

## CHAPTER XII.

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I was finishing this book, which I had been working at for two

years, when I happened on the 9th of September to be traveling by rail through the governments of Toula and Riazan, where the peasants were starving last year and where the famine is even more severe now. At one of the railway stations my train passed an extra train which was taking a troop of soldiers under the conduct of the governor of the province, together with muskets, cartridges, and rods, to flog and murder these same famishing peasants.

The punishment of flogging by way of carrying the decrees of the authorities into effect has been more and more frequently adopted of late in Russia, in spite of the fact that corporal punishment was abolished by law thirty years ago.

I had heard of this, I had even read in the newspapers of the fearful floggings which had been inflicted in Tchernigov, Tambov, Saratov, Astrakhan, and Orel, and of those of which the governor of Nijni-Novgorod, General Baranov, had boasted. But I had never before happened to see men in the process of carrying out these punishments.

And here I saw the spectacle of good Russians full of the Christian spirit traveling with guns and rods to torture and kill their starving brethren. The reason for their expedition was as follows:

On one of the estates of a rich landowner the peasants had common rights on the forest, and having always enjoyed these rights, regarded the forest as their own, or at least as theirs in common with the owner. The landowner wished to keep the forest entirely to himself and began to fell the trees. The peasants lodged a complaint. The judges in the first instance gave an unjust decision (I say unjust on the authority of the lawyer and governor, who ought to understand the matter), and decided the case in favor of the landowner. All the later decisions, even that of the senate, though they could see that the matter had been unjustly decided, confirmed the judgment and adjudged the forest to the landowner. He began to cut down the trees, but the peasants, unable to believe that such obvious injustice could be done them by the higher authorities, did not submit to the decision and drove away the men sent to cut down the trees, declaring that the forest belonged to them and they would go to the Tzar before they would let them cut it down.

The matter was referred to Petersburg, and the order was transmitted to the governor to carry the decision of the court into effect. The governor asked for a troop of soldiers. And here were the soldiers with bayonets and cartridges, and moreover, a supply of rods, expressly prepared for the purpose and heaped up in one of the trucks, going to carry the decision of the higher authorities into effect.

The decisions of the higher authorities are carried into effect by means of murder or torture, or threats of one or the other, according to whether they offer resistance or not.

In the first case if the peasants offer resistance the practice is in Russia, and it is the same everywhere where a state organization and private property exist, as follows. The governor delivers an address in which he demands submission. The excited crowd, generally deluded by their leaders, don't understand a word of what the representative of authority is saying in the pompous official language, and their excitement continues. Then the governor announces that if they do not submit and disperse, he will be obliged to have recourse to force. If the crowd does not disperse even on this, the governor gives the order to fire over the heads of the crowd. If the crowd does not even then disperse, the governor gives the order to fire straight into the crowd; the soldiers fire and the killed and wounded fall about the street. Then the crowd usually runs away in all directions, and the troops at the governor's command take those who are supposed to be the ringleaders and lead them off under escort. Then they pick up the dying, the wounded, and the dead, covered with blood, sometimes women and children among them. The dead they bury and the wounded they carry to the hospital. Those whom they regard as the ringleaders they take to the town hall and have them tried by a special court-martial. And if they have had recourse to violence on their side, they are condemned to be hanged. And then the



gallows is erected. And they solemnly strangle a few defenseless creatures.

This is what has often been done in Russia, and is and must always be done where the social order is based on force.

But in the second case, when the peasants do submit, something quite special, peculiar to Russia, takes place. The governor arrives on the scene of action and delivers an harangue to the people, reproaching them for their insubordination, and either stations troops in the houses of the villages, where sometimes for a whole month the soldiers drain the resources of the peasants, or contenting himself with threats, he mercifully takes leave of the people, or what is the most frequent course, he announces that the ringleaders must be punished, and quite arbitrarily without any trial selects a certain number of men, regarded as ringleaders, and commands them to be flogged in his presence.

In order to give an idea of how such things are done I will describe a proceeding of the kind which took place in Orel, and received the full approval of the highest authorities.

This is what took place in Orel. Just as here in the Toula province, a landlord wanted to appropriate the property of the peasants and just in the same way the peasants opposed it. The matter in dispute was a fall of water, which irrigated the

peasants' fields, and which the landowner wanted to cut off and divert to turn his mill. The peasants rebelled against this being done. The land owner laid a complaint before the district commander, who illegally (as was recognized later even by a legal decision) decided the matter in favor of the landowner, and allowed him to divert the water course. The landowner sent workmen to dig the conduit by which the water was to be let off to turn the mill. The peasants were indignant at this unjust decision, and sent their women to prevent the landowner's men from digging this conduit. The women went to the dykes, overturned the carts, and drove away the men. The landowner made a complaint against the women for thus taking the law into their own hands. The district commander made out an order that from every house throughout the village one woman was to be taken and put in prison. The order was not easily executed. For in every household there were several women, and it was impossible to know which one was to be arrested. Consequently the police did not carry out the order. The landowner complained to the governor of the neglect on the part of the police, and the latter, without examining into the affair, gave the chief official of the police strict orders to carry out the instructions of the district commander without delay. The police official, in obedience to his superior, went to the village and with the insolence peculiar to Russian officials ordered his policemen to take one woman out of each house. But since there were more than one woman in each house, and there was no knowing which one was sentenced to imprisonment, disputes and

opposition arose. In spite of these disputes and opposition, however, the officer of police gave orders that some woman, whichever came first, should be taken from each household and led away to prison. The peasants began to defend their wives and mothers, would not let them go, and beat the police and their officer. This was a fresh and terrible crime: resistance was offered to the authorities. A report of this new offense was sent to the town. And so this governor--precisely as the governor of Toula was doing on that day--with a battalion of soldiers with guns and rods, hastily brought together by means of telegraphs and telephones and railways, proceeded by a special train to the scene of action, with a learned doctor whose duty it was to insure the flogging being of an hygienic character. Herzen's prophecy of the modern Ghenghis Khan with his telegrams is completely realized by this governor.

Before the town hall of the district were the soldiery, a battalion of police with their revolvers slung round them with red cords, the persons of most importance among the peasants, and the culprits. A crowd of one thousand or more people were standing round. The governor, on arriving, stepped out of his carriage, delivered a prepared harangue, and asked for the culprits and a bench. The latter demand was at first not understood. But a police constable whom the governor always took about with him, and who undertook to organize such executions--by no means exceptional in that province--explained that what was meant was a bench for

flogging. A bench was brought as well as the rods, and then the executioners were summoned (the latter had been selected beforehand from some horsestealers of the same village, as the soldiers refused the office). When everything was ready, the governor ordered the first of the twelve culprits pointed out by the landowner as the most guilty to come forward. The first to come forward was the head of a family, a man of forty who had always stood up manfully for the rights of his class, and therefore was held in the greatest esteem by all the villagers. He was led to the bench and stripped, and then ordered to lie down.

The peasant attempted to supplicate for mercy, but seeing it was useless, he crossed himself and lay down. Two police constables hastened to hold him down. The learned doctor stood by, in readiness to give his aid and his medical science when they should be needed. The convicts spit into their hands, brandished the rods, and began to flog. It seemed, however, that the bench was too narrow, and it was difficult to keep the victim writhing in torture upon it. Then the governor ordered them to bring another bench and to put a plank across them. Soldiers, with their hands raised to their caps, and respectful murmurs of "Yes, your Excellency," hasten obediently to carry out this order. Meanwhile the tortured man, half naked, pale and scowling, stood waiting, his eyes fixed on the ground and his teeth chattering. When another bench had been brought they again made him lie down, and

the convicted thieves again began to flog him.

The victim's back and thighs and legs, and even his sides, became more and more covered with scars and wheals, and at every blow there came the sound of the deep groans which he could no longer restrain. In the crowd standing round were heard the sobs of wives, mothers, children, the families of the tortured man and of all the others picked out for punishment.

The miserable governor, intoxicated with power, was counting the strokes on his fingers, and never left off smoking cigarettes, while several officious persons hastened on every opportunity to offer him a burning match to light them. When more than fifty strokes had been given, the peasant ceased to shriek and writhe, and the doctor, who had been educated in a government institution to serve his sovereign and his country with his scientific attainments, went up to the victim, felt his pulse, listened to his heart, and announced to the representative of authority that the man undergoing punishment had lost consciousness, and that, in accordance with the conclusions of science, to continue the punishment would endanger the victim's life. But the miserable governor, now completely intoxicated by the sight of blood, gave orders that the punishment should go on, and the flogging was continued up to seventy strokes, the number which the governor had for some reason fixed upon as necessary. When the seventieth stroke had been reached, the governor said "Enough! Next one!"

And the mutilated victim, his back covered with blood, was lifted up and carried away unconscious, and another was led up. The sobs and groans of the crowd grew louder. But the representative of the state continued the torture.

Thus they flogged each of them up to the twelfth, and each of them received seventy strokes. They all implored mercy, shrieked and groaned. The sobs and cries of the crowd of women grew louder and more heart-rending, and the men's faces grew darker and darker. But they were surrounded by troops, and the torture did not cease till it had reached the limit which had been fixed by the caprice of the miserable half-drunken and insane creature they called the governor.

The officials, and officers, and soldiers not only assisted in it, but were even partly responsible for the affair, since by their presence they prevented any interference on the part of the crowd.

When I inquired of one of the governors why they made use of this kind of torture when people had already submitted and soldiers were stationed in the village, he replied with the important air of a man who thoroughly understands all the subtleties of statecraft, that if the peasants were not thoroughly subdued by flogging, they would begin offering opposition to the decisions of authorities again. When some of them had been thoroughly tortured, the authority of the state would be secured forever

among them.

And so that was why the Governor of Toula was going in his turn with his subordinate officials, officers, and soldiers to carry out a similar measure. By precisely the same means, i. e., by murder and torture, obedience to the decision of the higher authorities was to be secured. And this decision was to enable a young landowner, who had an income of one hundred thousand, to gain three thousand rubles more by stealing a forest from a whole community of cold and famished peasants, to spend it, in two or three weeks in the saloons of Moscow, Petersburg, or Paris. That was what those people whom I met were going to do.

After my thoughts had for two years been turned in the same direction, fate seemed expressly to have brought me face to face for the first time in my life with a fact which showed me absolutely unmistakably in practice what had long been clear to me in theory, that the organization of our society rests, not as people interested in maintaining the present order of things like to imagine, on certain principles of jurisprudence, but on simple brute force, on the murder and torture of men.

People who own great estates or fortunes, or who receive great revenues drawn from the class who are in want even of necessities, the working class, as well as all those who like merchants, doctors, artists, clerks, learned professors, coachmen, cooks,

writers, valets, and barristers, make their living about these rich people, like to believe that the privileges they enjoy are not the result of force, but of absolutely free and just interchange of services, and that their advantages, far from being gained by such punishments and murders as took place in Orel and several parts of Russia this year, and are always taking place all over Europe and America, have no kind of connection with these acts of violence. They like to believe that their privileges exist apart and are the result of free contract among people; and that the violent cruelties perpetrated on the people also exist apart and are the result of some general judicial, political, or economical laws. They try not to see that they all enjoy their privileges as a result of the same fact which forces the peasants who have tended the forest, and who are in the direct need of it for fuel, to give it up to a rich landowner who has taken no part in caring for its growth and has no need of it whatever--the fact, that is, that if they don't give it up they will be flogged or killed.

And yet if it is clear that it was only by means of menaces, blows, or murder, that the mill in Orel was enabled to yield a larger income, or that the forest which the peasants had planted became the property of a landowner, it should be equally clear that all the other exclusive rights enjoyed by the rich, by robbing the poor of their necessities, rest on the same basis of violence. If the peasants, who need land to maintain their families, may not cultivate the land about their houses,



but one man, a Russian, English, Austrian, or any other great landowner, possesses land enough to maintain a thousand families, though he does not cultivate it himself, and if a merchant profiting by the misery of the cultivators, taking corn from them at a third of its value, can keep this corn in his granaries with perfect security while men are starving all around him, and sell it again for three times its value to the very cultivators he bought it from, it is evident that all this too comes from the same cause. And if one man may not buy of another a commodity from the other side of a certain fixed line, called the frontier, without paying certain duties on it to men who have taken no part whatever in its production--and if men are driven to sell their last cow to pay taxes which the government distributes among its functionaries, and spends on maintaining soldiers to murder these very taxpayers--it would appear self-evident that all this does not come about as the result of any abstract laws, but is based on just what was done in Orel, and which may be done in Toula, and is done periodically in one form or another throughout the whole world wherever there is a government, and where there are rich and poor.

Simply because torture and murder are not employed in every instance of oppression by force, those who enjoy the exclusive privileges of the ruling classes persuade themselves and others that their privileges are not based on torture and murder, but on some mysterious general causes, abstract laws, and so on. Yet one would think it was perfectly clear that if men, who consider it unjust (and all the working classes do consider it so nowadays),

still pay the principal part of the produce of their labor away to the capitalist and the landowner, and pay taxes, though they know to what a bad use these taxes are put, they do so not from recognition of abstract laws of which they have never heard, but only because they know they will be beaten and killed if they don't do so.

