does take place.

But we, in our blindness, have so completely lost sight of the responsibility which we have assumed, that we have even forgotten in whose name our labor is prosecuted; and the very people whom we have undertaken to serve have become the objects of our scientific and artistic activity. We study and depict them for our amusement and diversion. We have totally forgotten that what we need to do is not to study and depict them, but to serve them. To such a degree have we lost sight of this duty which we have taken upon us, that we have not even noticed that what we have undertaken to perform in the realm of science and art has been accomplished not by us, but by others, and that our place has turned out to be occupied.

It proves that while we have been disputing, one about the spontaneous origin of organisms, another as to what else there is in protoplasm, and



so on, the common people have been in need of spiritual food; and the unsuccessful and rejected of art and science, in obedience to the mandate of adventurers who have in view the sole aim of profit, have begun to furnish the people with this spiritual food, and still so furnish them. For the last forty years in Europe, and for the last ten years with us here in Russia, millions of books and pictures and song-books have been distributed, and stalls have been opened, and the people gaze and sing and receive spiritual nourishment, but not from us who have undertaken to provide it; while we, justifying our idleness by that spiritual food which we are supposed to furnish, sit by and wink at it.

But it is impossible for us to wink at it, for our last justification is slipping from beneath our feet. We have become specialized. We have our particular functional activity. We are the brains of the people. They support us, and we have undertaken to teach them. It is only under this pretence that we have excused ourselves from work. But what have we taught them, and what are we now teaching them? They have waited for years--for tens, for hundreds of years. And we keep on diverting our minds with chatter, and we instruct each other, and we console ourselves, and we have utterly forgotten them. We have so entirely forgotten them, that others have undertaken to instruct them, and we have not even perceived it. We have spoken of the division of labor with such lack of seriousness, that it is obvious that what we have said about the benefits which we have conferred on the people was simply a shameless evasion.