And if there is no need to imprison, beat, and kill men every time the landlord collects his rents, every time those who are in want of bread have to pay a swindling merchant three times its value, every time the factory hand has to be content with a wage less than half of the profit made by the employer, and every time a poor man pays his last ruble in taxes, it is because so many men have been beaten and killed for trying to resist these demands, that the lesson has now been learnt very thoroughly.

Just as a trained tiger, who does not eat meat put under his nose, and jumps over a stick at the word of command, does not act thus because he likes it, but because he remembers the red-hot irons or the fast with which he was punished every time he did not obey; so men submitting to what is disadvantageous or even ruinous to them, and considered by them as unjust, act thus because they remember what they suffered for resisting it.

As for those who profit by the privileges gained by previous acts of violence, they often forget and like to forget how these

privileges were obtained. But one need only recall the facts of history, not the history of the exploits of different dynasties of rulers, but real history, the history of the oppression of the majority by a small number of men, to see that all the advantages the rich have over the poor are based on nothing but flogging, imprisonment, and murder.

One need but reflect on the unceasing, persistent struggle of all to better their material position, which is the guiding motive of men of the present day, to be convinced that the advantages of the rich over the poor could never and can never be maintained by anything but force.

There may be cases of oppression, of violence, and of punishments, though they are rare, the aim of which is not to secure the privileges of the propertied classes. But one may confidently assert that in any society where, for every man living in ease, there are ten exhausted by labor, envious, covetous, and often suffering with their families from direct privation, all the privileges of the rich, all their luxuries and superfluities, are obtained and maintained only by tortures, imprisonment, and murder.

The train I met on the 9th of September going with soldiers, guns, cartridges, and rods, to confirm the rich landowner in the possession of a small forest which he had taken from the starving

peasants, which they were in the direst need of, and he was in no need of at all, was a striking proof of how men are capable of doing deeds directly opposed to their principles and their conscience without perceiving it.

The special train consisted of one first-class carriage for the governor, the officials, and officers, and several luggage vans crammed full of soldiers. The latter, smart young fellows in their clean new uniforms, were standing about in groups or sitting swinging their legs in the wide open doorways of the luggage vans. Some were smoking, nudging each other, joking, grinning, and laughing, others were munching sunflower seeds and spitting out the husks with an air of dignity. Some of them ran along the platform to drink some water from a tub there, and when they met the officers they slackened their pace, made their stupid gesture of salutation, raising their hands to their heads with serious faces as though they were doing something of the greatest importance. They kept their eyes on them till they had passed by them, and then set off running still more merrily, stamping their heels on the platform, laughing and chattering after the manner of healthy, good-natured young fellows, traveling in lively company.

They were going to assist at the murder of their fathers or grandfathers just as if they were going on a party of pleasure, or at any rate on some quite ordinary business.

The same impression was produced by the well-dressed functionaries and officers who were scattered about the platform and in the first-class carriage. At a table covered with bottles was sitting the governor, who was responsible for the whole expedition, dressed in his half-military uniform and eating something while he chatted tranquilly about the weather with some acquaintances he had met, as though the business he was upon was of so simple and ordinary a character that it could not disturb his serenity and his interest in the change of weather.

At a little distance from the table sat the general of the police. He was not taking any refreshment, and had an impenetrable bored expression, as though he were weary of the formalities to be gone through. On all sides officers were bustling noisily about in their red uniforms trimmed with gold; one sat at a table finishing his bottle of beer, another stood at the buffet eating a cake, and brushing the crumbs off his uniform, threw down his money with a self-confident air; another was sauntering before the carriages of our train, staring at the faces of the women.

All these men who were going to murder or to torture the famishing and defenseless creatures who provide them their sustenance had the air of men who knew very well that they were doing their duty, and some were even proud, were "glorying" in what they were doing.

What is the meaning of it?

All these people are within half an hour of reaching the place where, in order to provide a wealthy young man with three thousand rubles stolen from a whole community of famishing peasants, they may be forced to commit the most horrible acts one can conceive, to murder or torture, as was done in Orel, innocent beings, their brothers. And they see the place and time approaching with untroubled serenity.

To say that all these government officials, officers, and soldiers do not know what is before them is impossible, for they are prepared for it. The governor must have given directions about the rods, the officials must have sent an order for them, purchased them, and entered the item in their accounts. The military officers have given and received orders about cartridges. They all know that they are going to torture, perhaps to kill, their famishing fellow-creatures, and that they must set to work within an hour.

To say, as is usually said, and as they would themselves repeat, that they are acting from conviction of the necessity for supporting the state organization, would be a mistake. For in the first place, these men have probably never even thought about state organization and the necessity of it; in the second place, they cannot possibly be convinced that the act in which they are taking part will tend to support rather than to ruin the state;

and thirdly, in reality the majority, if not all, of these men, far from ever sacrificing their own pleasure or tranquillity to support the state, never let slip an opportunity of profiting at the expense of the state in every way they can increase their own pleasure and ease. So that they are not acting thus for the sake of the abstract principle of the state.

What is the meaning of it?

Yet I know all these men. If I don't know all of them personally, I know their characters pretty nearly, their past, and their way of thinking. They certainly all have mothers, some of them wives and children. They are certainly for the most part good, kind, even tender-hearted fellows, who hate every sort of cruelty, not to speak of murder; many of them would not kill or hurt an animal. Moreover, they are all professed Christians and regard all violence directed against the defenseless as base and disgraceful.

Certainly not one of them would be capable in everyday life, for his own personal profit, of doing a hundredth part of what the Governor of Orel did. Every one of them would be insulted at the supposition that he was capable of doing anything of the kind in private life.

And yet they are within half an hour of reaching the place where they may be reduced to the inevitable necessity of committing this

crime.

What is the meaning of it?

But it is not only these men who are going by train prepared for murder and torture. How could the men who began the whole business, the landowner, the commissioner, the judges, and those who gave the order and are responsible for it, the ministers, the Tzar, who are also good men, professed Christians, how could they elaborate such a plan and assent to it, knowing its consequences? The spectators even, who took no part in the affair, how could they, who are indignant at the sight of any cruelty in private life, even the overtaking of a horse, allow such a horrible deed to be perpetrated? How was it they did not rise in indignation and bar the roads, shouting, "No; flog and kill starving men because they won't let their last possession be stolen from them without resistance, that we won't allow!" But far from anyone doing this, the majority, even of those who were the cause of the affair, such as the commissioner, the landowner, the judge, and those who took part in it and arranged it, as the governor, the ministers, and the Tzar, are perfectly tranquil and do not even feel a prick of conscience. And apparently all the men who are going to carry out this crime are equally undisturbed.

The spectators, who one would suppose could have no personal interest in the affair, looked rather with sympathy than with



disapproval at all these people preparing to carry out this infamous action. In the same compartment with me was a wood merchant, who had risen from a peasant. He openly expressed aloud his sympathy with such punishments. "They can't disobey the authorities," he said; "that's what the authorities are for. Let them have a lesson; send their fleas flying! They'll give over making commotions, I warrant you. That's what they want."

What is the meaning of it?

It is not possible to say that all these people who have provoked or aided or allowed this deed are such worthless creatures that, knowing all the infamy of what they are doing, they do it against their principles, some for pay and for profit, others through fear of punishment. All of them in certain circumstances know how to stand up for their principles. Not one of these officials would steal a purse, read another man's letter, or put up with an affront without demanding satisfaction. Not one of these officers would consent to cheat at cards, would refuse to pay a debt of honor, would betray a comrade, run away on the field of battle, or desert the flag. Not one of these soldiers would spit out the holy sacrament or eat meat on Good Friday. All these men are ready to face any kind of privation, suffering, or danger rather than consent to do what they regard as wrong. They have therefore the strength to resist doing what is against their principles.

It is even less possible to assert that all these men are such brutes that it is natural and not distasteful to them to do such deeds. One need only talk to these people a little to see that all of them, the landowner even, and the judge, and the minister and the Tzar and the government, the officers and the soldiers, not only disapprove of such things in the depth of their soul, but suffer from the consciousness of their participation in them when they recollect what they imply. But they try not to think about it.

One need only talk to any of these who are taking part in the affair from the landowner to the lowest policeman or soldier to see that in the depth of their soul they all know it is a wicked thing, that it would be better to have nothing to do with it, and are suffering from the knowledge.

A lady of liberal views, who was traveling in the same train with us, seeing the governor and the officers in the first-class saloon and learning the object of the expedition, began, intentionally raising her voice so that they should hear, to abuse the existing order of things and to cry shame on men who would take part in such proceedings. Everyone felt awkward, none knew where to look, but no one contradicted her. They tried to look as though such remarks were not worth answering. But one could see by their faces and their averted eyes that they were ashamed. I noticed the same thing in the soldiers. They too knew that what they were

sent to do was a shameful thing, but they did not want to think about what was before them.

When the wood merchant, as I suspect insincerely only to show that he was a man of education, began to speak of the necessity of such measures, the soldiers who heard him all turned away from him, scowling and pretending not to hear.

All the men who, like the landowner, the commissioner, the minister, and the Tzar, were responsible for the perpetration of this act, as well as those who were now going to execute it, and even those who were mere spectators of it, knew that it was a wickedness, and were ashamed of taking any share in it, and even of being present at it.

Then why did they do it, or allow it to be done?

Ask them the question. And the landowner who started the affair, and the judge who pronounced a clearly unjust even though formally legal decision, and those who commanded the execution of the decision, and those who, like the policemen, soldiers, and peasants, will execute the deed with their own hands, flogging and killing their brothers, all who have devised, abetted, decreed, executed, or allowed such crimes, will make substantially the same reply.

The authorities, those who have started, devised, and decreed the matter, will say that such acts are necessary for the maintenance of the existing order; the maintenance of the existing order is necessary for the welfare of the country and of humanity, for the possibility of social existence and human progress.

Men of the poorer class, peasants and soldiers, who will have to execute the deed of violence with their own hands, say that they do so because it is the command of their superior authority, and the superior authority knows what he is about. That those are in authority who ought to be in authority, and that they know what they are doing appears to them a truth of which there can be no doubt. If they could admit the possibility of mistake or error, it would only be in functionaries of a lower grade; the highest authority on which all the rest depends seems to them immaculate beyond suspicion.

Though expressing the motives of their conduct differently, both those in command and their subordinates are agreed in saying that they act thus because the existing order is the order which must and ought to exist at the present time, and that therefore to support it is the sacred duty of every man.

On this acceptance of the necessity and therefore immutability of the existing order, all who take part in acts of violence on the part of government base the argument always advanced in their

justification. "Since the existing order is immutable," they say, "the refusal of a single individual to perform the duties laid upon him will effect no change in things, and will only mean that some other man will be put in his place who may do the work worse, that is to say, more cruelly, to the still greater injury of the victims of the act of violence."

This conviction that the existing order is the necessary and therefore immutable order, which it is a sacred duty for every man to support, enables good men, of high principles in private life, to take part with conscience more or less untroubled in crimes such as that perpetrated in Orel, and that which the men in the Toula train were going to perpetrate.

But what is this conviction based on? It is easy to understand that the landowner prefers to believe that the existing order is inevitable and immutable, because this existing order secures him an income from his hundreds and thousands of acres, by means of which he can lead his habitual indolent and luxurious life.

It is easy to understand that the judge readily believes in the necessity of an order of things through which he receives a wage fifty times as great as the most industrious laborer can earn, and the same applies to all the higher officials. It is only under the existing RÉGIME that as governor, prosecutor, senator, members of the various councils, they can receive their several thousands

of rubles a year, without which they and their families would at once sink into ruin, since if it were not for the position they occupy they would never by their own abilities, industry, or acquirements get a thousandth part of their salaries. The minister, the Tzar, and all the higher authorities are in the same position. The only distinction is that the higher and the more exceptional their position, the more necessary it is for them to believe that the existing order is the only possible order of things. For without it they would not only be unable to gain an equal position, but would be found to fall lower than all other people. A man who has of his own free will entered the police force at a wage of ten rubles, which he could easily earn in any other position, is hardly dependent on the preservation of the existing RÉGIME, and so he may not believe in its immutability. But a king or an emperor, who receives millions for his post, and knows that there are thousands of people round him who would like to dethrone him and take his place, who knows that he will never receive such a revenue or so much honor in any other position, who knows, in most cases through his more or less despotic rule, that if he were dethroned he would have to answer for all his abuse of power--he cannot but believe in the necessity and even sacredness of the existing order. The higher and the more profitable a man's position, the more unstable it becomes, and the more terrible and dangerous a fall from it for him, the more firmly the man believes in the existing order, and therefore with the more ease of conscience can such a man perpetrate cruel and wicked acts, as

though they were not in his own interest, but for the maintenance of that order.

This is the case with all men in authority, who occupy positions more profitable than they could occupy except for the present RÉGIME, from the lowest police officer to the Tzar. All of them are more or less convinced that the existing order is immutable, because--the chief consideration--it is to their advantage. But the peasants, the soldiers, who are at the bottom of the social scale, who have no kind of advantage from the existing order, who are in the very lowest position of subjection and humiliation, what forces them to believe that the existing order in which they are in their humble and disadvantageous position is the order which ought to exist, and which they ought to support even at the cost of evil actions contrary to their conscience?

What forces these men to the false reasoning that the existing order is unchanging, and that therefore they ought to support it, when it is so obvious, on the contrary, that it is only unchanging because they themselves support it?

What forces these peasants, taken only yesterday from the plow and dressed in ugly and unseemly costumes with blue collars and gilt buttons, to go with guns and sabers and murder their famishing fathers and brothers? They gain no kind of advantage and can be in no fear of losing the position they occupy, because it is worse

than that from which they have been taken.

The persons in authority of the higher orders--landowners, merchants, judges, senators, governors, ministers, tzars, and officers--take part in such doings because the existing order is to their advantage. In other respects they are often good and kind-hearted men, and they are more able to take part in such doings because their share in them is limited to suggestions, decisions, and orders. These persons in authority never do themselves what they suggest, decide, or command to be done. For the most part they do not even see how all the atrocious deeds they have suggested and authorized are carried out. But the unfortunate men of the lower orders, who gain no kind of advantage from the existing RÉGIME, but, on the contrary, are treated with the utmost contempt, support it even by dragging people with their own hands from their families, handcuffing them, throwing them in prison, guarding them, shooting them.

Why do they do it? What forces them to believe that the existing order is unchanging and they must support it?

All violence rests, we know, on those who do the beating, the handcuffing, the imprisoning, and the killing with their own hands. If there were no soldiers or armed policemen, ready to kill or outrage anyone as they are ordered, not one of those people who sign sentences of death, imprisonment, or galley-slavery for life would make up his



mind to hang, imprison, or torture a thousandth part of those whom, quietly sitting in his study, he now orders to be tortured in all kinds of ways, simply because he does not see it nor do it himself, but only gets it done at a distance by these servile tools.

All the acts of injustice and cruelty which are committed in the ordinary course of daily life have only become habitual because there are these men always ready to carry out such acts of injustice and cruelty. If it were not for them, far from anyone using violence against the immense masses who are now ill-treated, those who now command their punishment would not venture to sentence them, would not even dare to dream of the sentences they decree with such easy confidence at present. And if it were not for these men, ready to kill or torture anyone at their commander's will, no one would dare to claim, as all the idle landowners claim with such assurance, that a piece of land, surrounded by peasants, who are in wretchedness from want of land, is the property of a man who does not cultivate it, or that stores of corn taken by swindling from the peasants ought to remain untouched in the midst of a population dying of hunger because the merchants must make their profit. If it were not for these servile instruments at the disposal of the authorities, it could never have entered the head of the landowner to rob the peasants of the forest they had tended, nor of the officials to think they are entitled to their salaries, taken from the famishing people, the price of their oppression; least of all could anyone dream of

killing or exiling men for exposing falsehood and telling the truth. All this can only be done because the authorities are confidently assured that they have always these servile tools at hand, ready to carry all their demands into effect by means of torture and murder.

All the deeds of violence of tyrants from Napoleon to the lowest commander of a company who fires upon a crowd, can only be explained by the intoxicating effect of their absolute power over these slaves. All force, therefore, rests on these men, who carry out the deeds of violence with their own hands, the men who serve in the police or the army, especially the army, for the police only venture to do their work because the army is at their back.

What, then, has brought these masses of honest men, on whom the whole thing depends, who gain nothing by it, and who have to do these atrocious deeds with their own hands, what has brought them to accept the amazing delusion that the existing order, unprofitable, ruinous, and fatal as it is for them, is the order which ought to exist?

Who has led them into this amazing delusion?

They can never have persuaded themselves that they ought to do what is against their conscience, and also the source of misery and ruin for themselves, and all their class, who make up nine-tenths of the

population.

"How can you kill people, when it is written in God's commandment: 'Thou shalt not kill'?" I have often inquired of different soldiers. And I always drove them to embarrassment and confusion by reminding them of what they did not want to think about. They knew they were bound by the law of God, "Thou shalt not kill," and knew too that they were bound by their duty as soldiers, but had never reflected on the contradiction between these duties. The drift of the timid answers I received to this question was always approximately this: that killing in war and executing criminals by command of the government are not included in the general prohibition of murder. But when I said this distinction was not made in the law of God, and reminded them of the Christian duty of fraternity, forgiveness of injuries, and love, which could not be reconciled with murder, the peasants usually agreed, but in their turn began to ask me questions. "How does it happen," they inquired, "that the government [which according to their ideas cannot do wrong] sends the army to war and orders criminals to be executed." When I answered that the government does wrong in giving such orders, the peasants fell into still greater confusion, and either broke off the conversation or else got angry with me.

"They must have found a law for it. The archbishops know as much about it as we do, I should hope," a Russian soldier once observed

to me. And in saying this the soldier obviously set his mind at rest, in the full conviction that his spiritual guides had found a law which authorized his ancestors, and the tzars and their descendants, and millions of men, to serve as he was doing himself, and that the question I had put him was a kind of hoax or conundrum on my part.

Everyone in our Christian society knows, either by tradition or by revelation or by the voice of conscience, that murder is one of the most fearful crimes a man can commit, as the Gospel tells us, and that the sin of murder cannot be limited to certain persons, that is, murder cannot be a sin for some and not a sin for others. Everyone knows that if murder is a sin, it is always a sin, whoever are the victims murdered, just like the sin of adultery, theft, or any other. At the same time from their childhood up men see that murder is not only permitted, but even sanctioned by the blessing of those whom they are accustomed to regard as their divinely appointed spiritual guides, and see their secular leaders with calm assurance organizing murder, proud to wear murderous arms, and demanding of others in the name of the laws of the country, and even of God, that they should take part in murder. Men see that there is some inconsistency here, but not being able to analyze it, involuntarily assume that this apparent inconsistency is only the result of their ignorance. The very grossness and obviousness of the inconsistency confirms them in this conviction.

They cannot imagine that the leaders of civilization, the educated classes, could so confidently preach two such opposed principles as the law of Christ and murder. A simple uncorrupted youth cannot imagine that those who stand so high in his opinion, whom he regards as holy or learned men, could for any object whatever mislead him so shamefully. But this is just what has always been and always is done to him. It is done (1) by instilling, by example and direct instruction, from childhood up, into the working people, who have not time to study moral and religious questions for themselves, the idea that torture and murder are compatible with Christianity, and that for certain objects of state, torture and murder are not only admissible, but ought to be employed; and (2) by instilling into certain of the people, who have either voluntarily enlisted or been taken by compulsion into the army, the idea that the perpetration of murder and torture with their own hands is a sacred duty, and even a glorious exploit, worthy of praise and reward.

The general delusion is diffused among all people by means of the catechisms or books, which nowadays replace them, in use for the compulsory education of children. In them it is stated that violence, that is, imprisonment and execution, as well as murder in civil or foreign war in the defense and maintenance of the existing state organization (whatever that may be, absolute or limited monarchy, convention, consulate, empire of this or that

Napoleon or Boulanger, constitutional monarchy, commune or republic) is absolutely lawful and not opposed to morality and Christianity.

This is stated in all catechisms or books used in schools. And men are so thoroughly persuaded of it that they grow up, live and die in that conviction without once entertaining a doubt about it.

This is one form of deception, the general deception instilled into everyone, but there is another special deception practiced upon the soldiers or police who are picked out by one means or another to do the torturing and murdering necessary to defend and maintain the existing RÉGIME.

In all military instructions there appears in one form or another what is expressed in the Russian military code in the following words:

ARTICLE 87. To carry out exactly and without comment the orders of a superior officer means: to carry out an order received from a superior officer exactly without considering whether it is good or not, and whether it is possible to carry it out. The superior officer is responsible for the consequences of the order he gives.

ARTICLE 88. The subordinate ought never to refuse to carry out the orders of a superior officer except when he sees clearly that

in carrying out his superior officer's command, he breaks [the law of God, one involuntarily expects; not at all] HIS OATH OF FIDELITY AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE TZAR.

It is here said that the man who is a soldier can and ought to carry out all the orders of his superior without exception. And as these orders for the most part involve murder, it follows that he ought to break all the laws of God and man. The one law he may not break is that of fidelity and allegiance to the man who happens at a given moment to be in power.

Precisely the same thing is said in other words in all codes of military instruction. And it could not be otherwise, since the whole power of the army and the state is based in reality on this delusive emancipation of men from their duty to God and their conscience, and the substitution of duty to their superior officer for all other duties.

This, then, is the foundation of the belief of the lower classes that the existing RÉGIME so fatal for them is the RÉGIME which ought to exist, and which they ought therefore to support even by torture and murder.

This belief is founded on a conscious deception practiced on them by the higher classes.

And it cannot be otherwise. To compel the lower classes, which are more numerous, to oppress and ill treat themselves, even at the cost of actions opposed to their conscience, it was necessary to deceive them. And it has been done accordingly.

Not many days ago I saw once more this shameless deception being openly practiced, and once more I marveled that it could be practiced so easily and impudently.

At the beginning of November, as I was passing through Toula, I saw once again at the gates of the Zemsky Courthouse the crowd of peasants I had so often seen before, and heard the drunken shouts of the men mingled with the pitiful lamentations of their wives and mothers. It was the recruiting session.

I can never pass by the spectacle. It attracts me by a kind of fascination of repulsion. I again went into the crowd, took my stand among the peasants, looked about and asked questions. And once again I was amazed that this hideous crime can be perpetrated so easily in broad daylight and in the midst of a large town.

As the custom is every year, in all the villages and hamlets of the one hundred millions of Russians, on the 1st of November, the village elders had assembled the young men inscribed on the lists, often their own sons among them, and had brought them to the town.



On the road the recruits have been drinking without intermission, unchecked by the elders, who feel that going on such an insane errand, abandoning their wives and mothers and renouncing all they hold sacred in order to become a senseless instrument of destruction, would be too agonizing if they were not stupefied with spirits.

And so they have come, drinking, swearing, singing, fighting and scuffling with one another. They have spent the night in taverns. In the morning they have slept off their drunkenness and have gathered together at the Zemsky Court-house.

Some of them, in new sheepskin pelisses, with knitted scarves round their necks, their eyes swollen from drinking, are shouting wildly to one another to show their courage; others, crowded near the door, are quietly and mournfully waiting their turn, between their weeping wives and mothers (I had chanced upon the day of the actual enrolling, that is, the examination of those whose names are on the list); others meantime were crowding into the hall of the recruiting office.

Inside the office the work was going on rapidly. The door is opened and the guard calls Piotr Sidorov. Piotr Sidorov starts, crosses himself, and goes into a little room with a glass door, where the conscripts undress. A comrade of Piotr Sidorov's, who has just been passed for service, and come naked out of the

revision office, is dressing hurriedly, his teeth chattering.

Sidorov has already heard the news, and can see from his face too that he has been taken. He wants to ask him questions, but they hurry him and tell him to make haste and undress. He throws off his pelisse, slips his boots off his feet, takes off his waistcoat and draws his shirt over his head, and naked, trembling all over, and exhaling an odor of tobacco, spirits, and sweat, goes into the revision office, not knowing what to do with his brawny bare arms.

Directly facing him in the revision office hangs in a great gold frame a portrait of the Tzar in full uniform with decorations, and in the corner a little portrait of Christ in a shirt and a crown of thorns. In the middle of the room is a table covered with green cloth, on which there are papers lying and a three-cornered ornament surmounted by an eagle--the zertzal. Round the table are sitting the revising officers, looking collected and indifferent. One is smoking a cigarette; another is looking through some papers. Directly Sidorov comes in, a guard goes up to him, places him under the measuring frame, raising him under his chin, and straightening his legs.

The man with the cigarette--he is the doctor--comes up, and without looking at the recruit's face, but somewhere beyond it, feels his body over with an air of disgust, measures him, tests him, tells the guard to open his mouth, tells him to breathe, to speak. Someone notes something down. At last without having once looked him in the face the doctor

says, "Right. Next one!" and with a weary air sits down again at the table. The soldiers again hustle and hurry the lad. He somehow gets into his trousers, wraps his feet in rags, puts on his boots, looks for his scarf and cap, and bundles his pelisse under his arm. Then they lead him into the main hall, shutting him off apart from the rest by a bench, behind which all the conscripts who have been passed for service are waiting. Another village lad like himself, but from a distant province, now a soldier armed with a gun with a sharp-pointed bayonet at the end, keeps watch over him, ready to run him through the body if he should think of trying to escape.

Meantime the crowd of fathers, mothers, and wives, hustled by the police, are pressing round the doors to hear whose lad has been taken, whose is let off. One of the rejected comes out and announces that Piotr is taken, and at once a shrill cry is heard from Piotr's young wife, for whom this word "taken" means separation for four or five years, the life of a soldier's wife as a servant, often a prostitute.

But here comes a man along the street with flowing hair and in a peculiar dress, who gets out of his droskhy and goes into the Zemsky Court-house. The police clear a way for him through the crowd. It is the "reverend father" come to administer the oath. And this "father," who has been persuaded that he is specially and exclusively devoted to the service of Christ, and who, for the most part, does not himself see the deception in which he lives,

goes into the hall where the conscripts are waiting. He throws round him a kind of curtain of brocade, pulls his long hair out over it, opens the very Gospel in which swearing is forbidden, takes the cross, the very cross on which Christ was crucified because he would not do what this false servant of his is telling men to do, and puts them on the lectern. And all these unhappy, defenseless, and deluded lads repeat after him the lie, which he utters with the assurance of familiarity.

He reads and they repeat after him:

"I promise and swear by Almighty God upon his holy Gospel," etc., "to defend," etc., and that is, to murder anyone I am told to, and to do everything I am told by men I know nothing of, and who care nothing for me except as an instrument for perpetrating the crimes by which they are kept in their position of power, and my brothers in their condition of misery. All the conscripts repeat these ferocious words without thinking. And then the so-called "father" goes away with a sense of having correctly and conscientiously done his duty. And all these poor deluded lads believe that these nonsensical and incomprehensible words which they have just uttered set them free for the whole time of their service from their duties as men, and lay upon them fresh and more binding duties as soldiers.

And this crime is perpetrated publicly and no one cries out to the

deceiving and the deceived: "Think what you are doing; this is the basest, falsest lie, by which not bodies only, but souls too, are destroyed."

No one does this. On the contrary, when all have been enrolled, and they are to be let out again, the military officer goes with a confident and majestic air into the hall where the drunken, cheated lads are shut up, and cries in a bold, military voice: "Your health, my lads! I congratulate you on 'serving the Tzar!'" And they, poor fellows (someone has given them a hint beforehand), mutter awkwardly, their voices thick with drink, something to the effect that they are glad.

Meantime the crowd of fathers, mothers, and wives is standing at the doors waiting. The women keep their tearful eyes fixed on the doors. They open at last, and out come the conscripts, unsteady, but trying to put a good face on it. Here are Piotr and Vania and Makar trying not to look their dear ones in the face. Nothing is heard but the wailing of the wives and mothers. Some of the lads embrace them and weep with them, others make a show of courage, and others try to comfort them.

The wives and mothers, knowing that they will be left for three, four, or five years without their breadwinners, weep and rehearse their woes aloud. The fathers say little. They only utter a clucking sound with their tongues and sigh mournfully, knowing

that they will see no more of the steady lads they have reared and trained to help them, that they will come back not the same quiet hard-working laborers, but for the most part conceited and demoralized, unfitted for their simple life.

And then all the crowd get into their sledges again and move away down the street to the taverns and pot-houses, and louder than ever sounds the medley of singing and sobbing, drunken shouts, and the wailing of the wives and mothers, the sounds of the accordeon and oaths. They all turn into the taverns, whose revenues go to the government, and the drinking bout begins, which stifles their sense of the wrong which is being done them.

For two or three weeks they go on living at home, and most of that time they are "jaunting," that is, drinking.

On a fixed day they collect them, drive them together like a flock of sheep, and begin to train them in the military exercises and drill. Their teachers are fellows like themselves, only deceived and brutalized two or three years sooner. The means of instruction are: deception, stupefaction, blows, and vodka. And before a year has passed these good, intelligent, healthy-minded lads will be as brutal beings as their instructors.

"Come, now, suppose your father were arrested and tried to make his escape?" I asked a young soldier.

"I should run him through with my bayonet," he answered with the foolish intonation peculiar to soldiers; "and if he made off, I ought to shoot him," he added, obviously proud of knowing what he must do if his father were escaping.

And when a good-hearted lad has been brought to a state lower than that of a brute, he is just what is wanted by those who use him as an instrument of violence. He is ready; the man has been destroyed and a new instrument of violence has been created. And all this is done every year, every autumn, everywhere, through all Russia in broad daylight in the midst of large towns, where all may see it, and the deception is so clever, so skillful, that though all men know the infamy of it in their hearts, and see all its horrible results, they cannot throw it off and be free.

When one's eyes are opened to this awful deception practiced upon us, one marvels that the teachers of the Christian religion and of morals, the instructors of youth, or even the good-hearted and intelligent parents who are to be found in every society, can teach any kind of morality in a society in which it is openly admitted (it is so admitted, under all governments and all churches) that murder and torture form an indispensable element in the life of all, and that there must always be special men trained to kill their fellows, and that any one of us may have to become such a trained assassin.

How can children, youths, and people generally be taught any kind of morality--not to speak of teaching in the spirit of Christianity--side by side with the doctrine that murder is necessary for the public weal, and therefore legitimate, and that there are men, of whom each of us may have to be one, whose duty is to murder and torture and commit all sorts of crimes at the will of those who are in possession of authority. If this is so, and one can and ought to murder and torture, there is not, and cannot be, any kind of moral law, but only the law that might is right. And this is just how it is. In reality that is the doctrine--justified to some by the theory of the struggle for existence--which reigns in our society.

And, indeed, what sort of ethical doctrine could admit the legitimacy of murder for any object whatever? It is as impossible as a theory of mathematics admitting that two is equal to three.

There may be a semblance of mathematics admitting that two is equal to three, but there can be no real science of mathematics. And there can only be a semblance of ethics in which murder in the shape of war and the execution of criminals is allowed, but no true ethics. The recognition of the life of every man as sacred is the first and only basis of all ethics.

The doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth has been



abrogated by Christianity, because it is the justification of immorality, and a mere semblance of equity, and has no real meaning. Life is a value which has no weight nor size, and cannot be compared to any other, and so there is no sense in destroying a life for a life. Besides, every social law aims at the amelioration of man's life. What way, then, can the annihilation of the life of some men ameliorate men's life? Annihilation of life cannot be a means of the amelioration of life; it is a suicidal act.

To destroy another life for the sake of justice is as though a man, to repair the misfortune of losing one arm, should cut off the other arm for the sake of equity.

But putting aside the sin of deluding men into regarding the most awful crime as a duty, putting aside the revolting sin of using the name and authority of Christ to sanction what he most condemned, not to speak of the curse on those who cause these "little ones" to offend--how can people who cherish their own way of life, their progress, even from the point of view of their personal security, allow the formation in their midst of an overwhelming force as senseless, cruel, and destructive as every government is organized on the basis of an army? Even the most cruel band of brigands is not so much to be dreaded as such a government.

The power of every brigand chief is at least so far limited that the men of his band preserve at least some human liberty, and can refuse to commit acts opposed to their conscience. But, owing to the perfection to which the discipline of the army has been brought, there is no limit to check men who form part of a regularly organized government. There are no crimes so revolting that they would not readily be committed by men who form part of a government or army, at the will of anyone (such as Boulanger, Napoleon, or Pougachef) who may chance to be at their head.

Often when one sees conscription levies, military drills and maneuvers, police officers with loaded revolvers, and sentinels at their posts with bayonets on their rifles; when one hears for whole days at a time (as I hear it in Hamovniky where I live) the whistle of balls and the dull thud as they fall in the sand; when one sees in the midst of a town where any effort at violence in self-defense is forbidden, where the sale of powder and of chemicals, where furious driving and practicing as a doctor without a diploma, and so on, are not allowed; thousands of disciplined troops, trained to murder, and subject to one man's will; one asks oneself how can people who prize their security quietly allow it, and put up with it? Apart from the immorality and evil effects of it, nothing can possibly be more unsafe. What are people thinking about? I don't mean now Christians, ministers of religion, philanthropists, and moralists, but simply people who value their life, their security, and their comfort. This

organization, we know, will work just as well in one man's hands as another's. To-day, let us assume, power is in the hands of a ruler who can be endured, but to-morrow it may be seized by a Biron, an Elizabeth, a Catherine, a Pougachef, a Napoleon I., or a Napoleon III.

And the man in authority, endurable to-day, may become a brute to-morrow, or may be succeeded by a mad or imbecile heir, like the King of Bavaria or our Paul I.

And not only the highest authorities, but all little satraps scattered over everywhere, like so many General Baranovs, governors, police officers even, and commanders of companies, can perpetrate the most awful crimes before there is time for them to be removed from office. And this is what is constantly happening.

One involuntarily asks how can men let it go on, not from higher considerations only, but from regard to their own safety?

The answer to this question is that it is not all people who do tolerate it (some--the greater proportion--deluded and submissive, have no choice and have to tolerate anything). It is tolerated by those who only under such an organization can occupy a position of profit. They tolerate it, because for them the risks of suffering from a foolish or cruel man being at the head of the government or the army are always less than the disadvantages to which they

would be exposed by the destruction of the organization itself.

A judge, a commander of police, a governor, or an officer will keep his position just the same under Boulanger or the republic, under Pougachef or Catherine. He will lose his profitable position for certain, if the existing order of things which secured it to him is destroyed. And so all these people feel no uneasiness as to who is at the head of the organization, they will adapt themselves to anyone; they only dread the downfall of the organization itself, and that is the reason--though often an unconscious one--that they support it.

One often wonders why independent people, who are not forced to do so in any way, the so-called ÉLITE of society, should go into the army in Russia, England, Germany, Austria, and even France, and seek opportunities of becoming murderers. Why do even high-principled parents send their boys to military schools? Why do mothers buy their children toy helmets, guns, and swords as playthings? (The peasant's children never play at soldiers, by the way). Why do good men and even women, who have certainly no interest in war, go into raptures over the various exploits of Skobeloff and others, and vie with one another in glorifying them? Why do men, who are not obliged to do so, and get no fee for it, devote, like the marshals of nobility in Russia, whole months of toil to a business physically disagreeable and morally painful--the enrolling of conscripts? Why do all kings and emperors wear the military uniform? Why do they all hold military reviews, why do they organize maneuvers,

distribute rewards to the military, and raise monuments to generals and successful commanders? Why do rich men of independent position consider it an honor to perform a valet's duties in attendance on crowned personages, flattering them and cringing to them and pretending to believe in their peculiar superiority? Why do men who have ceased to believe in the superstitions of the mediaeval Church, and who could not possibly believe in them seriously and consistently, pretend to believe in and give their support to the demoralizing and blasphemous institution of the church? Why is it that not only governments but private persons of the higher classes, try so jealously to maintain the ignorance of the people? Why do they fall with such fury on any effort at breaking down religious superstitions or really enlightening the people? Why do historians, novelists, and poets, who have no hope of gaining anything by their flatteries, make heroes of kings, emperors, and conquerors of past times? Why do men, who call themselves learned, dedicate whole lifetimes to making theories to prove that violence employed by authority against the people is not violence at all, but a special right? One often wonders why a fashionable lady or an artist, who, one would think, would take no interest in political or military questions, should always condemn strikes of working people, and defend war; and should always be found without hesitation opposed to the one, favorable to the other.

But one no longer wonders when one realizes that in the higher classes there is an unerring instinct of what tends to maintain and of what tends to destroy the organization by virtue of which

they enjoy their privileges. The fashionable lady had certainly not reasoned out that if there were no capitalists and no army to defend them, her husband would have no fortune, and she could not have her entertainments and her ball-dresses. And the artist certainly does not argue that he needs the capitalists and the troops to defend them, so that they may buy his pictures. But instinct, replacing reason in this instance, guides them unerringly. And it is precisely this instinct which leads all men, with few exceptions, to support all the religious, political, and economic institutions which are to their advantage.

But is it possible that the higher classes support the existing order of things simply because it is to their advantage? Cannot they see that this order of things is essentially irrational, that it is no longer consistent with the stage of moral development attained by people, and with public opinion, and that it is fraught with perils? The governing classes, or at least the good, honest, and intelligent people of them, cannot but suffer from these fundamental inconsistencies, and see the dangers with which they are threatened. And is it possible that all the millions of the lower classes can feel easy in conscience when they commit such obviously evil deeds as torture and murder from fear of punishment? Indeed, it could not be so, neither the former nor the latter could fail to see the irrationality of their conduct, if the complexity of government organization did not obscure the unnatural senselessness of their actions.

So many instigate, assist, or sanction the commission of every one of these actions that no one who has a hand in them feels himself morally responsible for it.

It is the custom among assassins to oblige all the witnesses of a murder to strike the murdered victim, that the responsibility may be divided among as large a number of people as possible. The same principle in different forms is applied under the government organization in the perpetration of the crimes, without which no government organization could exist. Rulers always try to implicate as many citizens as possible in all the crimes committed in their support.

Of late this tendency has been expressed in a very obvious manner by the obligation of all citizens to take part in legal processes as jurors, in the army as soldiers, in the local government, or legislative assembly, as electors or members.

Just as in a wicker basket all the ends are so hidden away that it is hard to find them, in the state organization the responsibility for the crimes committed is so hidden away that men will commit the most atrocious acts without seeing their responsibility for them.

In ancient times tyrants got credit for the crimes they committed,

but in our day the most atrocious infamies, inconceivable under the Neros, are perpetrated and no one gets blamed for them.

One set of people have suggested, another set have proposed, a third have reported, a fourth have decided, a fifth have confirmed, a sixth have given the order, and a seventh set of men have carried it out. They hang, they flog to death women, old men, and innocent people, as was done recently among us in Russia at the Yuzovsky factory, and is always being done everywhere in Europe and America in the struggle with the anarchists and all other rebels against the existing order; they shoot and hang men by hundreds and thousands, or massacre millions in war, or break men's hearts in solitary confinement, and ruin their souls in the corruption of a soldier's life, and no one is responsible.

At the bottom of the social scale soldiers, armed with guns, pistols, and sabers, injure and murder people, and compel men through these means to enter the army, and are absolutely convinced that the responsibility for the actions rests solely on the officers who command them.

At the top of the scale--the Tzars, presidents, ministers, and parliaments decree these tortures and murders and military conscription, and are fully convinced that since they are either placed in authority by the grace of God or by the society they govern, which demands such decrees from them, they cannot be held



responsible. Between these two extremes are the intermediary personages who superintend the murders and other acts of violence, and are fully convinced that the responsibility is taken off their shoulders partly by their superiors who have given the order, partly by the fact that such orders are expected from them by all who are at the bottom of the scale.

The authority who gives the orders and the authority who executes them at the two extreme ends of the state organization, meet together like the two ends of a ring; they support and rest on one another and inclose all that lies within the ring.

Without the conviction that there is a person or persons who will take the whole responsibility of his acts, not one soldier would ever lift a hand to commit a murder or other deed of violence.

Without the conviction that it is expected by the whole people not a single king, emperor, president, or parliament would order murders or acts of violence.

Without the conviction that there are persons of a higher grade who will take the responsibility, and people of a lower grade who require such acts for their welfare, not one of the intermediate class would superintend such deeds.

The state is so organized that wherever a man is placed in the

social scale, his irresponsibility is the same. The higher his grade the more he is under the influence of demands from below, and the less he is controlled by orders from above, and VICE VERSA.

All men, then, bound together by state organization, throw the responsibility of their acts on one another, the peasant soldier on the nobleman or merchant who is his officer, and the officer on the nobleman who has been appointed governor, the governor on the nobleman or son of an official who is minister, the minister on the member of the royal family who occupies the post of Tzar, and the Tzar again on all these officials, noblemen, merchants, and peasants. But that is not all. Besides the fact that men get rid of the sense of responsibility for their actions in this way, they lose their moral sense of responsibility also, by the fact that in forming themselves into a state organization they persuade themselves and each other so continually, and so indefatigably, that they are not all equal, but "as the stars apart," that they come to believe it genuinely themselves. Thus some are persuaded that they are not simple people like everyone else, but special people who are to be specially honored. It is instilled into another set of men by every possible means that they are inferior to others, and therefore must submit without a murmur to every order given them by their superiors.

On this inequality, above all, on the elevation of some and the

degradation of others, rests the capacity men have of being blind to the insanity of the existing order of life, and all the cruelty and criminality of the deception practiced by one set of men on another.

Those in whom the idea has been instilled that they are invested with a special supernatural grandeur and consequence, are so intoxicated with a sense of their own imaginary dignity that they cease to feel their responsibility for what they do.

While those, on the other hand, in whom the idea is fostered that they are inferior animals, bound to obey their superiors in everything, fall, through this perpetual humiliation, into a strange condition of stupefied servility, and in this stupefied state do not see the significance of their actions and lose all consciousness of responsibility for what they do.

The intermediate class, who obey the orders of their superiors on the one hand and regard themselves as superior beings on the other, are intoxicated by power and stupefied by servility at the same time and so lose the sense of their responsibility.

One need only glance during a review at the commander-in-chief, intoxicated with self-importance, followed by his retinue, all on magnificent and gayly appareled horses, in splendid uniforms and wearing decorations, and see how they ride to the harmonious and solemn strains

of music before the ranks of soldiers, all presenting arms and petrified with servility. One need only glance at this spectacle to understand that at such moments, when they are in a state of the most complete intoxication, commander-in-chief, soldiers, and intermediate officers alike, would be capable of committing crimes of which they would never dream under other conditions.

The intoxication produced by such stimulants as parades, reviews, religious solemnities, and coronations, is, however, an acute and temporary condition; but there are other forms of chronic, permanent intoxication, to which those are liable who have any kind of authority, from that of the Tzar to that of the lowest police officer at the street corner, and also those who are in subjection to authority and in a state of stupefied servility. The latter, like all slaves, always find a justification for their own servility, in ascribing the greatest possible dignity and importance to those they serve.

It is principally through this false idea of inequality, and the intoxication of power and of servility resulting from it, that men associated in a state organization are enabled to commit acts opposed to their conscience without the least scruple or remorse. Under the influence of this intoxication, men imagine themselves no longer simply men as they are, but some special beings--noblemen, merchants, governors, judges, officers, tzars, ministers, or soldiers--no longer bound by ordinary human duties, but by other duties far more

weighty--the peculiar duties of a nobleman, merchant, governor, judge, officer, czar, minister, or soldier.

Thus the landowner, who claimed the forest, acted as he did only because he fancied himself not a simple man, having the same rights to life as the peasants living beside him and everyone else, but a great landowner, a member of the nobility, and under the influence of the intoxication of power he felt his dignity offended by the peasants' claims. It was only through this feeling that, without considering the consequences that might follow, he sent in a claim to be reinstated in his pretended rights.

In the same way the judges, who wrongfully adjudged the forest to the proprietor, did so simply because they fancied themselves not simply men like everyone else, and so bound to be guided in everything only by what they consider right, but, under the intoxicating influence of power, imagined themselves the representatives of the justice which cannot err; while under the intoxicating influence of servility they imagined themselves bound to carry out to the letter the instructions inscribed in a certain book, the so-called law. In the same way all who take part in such an affair, from the highest representative of authority who signs his assent to the report, from the superintendent presiding at the recruiting sessions, and the priest who deludes the recruits, to the lowest soldier who is ready now to fire on his

own brothers, imagine, in the intoxication of power or of servility, that they are some conventional characters. They do not face the question that is presented to them, whether or not they ought to take part in what their conscience judges an evil act, but fancy themselves various conventional personages--one as the Tzar, God's anointed, an exceptional being, called to watch over the happiness of one hundred millions of men; another as the representative of nobility; another as a priest, who has received special grace by his ordination; another as a soldier, bound by his military oath to carry out all he is commanded without reflection.

Only under the intoxication of the power or the servility of their imagined positions could all these people act as they do.

Were not they all firmly convinced that their respective vocations of tzar, minister, governor, judge, nobleman, landowner, superintendent, officer, and soldier are something real and important, not one of them would even think without horror and aversion of taking part in what they do now.

The conventional positions, established hundreds of years, recognized for centuries and by everyone, distinguished by special names and dresses, and, moreover, confirmed by every kind of solemnity, have so penetrated into men's minds through their senses, that, forgetting the ordinary conditions of life common to

all, they look at themselves and everyone only from this conventional point of view, and are guided in their estimation of their own actions and those of others by this conventional standard.

Thus we see a man of perfect sanity and ripe age, simply because he is decked out with some fringe, or embroidered keys on his coat tails, or a colored ribbon only fit for some gayly dressed girl, and is told that he is a general, a chamberlain, a knight of the order of St. Andrew, or some similar nonsense, suddenly become self-important, proud, and even happy, or, on the contrary, grow melancholy and unhappy to the point of falling ill, because he has failed to obtain the expected decoration or title. Or what is still more striking, a young man, perfectly sane in every other matter, independent and beyond the fear of want, simply because he has been appointed judicial prosecutor or district commander, separates a poor widow from her little children, and shuts her up in prison, leaving her children uncared for, all because the unhappy woman carried on a secret trade in spirits, and so deprived the revenue of twenty-five rubles, and he does not feel the least pang of remorse. Or what is still more amazing; a man, otherwise sensible and good-hearted, simply because he is given a badge or a uniform to wear, and told that he is a guard or customs officer, is ready to fire on people, and neither he nor those around him regard him as to blame for it, but, on the contrary, would regard him as to blame if he did not fire. To say nothing

of judges and juries who condemn men to death, and soldiers who kill men by thousands without the slightest scruple merely because it has been instilled into them that they are not simply men, but jurors, judges, generals, and soldiers.

This strange and abnormal condition of men under state organization is usually expressed in the following words: "As a man, I pity him; but as guard, judge, general, governor, tzar, or soldier, it is my duty to kill or torture him." Just as though there were some positions conferred and recognized, which would exonerate us from the obligations laid on each of us by the fact of our common humanity.

So, for example, in the case before us, men are going to murder and torture the famishing, and they admit that in the dispute between the peasants and the landowner the peasants are right (all those in command said as much to me). They know that the peasants are wretched, poor, and hungry, and the landowner is rich and inspires no sympathy. Yet they are all going to kill the peasants to secure three thousand rubles for the landowner, only because at that moment they fancy themselves not men but governor, official, general of police, officer, and soldier, respectively, and consider themselves bound to obey, not the eternal demands of the conscience of man, but the casual, temporary demands of their positions as officers or soldiers.



Strange as it may seem, the sole explanation of this astonishing phenomenon is that they are in the condition of the hypnotized, who, they say, feel and act like the creatures they are commanded by the hypnotizer to represent. When, for instance, it is suggested to the hypnotized subject that he is lame, he begins to walk lame, that he is blind, and he cannot see, that he is a wild beast, and he begins to bite. This is the state, not only of those who were going on this expedition, but of all men who fulfill their state and social duties in preference to and in detriment of their human duties.

The essence of this state is that under the influence of one suggestion they lose the power of criticising their actions, and therefore do, without thinking, everything consistent with the suggestion to which they are led by example, precept, or insinuation.

The difference between those hypnotized by scientific men and those under the influence of the state hypnotism, is that an imaginary position is suggested to the former suddenly by one person in a very brief space of time, and so the hypnotized state appears to us in a striking and surprising form, while the imaginary position suggested by state influence is induced slowly, little by little, imperceptibly from childhood, sometimes during years, or even generations, and not in one person alone but in a whole society.

"But," it will be said, "at all times, in all societies, the majority of persons--all the children, all the women absorbed in the bearing and rearing of the young, all the great mass of the laboring population, who are under the necessity of incessant and fatiguing physical labor, all those of weak character by nature, all those who are abnormally enfeebled intellectually by the effects of nicotine, alcohol, opium, or other intoxicants--are always in a condition of incapacity for independent thought, and are either in subjection to those who are on a higher intellectual level, or else under the influence of family or social traditions, of what is called public opinion, and there is nothing unnatural or incongruous in their subjection."

And truly there is nothing unnatural in it, and the tendency of men of small intellectual power to follow the lead of those on a higher level of intelligence is a constant law, and it is owing to it that men can live in societies and on the same principles at all. The minority consciously adopt certain rational principles through their correspondence with reason, while the majority act on the same principles unconsciously because it is required by public opinion.

Such subjection to public opinion on the part of the unintellectual does not assume an unnatural character till the public opinion is split into two.

But there are times when a higher truth, revealed at first to a few persons, gradually gains ground till it has taken hold of such a number of persons that the old public opinion, founded on a lower order of truths, begins to totter and the new is ready to take its place, but has not yet been firmly established. It is like the spring, this time of transition, when the old order of ideas has not quite broken up and the new has not quite gained a footing. Men begin to criticise their actions in the light of the new truth, but in the meantime in practice, through inertia and tradition, they continue to follow the principles which once represented the highest point of rational consciousness, but are now in flagrant contradiction with it.

Then men are in an abnormal, wavering condition, feeling the necessity of following the new ideal, and yet not bold enough to break with the old-established traditions.

Such is the attitude in regard to the truth of Christianity not only of the men in the Toulon train, but of the majority of men of our times, alike of the higher and the lower orders.

Those of the ruling classes, having no longer any reasonable justification for the profitable positions they occupy, are forced, in order to keep them, to stifle their higher rational faculty of loving, and to persuade themselves that their positions

are indispensable. And those of the lower classes, exhausted by toil and brutalized of set purpose, are kept in a permanent deception, practiced deliberately and continuously by the higher classes upon them.

Only in this way can one explain the amazing contradictions with which our life is full, and of which a striking example was presented to me by the expedition I met on the 9th of September; good, peaceful men, known to me personally, going with untroubled tranquillity to perpetrate the most beastly, senseless, and vile of crimes. Had not they some means of stifling their conscience, not one of them would be capable of committing a hundredth part of such a villainy.

It is not that they have not a conscience which forbids them from acting thus, just as, even three or four hundred years ago, when people burnt men at the stake and put them to the rack they had a conscience which prohibited it; the conscience is there, but it has been put to sleep--in those in command by what the psychologists call auto-suggestion; in the soldiers, by the direct conscious hypnotizing exerted by the higher classes.

Though asleep, the conscience is there, and in spite of the hypnotism it is already speaking in them, and it may awake.

All these men are in a position like that of a man under

hypnotism, commanded to do something opposed to everything he regards as good and rational, such as to kill his mother or his child. The hypnotized subject feels himself bound to carry out the suggestion--he thinks he cannot stop--but the nearer he gets to the time and the place of the action, the more the benumbed conscience begins to stir, to resist, and to try to awake. And no one can say beforehand whether he will carry out the suggestion or not; which will gain the upper hand, the rational conscience or the irrational suggestion. It all depends on their relative strength.

That is just the case with the men in the Toula train and in general with everyone carrying out acts of state violence in our day.

There was a time when men who set out with the object of murder and violence, to make an example, did not return till they had carried out their object, and then, untroubled by doubts or scruples, having calmly flogged men to death, they returned home and caressed their children, laughed, amused themselves, and enjoyed the peaceful pleasures of family life. In those days it never struck the landowners and wealthy men who profited by these crimes, that the privileges they enjoyed had any direct connection with these atrocities. But now it is no longer so. Men know now, or are not far from knowing, what they are doing and for what object they do it. They can shut their eyes and force their conscience to be still, but so long as their eyes are opened and their conscience

undulled, they must all--those who carry out and those who profit by these crimes alike--see the import of them. Sometimes they realize it only after the crime has been perpetrated, sometimes they realize it just before its perpetration. Thus those who commanded the recent acts of violence in Nijni-Novgorod, Saratov, Orel, and the Yuzovsky factory realized their significance only after their perpetration, and now those who commanded and those who carried out these crimes are ashamed before public opinion and their conscience. I have talked to soldiers who had taken part in these crimes, and they always studiously turned the conversation off the subject, and when they spoke of it it was with horror and bewilderment. There are cases, too, when men come to themselves just before the perpetration of the crime. Thus I know the case of a sergeant-major who had been beaten by two peasants during the repression of disorder and had made a complaint. The next day, after seeing the atrocities perpetrated on the other peasants, he entreated the commander of his company to tear up his complaint and let off the two peasants. I know cases when soldiers, commanded to fire, have refused to obey, and I know many cases of officers who have refused to command expeditions for torture and murder. So that men sometimes come to their senses long before perpetrating the suggested crime, sometimes at the very moment before perpetrating it, sometimes only afterward.

The men traveling in the Toula train were going with the object of killing and injuring their fellow-creatures, but none could tell whether they would carry out their object or not. However obscure his responsibility for the affair is to each, and however strong

the idea instilled into all of them that they are not men, but governors, officials, officers, and soldiers, and as such beings can violate every human duty, the nearer they approach the place of the execution, the stronger their doubts as to its being right, and this doubt will reach its highest point when the very moment for carrying it out has come.

The governor, in spite of all the stupefying effect of his surroundings, cannot help hesitating when the moment comes to give final decisive command. He knows that the action of the Governor of Orel has called down upon him the disapproval of the best people, and he himself, influenced by the public opinion of the circles in which he moves, has more than once expressed his disapprobation of him. He knows that the prosecutor, who ought to have come, flatly refused to have anything to do with it, because he regarded it as disgraceful. He knows, too, that there may be changes any day in the government, and that what was a ground for advancement yesterday may be the cause of disgrace to-morrow. And he knows that there is a press, if not in Russia, at least abroad, which may report the affair and cover him with ignominy forever. He is already conscious of a change in public opinion which condemns what was formerly a duty. Moreover, he cannot feel fully assured that his soldiers will at the last moment obey him. He is wavering, and none can say beforehand what he will do.

All the officers and functionaries who accompany him experience in

greater or less degree the same emotions. In the depths of their hearts they all know that what they are doing is shameful, that to take part in it is a discredit and blemish in the eyes of some people whose opinion they value. They know that after murdering and torturing the defenseless, each of them will be ashamed to face his betrothed or the woman he is courting. And besides, they too, like the governor, are doubtful whether the soldiers' obedience to orders can be reckoned on. What a contrast with the confident air they all put on as they sauntered about the station and platform! Inwardly they were not only in a state of suffering but even of suspense. Indeed they only assumed this bold and composed manner to conceal the wavering within. And this feeling increased as they drew near the scene of action.

And imperceptible as it was, and strange as it seems to say so, all that mass of lads, the soldiers, who seemed so submissive, were in precisely the same condition.

These are not the soldiers of former days, who gave up the natural life of industry and devoted their whole existence to debauchery, plunder, and murder, like the Roman legionaries or the warriors of the Thirty Years' War, or even the soldiers of more recent times who served for twenty-five years in the army. They have mostly been only lately taken from their families, and are full of the recollections of the good, rational, natural life they have left behind them.



All these lads, peasants for the most part, know what is the business they have come about; they know that the landowners always oppress their brothers the peasants, and that therefore it is most likely the same thing here. Moreover, a majority of them can now read, and the books they read are not all such as exalt a military life; there are some which point out its immorality. Among them are often free-thinking comrades--who have enlisted voluntarily--or young officers of liberal ideas, and already the first germ of doubt has been sown in regard to the unconditional legitimacy and glory of their occupation.

It is true that they have all passed through that terrible, skillful education, elaborated through centuries, which kills all initiative in a man, and that they are so trained to mechanical obedience that at the word of command: "Fire!--All the line!--Fire!" and so on, their guns will rise of themselves and the habitual movements will be performed. But "Fire!" now does not mean shooting into the sand for amusement, it means firing on their broken-down, exploited fathers and brothers whom they see there in the crowd, with women and children shouting and waving their arms. Here they are--one with his scanty beard and patched coat and plaited shoes of reed, just like the father left at home in Kazan or Riazan province; one with gray beard and bent back, leaning on a staff like the old grandfather; one, a young fellow in boots and a red shirt, just as he was himself a year ago--he, the soldier who must fire upon him. There, too, a woman in reed shoes and PANYOVA, just like the mother

left at home.

Is it possible they must fire on them? And no one knows what each soldier will do at the last minute. The least word, the slightest allusion would be enough to stop them.

At the last moment they will all find themselves in the position of a hypnotized man to whom it has been suggested to chop a log, who coming up to what has been indicated to him as a log, with the ax already lifted to strike, sees that it is not a log but his sleeping brother. He may perform the act that has been suggested to him, and he may come to his senses at the moment of performing it. In the same way all these men may come to themselves in time or they may go on to the end.

If they do not come to themselves, the most fearful crime will be committed, as in Orel, and then the hypnotic suggestion under which they act will be strengthened in all other men. If they do come to themselves, not only this terrible crime will not be perpetrated, but many also who hear of the turn the affair has taken will be emancipated from the hypnotic influence in which they were held, or at least will be nearer being emancipated from it.

Even if a few only come to themselves, and boldly explain to the others all the wickedness of such a crime, the influence of these

few may rouse the others to shake off the controlling suggestion, and the atrocity will not be perpetrated.

More than that, if a few men, even of those who are not taking part in the affair but are only present at the preparations for it, or have heard of such things being done in the past, do not remain indifferent but boldly and plainly express their detestation of such crimes to those who have to execute them, and point out to them all the senselessness, cruelty, and wickedness of such acts, that alone will be productive of good.

That was what took place in the instance before us. It was enough for a few men, some personally concerned in the affair and others simply outsiders, to express their disapproval of floggings that had taken place elsewhere, and their contempt and loathing for those who had taken part in inflicting them, for a few persons in the Toula case to express their repugnance to having any share in it; for a lady traveling by the train, and a few other bystanders at the station, to express to those who formed the expedition their disgust at what they were doing; for one of the commanders of a company, who was asked for troops for the restoration of order, to reply that soldiers ought not to be butchers--and thanks to these and a few other seemingly insignificant influences brought to bear on these hypnotized men, the affair took a completely different turn, and the troops, when they reached the place, did not inflict any punishment, but contented themselves

with cutting down the forest and giving it to the landowner.

Had not a few persons had a clear consciousness that what they were doing was wrong, and consequently influenced one another in that direction, what was done at Orel would have taken place at Toula. Had this consciousness been still stronger, and had the influence exerted been therefore greater than it was, it might well have been that the governor with his troops would not even have ventured to cut down the forest and give it to the landowner.

Had that consciousness been stronger still, it might well have been that the governor would not have ventured to go to the scene of action at all; even that the minister would not have ventured to form this decision or the Tzar to ratify it.

All depends, therefore, on the strength of the consciousness of Christian truth on the part of each individual man.

And, therefore, one would have thought that the efforts of all men of the present day who profess to wish to work for the welfare of humanity would have been directed to strengthening this consciousness of Christian truth in themselves and others.

But, strange to say, it is precisely those people who profess most anxiety for the amelioration of human life, and are regarded as the leaders of public opinion, who assert that there is no need to

do that, and that there are other more effective means for the amelioration of men's condition. They affirm that the amelioration of human life is effected not by the efforts of individual men, to recognize and propagate the truth, but by the gradual modification of the general conditions of life, and that therefore the efforts of individuals should be directed to the gradual modification of external conditions for the better. For every advocacy of a truth inconsistent with the existing order by an individual is, they maintain, not only useless but injurious, since it provokes coercive measures on the part of the authorities, restricting these individuals from continuing any action useful to society. According to this doctrine all modifications in human life are brought about by precisely the same laws as in the life of the animals.

So that, according to this doctrine, all the founders of religions, such as Moses and the prophets, Confucius, Lao-Tse, Buddha, Christ, and others, preached their doctrines and their followers accepted them, not because they loved the truth, but because the political, social, and above all economic conditions of the peoples among whom these religions arose were favorable for their origination and development.

And therefore the chief efforts of the man who wishes to serve society and improve the condition of humanity ought, according to this doctrine, to be directed not to the elucidation and

propagation of truth, but to the improvement of the external political, social, and above all economic conditions. And the modification of these conditions is partly effected by serving the government and introducing liberal and progressive principles into it, partly in promoting the development of industry and the propagation of socialistic ideas, and most of all by the diffusion of science. According to this theory it is of no consequence whether you profess the truth revealed to you, and therefore realize it in your life, or at least refrain from committing actions opposed to the truth, such as serving the government and strengthening its authority when you regard it as injurious, profiting by the capitalistic system when you regard it as wrong, showing veneration for various ceremonies which you believe to be degrading superstitions, giving support to the law when you believe it to be founded on error, serving as a soldier, taking oaths, and lying, and lowering yourself generally. It is useless to refrain from all that; what is of use is not altering the existing forms of life, but submitting to them against your own convictions, introducing liberalism into the existing institutions, promoting commerce, the propaganda of socialism, and the triumphs of what is called science, and the diffusion of education. According to this theory one can remain a landowner, merchant, manufacturer, judge, official in government pay, officer or soldier, and still be not only a humane man, but even a socialist and revolutionist.

Hypocrisy, which had formerly only a religious basis in the doctrine of original sin, the redemption, and the Church, has in our day gained a new scientific basis and has consequently caught in its nets all those who had reached too high a stage of development to be able to find support in religious hypocrisy. So that while in former days a man who professed the religion of the Church could take part in all the crimes of the state, and profit by them, and still regard himself as free from any taint of sin, so long as he fulfilled the external observances of his creed, nowadays all who do not believe in the Christianity of the Church, find similar well-founded irrefutable reasons in science for regarding themselves as blameless and even highly moral in spite of their participation in the misdeeds of government and the advantages they gain from them.

A rich landowner--not only in Russia, but in France, England, Germany, or America--lives on the rents exacted; from the people living on his land, and robs these generally poverty-stricken people of all he can get from them. This man's right of property in the land rests on the fact that at every effort on the part of the oppressed people, without his consent, to make use of the land he considers his, troops are called out to subject them to punishment and murder. One would have thought that it was obvious that a man living in this way was an evil, egoistic creature and could not possibly consider himself a Christian or a liberal. One would have supposed it evident that the first thing such a man must do, if he wishes to approximate to Christianity or liberalism, would be to

cease to plunder and ruin men by means of acts of state violence in support of his claim to the land. And so it would be if it were not for the logic of hypocrisy, which reasons that from a religious point of view possession or non-possession of land is of no consequence for salvation, and from the scientific point of view, giving up the ownership of land is a useless individual renunciation, and that the welfare of mankind is not promoted in that way, but by a gradual modification of external forms. And so we see this man, without the least trouble of mind or doubt that people will believe in his sincerity, organizing an agricultural exhibition, or a temperance society, or sending some soup and stockings by his wife or children to three old women, and boldly in his family, in drawing rooms, in committees, and in the press, advocating the Gospel or humanitarian doctrine of love for one's neighbor in general and the agricultural laboring population in particular whom he is continually exploiting and oppressing. And other people who are in the same position as he believe him, commend him, and solemnly discuss with him measures for ameliorating the condition of the working-class, on whose exploitation their whole life rests, devising all kinds of possible methods for this, except the one without which all improvement of their condition is impossible, i. e., refraining from taking from them the land necessary for their subsistence. (A striking example of this hypocrisy was the solicitude displayed by the Russian landowners last year, their efforts to combat the famine which they had caused, and by which they profited, selling not only bread at the highest price, but even potato haulm at five rubles the dessiatine (about 2 and four-fifths acres) for fuel to



the freezing peasants.)

Or take a merchant whose whole trade--like all trade indeed--is founded on a series of trickery, by means of which, profiting by the ignorance or need of others, he buys goods below their value and sells them again above their value. One would have fancied it obvious that a man whose whole occupation was based on what in his own language is called swindling, if it is done under other conditions, ought to be ashamed of his position, and could not any way, while he continues a merchant, profess himself a Christian or a liberal.

But the sophistry of hypocrisy reasons that the merchant can pass for a virtuous man without giving up his pernicious course of action; a religious man need only have faith and a liberal man need only promote the modification of external conditions--the progress of industry. And so we see the merchant (who often goes further and commits acts of direct dishonesty, selling adulterated goods, using false weights and measures, and trading in products injurious to health, such as alcohol and opium) boldly regarding himself and being regarded by others, so long as he does not directly deceive his colleagues in business, as a pattern of probity and virtue. And if he spends a thousandth part of his stolen wealth on some public institution, a hospital or museum or school, then he is even regarded as the benefactor of the people on the exploitation and corruption of whom his whole prosperity has been founded: if he sacrifices, too, a portion of his ill-gotten gains on a

Church and the poor, then he is an exemplary Christian.

A manufacturer is a man whose whole income consists of value squeezed out of the workmen, and whose whole occupation is based on forced, unnatural labor, exhausting whole generations of men. It would seem obvious that if this man professes any Christian or liberal principles, he must first of all give up ruining human lives for his own profit. But by the existing theory he is promoting industry, and he ought not to abandon his pursuit. It would even be injuring society for him to do so. And so we see this man, the harsh slave-driver of thousands of men, building almshouses with little gardens two yards square for the workmen broken down in toiling for him, and a bank, and a poorhouse, and a hospital--fully persuaded that he has amply expiated in this way for all the human lives morally and physically ruined by him--and calmly going on with his business, taking pride in it.

Any civil, religious, or military official in government employ, who serves the state from vanity, or, as is most often the case, simply for the sake of the pay wrung from the harassed and toilworn working classes (all taxes, however raised, always fall on labor), if he, as is very seldom the case, does not directly rob the government in the usual way, considers himself, and is considered by his fellows, as a most useful and virtuous member of society.

A judge or a public prosecutor knows that through his sentence or his prosecution hundreds or thousands of poor wretches are at once torn from their families and thrown into prison, where they may go out of their minds, kill themselves with pieces of broken glass, or starve themselves; he knows that they have wives and mothers and children, disgraced and made miserable by separation from them, vainly begging for pardon for them or some alleviation of their sentence, and this judge or this prosecutor is so hardened in his hypocrisy that he and his fellows and his wife and his household are all fully convinced that he may be a most exemplary man. According to the metaphysics of hypocrisy it is held that he is doing a work of public utility. And this man who has ruined hundreds, thousands of men, who curse him and are driven to desperation by his action, goes to mass, a smile of shining benevolence on his smooth face, in perfect faith in good and in God, listens to the Gospel, caresses his children, preaches moral principles to them, and is moved by imaginary sufferings.

All these men and those who depend on them, their wives, tutors, children, cooks, actors, jockeys, and so on, are living on the blood which by one means or another, through one set of blood-suckers or another, is drawn out of the working class, and every day their pleasures cost hundreds or thousands of days of labor. They see the sufferings and privations of these laborers and their children, their aged, their wives, and their sick, they know the punishments inflicted on those who resist this organized plunder, and far from decreasing, far

from concealing their luxury, they insolently display it before these oppressed laborers who hate them, as though intentionally provoking them with the pomp of their parks and palaces, their theaters, hunts, and races. At the same time they continue to persuade themselves and others that they are all much concerned about the welfare of these working classes, whom they have always trampled under their feet, and on Sundays, richly dressed, they drive in sumptuous carriages to the houses of God built in very mockery of Christianity, and there listen to men, trained to this work of deception, who in white neckties or in brocaded vestments, according to their denomination, preach the love for their neighbor which they all gainsay in their lives. And these people have so entered into their part that they seriously believe that they really are what they pretend to be.

The universal hypocrisy has so entered into the flesh and blood of all classes of our modern society, it has reached such a pitch that nothing in that way can rouse indignation. Hypocrisy in the Greek means "acting," and acting--playing a part--is always possible. The representatives of Christ give their blessing to the ranks of murderers holding their guns loaded against their brothers; "for prayer" priests, ministers of various Christian sects are always present, as indispensably as the hangman, at executions, and sanction by their presence the compatibility of murder with Christianity (a clergyman assisted at the attempt at murder by electricity in America)--but such facts cause no one any surprise.

There was recently held at Petersburg an international exhibition of instruments of torture, handcuffs, models of solitary cells, that is to say instruments of torture worse than knouts or rods, and sensitive ladies and gentlemen went and amused themselves by looking at them.

No one is surprised that together with its recognition of liberty, equality, and fraternity, liberal science should prove the necessity of war, punishment, customs, the censure, the regulation of prostitution, the exclusion of cheap foreign laborers, the hindrance of emigration, the justifiableness of colonization, based on poisoning and destroying whole races of men called savages, and so on.

People talk of the time when all men shall profess what is called Christianity (that is, various professions of faith hostile to one another), when all shall be well-fed and clothed, when all shall be united from one end of the world to the other by telegraphs and telephones, and be able to communicate by balloons, when all the working classes are permeated by socialistic doctrines, when the Trades Unions possess so many millions of members and so many millions of rubles, when everyone is educated and all can read newspapers and learn all the sciences.

But what good or useful thing can come of all these improvements,

if men do not speak and act in accordance with what they believe to be the truth?

The condition of men is the result of their disunion. Their disunion results from their not following the truth which is one, but falsehoods which are many. The sole means of uniting men is their union in the truth. And therefore the more sincerely men strive toward the truth, the nearer they get to unity.

But how can men be united in the truth or even approximate to it, if they do not even express the truth they know, but hold that there is no need to do so, and pretend to regard as truth what they believe to be false?

And therefore no improvement is possible so long as men are hypocritical and hide the truth from themselves, so long as they do not recognize that their union and therefore their welfare is only possible in the truth, and do not put the recognition and profession of the truth revealed to them higher than everything else.

All the material improvements that religious and scientific men can dream of may be accomplished; all men may accept Christianity, and all the reforms desired by the Bellamys may be brought about with every possible addition and improvement, but if the hypocrisy which rules nowadays still exists, if men do not profess the truth

they know, but continue to feign belief in what they do not believe and veneration for what they do not respect, their condition will remain the same, or even grow worse and worse. The more men are freed from privation; the more telegraphs, telephones, books, papers, and journals there are; the more means there will be of diffusing inconsistent lies and hypocrisies, and the more disunited and consequently miserable will men become, which indeed is what we see actually taking place.

All these material reforms may be realized, but the position of humanity will not be improved. But only let each man, according to his powers, at once realize in his life the truth he knows, or at least cease to support the falsehoods he is supporting in the place of the truth, and at once, in this year 1893, we should see such reforms as we do not dare to hope for within a century--the emancipation of men and the reign of truth upon earth.

Not without good reason was Christ's only harsh and threatening reproof directed against hypocrites and hypocrisy. It is not theft nor robbery nor murder nor fornication, but falsehood, the special falsehood of hypocrisy, which corrupts men, brutalizes them and makes them vindictive, destroys all distinction between right and wrong in their conscience, deprives them of what is the true meaning of all real human life, and debars them from all progress toward perfection.

Those who do evil through ignorance of the truth provoke sympathy with their victims and repugnance for their actions, they do harm only to those they attack; but those who know the truth and do evil masked by hypocrisy, injure themselves and their victims, and thousands of other men as well who are led astray by the falsehood with which the wrongdoing is disguised.

Thieves, robbers, murderers, and cheats, who commit crimes recognized by themselves and everyone else as evil, serve as an example of what ought not to be done, and deter others from similar crimes. But those who commit the same thefts, robberies, murders, and other crimes, disguising them under all kinds of religious or scientific or humanitarian justifications, as all landowners, merchants, manufacturers, and government officials do, provoke others to imitation, and so do harm not only to those who are directly the victims of their crimes, but to thousands and millions of men whom they corrupt by obliterating their sense of the distinction between right and wrong.

A single fortune gained by trading in goods necessary to the people or in goods pernicious in their effects, or by financial speculations, or by acquiring land at a low price the value of which is increased by the needs of the population, or by an industry ruinous to the health and life of those employed in it, or by military or civil service of the state, or by any employment which trades on men's evil instincts--a single fortune acquired in



any of these ways, not only with the sanction, but even with the approbation of the leading men in society, and masked with an ostentation of philanthropy, corrupts men incomparably more than millions of thefts and robberies committed against the recognized forms of law and punishable as crimes.

A single execution carried out by prosperous educated men uninfluenced by passion, with the approbation and assistance of Christian ministers, and represented as something necessary and even just, is infinitely more corrupting and brutalizing to men than thousands of murders committed by uneducated working people under the influence of passion. An execution such as was proposed by Joukovsky, which would produce even a sentiment of religious emotion in the spectators, would be one of the most perverting actions imaginable. (SEE vol. iv. of the works of Joukovsky.)

Every war, even the most humanely conducted, with all its ordinary consequences, the destruction of harvests, robberies, the license and debauchery, and the murder with the justifications of its necessity and justice, the exaltation and glorification of military exploits, the worship of the flag, the patriotic sentiments, the feigned solicitude for the wounded, and so on, does more in one year to pervert men's minds than thousands of robberies, murders, and arsons perpetrated during hundreds of years by individual men under the influence of passion.

The luxurious expenditure of a single respectable and so-called honorable family, even within the conventional limits, consuming as it does the produce of as many days of labor as would suffice to provide for thousands living in privation near, does more to pervert men's minds than thousands of the violent orgies of coarse tradespeople, officers, and workmen of drunken and debauched habits, who smash up glasses and crockery for amusement.

One solemn religious procession, one service, one sermon from the altar-steps or the pulpit, in which the preacher does not believe, produces incomparably more evil than thousands of swindling tricks, adulteration of food, and so on.

We talk of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. But the hypocrisy of our society far surpasses the comparatively innocent hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They had at least an external religious law, the fulfillment of which hindered them from seeing their obligations to their neighbors. Moreover, these obligations were not nearly so clearly defined in their day. Nowadays we have no such religious law to exonerate us from our duties to our neighbors (I am not speaking now of the coarse and ignorant persons who still fancy their sins can be absolved by confession to a priest or by the absolution of the Pope). On the contrary, the law of the Gospel which we all profess in one form or another directly defines these duties. Besides, the duties which had then been only vaguely and mystically expressed by a few prophets have now

been so clearly formulated, have become such truisms, that they are repeated even by schoolboys and journalists. And so it would seem that men of to-day cannot pretend that they do not know these duties.

A man of the modern world who profits by the order of things based on violence, and at the same time protests that he loves his neighbor and does not observe what he is doing in his daily life to his neighbor, is like a brigand who has spent his life in robbing men, and who, caught at last, knife in hand, in the very act of striking his shrieking victim, should declare that he had no idea that what he was doing was disagreeable to the man he had robbed and was prepared to murder. Just as this robber and murderer could not deny what was evident to everyone, so it would seem that a man living upon the privations of the oppressed classes cannot persuade himself and others that he desires the welfare of those he plunders, and that he does not know how the advantages he enjoys are obtained.

It is impossible to convince ourselves that we do not know that there are a hundred thousand men in prison in Russia alone to guarantee the security of our property and tranquillity, and that we do not know of the law tribunals in which we take part, and which, at our initiative, condemn those who have attacked our property or our security to prison, exile, or forced labor, whereby men no worse than those who condemn them are ruined and

corrupted; or that we do not know that we only possess all that we do possess because it has been acquired and is defended for us by murder and violence.

We cannot pretend that we do not see the armed policeman who marches up and down beneath our windows to guarantee our security while we eat our luxurious dinner, or look at the new piece at the theater, or that we are unaware of the existence of the soldiers who will make their appearance with guns and cartridges directly our property is attacked.

We know very well that we are only allowed to go on eating our dinner, to finish seeing the new play, or to enjoy to the end the ball, the Christmas fete, the promenade, the races or, the hunt, thanks to the policeman's revolver or the soldier's rifle, which will shoot down the famished outcast who has been robbed of his share, and who looks round the corner with covetous eyes at our pleasures, ready to interrupt them instantly, were not the policeman and the soldier there prepared to run up at our first call for help.

And therefore just as a brigand caught in broad daylight in the act cannot persuade us that he did not lift his knife in order to rob his victim of his purse, and had no thought of killing him, we too, it would seem, cannot persuade ourselves or others that the soldiers and policemen around us are not to guard us, but only for

defense against foreign foes, and to regulate traffic and fêtes and reviews; we cannot persuade ourselves and others that we do not know that men do not like dying of hunger, bereft of the right to gain their subsistence from the earth on which they live; that they do not like working underground, in the water, or in stifling heat, for ten to fourteen hours a day, at night in factories to manufacture objects for our pleasure. One would imagine it impossible to deny what is so obvious. Yet it is denied.

Still, there are, among the rich, especially among the young, and among women, persons whom I am glad to meet more and more frequently, who, when they are shown in what way and at what cost their pleasures are purchased, do not try to conceal the truth, but hiding their heads in their hands, cry: "Ah! don't speak of that. If it is so, life is impossible." But though there are such sincere people who even though they cannot renounce their fault, at least see it, the vast majority of the men of the modern world have so entered into the parts they play in their hypocrisy that they boldly deny what is staring everyone in the face.

"All that is unjust," they say; "no one forces the people to work for the landowners and manufacturers. That is an affair of free contract. Great properties and fortunes are necessary, because they provide and organize work for the working classes. And labor in the factories and workshops is not at all the terrible thing you make it out to be. Even if there are some abuses in

factories, the government and the public are taking steps to obviate them and to make the labor of the factory workers much easier, and even agreeable. The working classes are accustomed to physical labor, and are, so far, fit for nothing else. The poverty of the people is not the result of private property in land, nor of capitalistic oppression, but of other causes: it is the result of the ignorance, brutality, and intemperance of the people. And we men in authority who are striving against this impoverishment of the people by wise legislation, we capitalists who are combating it by the extension of useful inventions, we clergymen by religious instruction, and we liberals by the formation of trades unions, and the diffusion of education, are in this way increasing the prosperity of the people without changing our own positions. We do not want all to be as poor as the poor; we want all to be as rich as the rich. As for the assertion that men are ill treated and murdered to force them to work for the profit of the rich, that is a sophism. The army is only called out against the mob, when the people, in ignorance of their own interests, make disturbances and destroy the tranquillity necessary for the public welfare. In the same way, too, it is necessary to keep in restraint the malefactors for whom the prisons and gallows are established. We ourselves wish to suppress these forms of punishment and are working in that direction."

Hypocrisy in our day is supported on two sides: by false religion

and by false science. And it has reached such proportions that if we were not living in its midst, we could not believe that men could attain such a pitch of self-deception. Men of the present day have come into such an extraordinary condition, their hearts are so hardened, that seeing they see not, hearing they do not hear, and understand not.

Men have long been living in antagonism to their conscience. If it were not for hypocrisy they could not go on living such a life. This social organization in opposition to their conscience only continues to exist because it is disguised by hypocrisy.

And the greater the divergence between actual life and men's conscience, the greater the extension of hypocrisy. But even hypocrisy has its limits. And it seems to me that we have reached those limits in the present day.

Every man of the present day with the Christian principles assimilated involuntarily in his conscience, finds himself in precisely the position of a man asleep who dreams that he is obliged to do something which even in his dream he knows he ought not to do. He knows this in the depths of his conscience, and all the same he seems unable to change his position; he cannot stop and cease doing what he ought not to do. And just as in a dream, his position becoming more and more painful, at last reaches such a pitch of intensity that he begins sometimes to doubt the reality

of what is passing and makes a moral effort to shake off the nightmare which is oppressing him.

This is just the condition of the average man of our Christian society. He feels that all that he does himself and that is done around him is something absurd, hideous, impossible, and opposed to his conscience; he feels that his position is becoming more and more unendurable and reaching a crisis of intensity.

It is not possible that we modern men, with the Christian sense of human dignity and equality permeating us soul and body, with our need for peaceful association and unity between nations, should really go on living in such a way that every joy, every gratification we have is bought by the sufferings, by the lives of our brother men, and moreover, that we should be every instant within a hair's-breadth of falling on one another, nation against nation, like wild beasts, mercilessly destroying men's lives and labor, only because some benighted diplomatist or ruler says or writes some stupidity to another equally benighted diplomatist or ruler.

It is impossible. Yet every man of our day sees that this is so and awaits the calamity. And the situation becomes more and more insupportable.

And as the man who is dreaming does not believe that what appears



to him can be truly the reality and tries to wake up to the actual real world again, so the average man of modern days cannot in the bottom of his heart believe that the awful position in which he is placed and which is growing worse and worse can be the reality, and tries to wake up to a true, real life, as it exists in his conscience.

And just as the dreamer need only make a moral effort and ask himself, "Isn't it a dream?" and the situation which seemed to him so hopeless will instantly disappear, and he will wake up to peaceful and happy reality, so the man of the modern world need only make a moral effort to doubt the reality presented to him by his own hypocrisy and the general hypocrisy around him, and to ask himself, "Isn't it all a delusion?" and he will at once, like the dreamer awakened, feel himself transported from an imaginary and dreadful world to the true, calm, and happy reality.

And to do this a man need accomplish no great feats or exploits. He need only make a moral effort.

But can a man make this effort?

According to the existing theory so essential to support hypocrisy, man is not free and cannot change his life.

"Man cannot change his life, because he is not free. He is not

free, because all his actions are conditioned by previously existing causes. And whatever the man may do there are always some causes or other through which he does these or those acts, and therefore man cannot be free and change his life," say the champions of the metaphysics of hypocrisy. And they would be perfectly right if man were a creature without conscience and incapable of moving toward the truth; that is to say, if after recognizing a new truth, man always remained at the same stage of moral development. But man is a creature with a conscience and capable of attaining a higher and higher degree of truth. And therefore even if man is not free as regards performing these or those acts because there exists a previous cause for every act, the very causes of his acts, consisting as they do for the man of conscience of the recognition of this or that truth, are within his own control.

So that though man may not be free as regards the performance of his actions, he is free as regards the foundation on which they are performed. Just as the mechanic who is not free to modify the movement of his locomotive when it is in motion, is free to regulate the machine beforehand so as to determine what the movement is to be.

Whatever the conscious man does, he acts just as he does, and not otherwise, only because he recognizes that to act as he is acting is in accord with the truth, or because he has recognized it at

some previous time, and is now only through inertia, through habit, acting in accordance with his previous recognition of truth.

In any case, the cause of his action is not to be found in any given previous fact, but in the consciousness of a given relation to truth, and the consequent recognition of this or that fact as a sufficient basis for action.

Whether a man eats or does not eat, works or rests, runs risks or avoids them, if he has a conscience he acts thus only because he considers it right and rational, because he considers that to act thus is in harmony with truth, or else because he has made this reflection in the past.

The recognition or non-recognition of a certain truth depends not on external causes, but on certain other causes within the man himself. So that at times under external conditions apparently very favorable for the recognition of truth, one man will not recognize it, and another, on the contrary, under the most unfavorable conditions will, without apparent cause, recognize it. As it is said in the Gospel, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." That is to say, the recognition of truth, which is the cause of all the manifestations of human life, does not depend on external phenomena, but on certain inner spiritual characteristics of the man which escape

our observation.

And therefore man, though not free in his acts, always feels himself free in what is the motive of his acts--the recognition or non-recognition of truth. And he feels himself independent not only of facts external to his own personality, but even of his own actions.

Thus a man who under the influence of passion has committed an act contrary to the truth he recognizes, remains none the less free to recognize it or not to recognize it; that is, he can by refusing to recognize the truth regard his action as necessary and justifiable, or he may recognize the truth and regard his act as wrong and censure himself for it.

Thus a gambler or a drunkard who does not resist temptation and yields to his passion is still free to recognize gambling and drunkenness as wrong or to regard them as a harmless pastime. In the first case even if he does not at once get over his passion, he gets the more free from it the more sincerely he recognizes the truth about it; in the second case he will be strengthened in his vice and will deprive himself of every possibility of shaking it off.

In the same way a man who has made his escape alone from a house

on fire, not having had the courage to save his friend, remains free, recognizing the truth that a man ought to save the life of another even at the risk of his own, to regard his action as bad and to censure himself for it, or, not recognizing this truth, to regard his action as natural and necessary and to justify it to himself. In the first case, if he recognizes the truth in spite of his departure from it, he prepares for himself in the future a whole series of acts of self-sacrifice necessarily flowing from this recognition of the truth; in the second case, a whole series of egoistic acts.

Not that a man is always free to recognize or to refuse to recognize every truth. There are truths which he has recognized long before or which have been handed down to him by education and tradition and accepted by him on faith, and to follow these truths has become a habit, a second nature with him; and there are truths, only vaguely, as it were distantly, apprehended by him. The man is not free to refuse to recognize the first, nor to recognize the second class of truths. But there are truths of a third kind, which have not yet become an unconscious motive of action, but yet have been revealed so clearly to him that he cannot pass them by, and is inevitably obliged to do one thing or the other, to recognize or not to recognize them. And it is in regard to these truths that the man's freedom manifests itself.

Every man during his life finds himself in regard to truth in the

position of a man walking in the darkness with light thrown before him by the lantern he carries. He does not see what is not yet lighted up by the lantern; he does not see what he has passed which is hidden in the darkness; but at every stage of his journey he sees what is lighted up by the lantern, and he can always choose one side or the other of the road.

There are always unseen truths not yet revealed to the man's intellectual vision, and there are other truths outlived, forgotten, and assimilated by him, and there are also certain truths that rise up before the light of his reason and require his recognition. And it is in the recognition or non-recognition of these truths that what we call his freedom is manifested.

All the difficulty and seeming insolubility of the question of the freedom of man results from those who tried to solve the question imagining man as stationary in his relation to the truth.

Man is certainly not free if we imagine him stationary, and if we forget that the life of a man and of humanity is nothing but a continual movement from darkness into light, from a lower stage of truth to a higher, from a truth more alloyed with errors to a truth more purified from them.

Man would not be free if he knew no truth at all, and in the same way he would not be free and would not even have any idea of

freedom if the whole truth which was to guide him in life had been revealed once for all to him in all its purity without any admixture of error.

But man is not stationary in regard to truth, but every individual man as he passes through life, and humanity as a whole in the same way, is continually learning to know a greater and greater degree of truth, and growing more and more free from error.

And therefore men are in a threefold relation to truth. Some truths have been so assimilated by them that they have become the unconscious basis of action, others are only just on the point of being revealed to him, and a third class, though not yet assimilated by him, have been revealed to him with sufficient clearness to force him to decide either to recognize them or to refuse to recognize them.

These, then, are the truths which man is free to recognize or to refuse to recognize.

The liberty of man does not consist in the power of acting independently of the progress of life and the influences arising from it, but in the capacity for recognizing and acknowledging the truth revealed to him, and becoming the free and joyful participator in the eternal and infinite work of God, the life of the world; or on the other hand for refusing to recognize the

truth, and so being a miserable and reluctant slave dragged whither he has no desire to go.

Truth not only points out the way along which human life ought to move, but reveals also the only way along which it can move. And therefore all men must willingly or unwillingly move along the way of truth, some spontaneously accomplishing the task set them in life, others submitting involuntarily to the law of life. Man's freedom lies in the power of this choice.

This freedom within these narrow limits seems so insignificant to men that they do not notice it. Some--the determinists--consider this amount of freedom so trifling that they do not recognize it at all. Others--the champions of complete free will--keep their eyes fixed on their hypothetical free will and neglect this which seemed to them such a trivial degree of freedom.

This freedom, confined between the limits of complete ignorance of the truth and a recognition of a part of the truth, seems hardly freedom at all, especially since, whether a man is willing or unwilling to recognize the truth revealed to him, he will be inevitably forced to carry it out in life.

A horse harnessed with others to a cart is not free to refrain from moving the cart. If he does not move forward the cart will knock him down and go on dragging him with it, whether he will or



not. But the horse is free to drag the cart himself or to be dragged with it. And so it is with man.

Whether this is a great or small degree of freedom in comparison with the fantastic liberty we should like to have, it is the only freedom that really exists, and in it consists the only happiness attainable by man.

And more than that, this freedom is the sole means of accomplishing the divine work of the life of the world.

According to Christ's doctrine, the man who sees the significance of life in the domain in which it is not free, in the domain of effects, that is, of acts, has not the true life. According to the Christian doctrine, that man is living in the truth who has transported his life to the domain in which it is free--the domain of causes, that is, the knowledge and recognition, the profession and realization in life of revealed truth.

Devoting his life to works of the flesh, a man busies himself with actions depending on temporary causes outside himself. He himself does nothing really, he merely seems to be doing something. In reality all the acts which seem to be his are the work of a higher power, and he is not the creator of his own life, but the slave of it. Devoting his life to the recognition and fulfillment of the truth revealed to him, he identifies himself with the source of

universal life and accomplishes acts not personal, and dependent on conditions of space and time, but acts unconditioned by previous causes, acts which constitute the causes of everything else, and have an infinite, unlimited significance.

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matt. xi. 12.)

It is this violent effort to rise above external conditions to the recognition and realization of truth by which the kingdom of heaven is taken, and it is this effort of violence which must and can be made in our times.

Men need only understand this, they need only cease to trouble themselves about the general external conditions in which they are not free, and devote one-hundredth part of the energy they waste on those material things to that in which they are free, to the recognition and realization of the truth which is before them, and to the liberation of themselves and others from deception and hypocrisy, and, without effort or conflict, there would be an end at once of the false organization of life which makes men miserable, and threatens them with worse calamities in the future. And then the kingdom of God would be realized, or at least that first stage of it for which men are ready now by the degree of development of their conscience.

Just as a single shock may be sufficient, when a liquid is saturated with some salt, to precipitate it at once in crystals, a slight effort may be perhaps all that is needed now that the truth already revealed to men may gain a mastery over hundreds, thousands, millions of men, that a public opinion consistent with conscience may be established, and through this change of public opinion the whole order of life may be transformed. And it depends upon us to make this effort.

Let each of us only try to understand and accept the Christian truth which in the most varied forms surrounds us on all sides and forces itself upon us; let us only cease from lying and pretending that we do not see this truth or wish to realize it, at least in what it demands from us above all else; only let us accept and boldly profess the truth to which we are called, and we should find at once that hundreds, thousands, millions of men are in the same position as we, that they see the truth as we do, and dread as we do to stand alone in recognizing it, and like us are only waiting for others to recognize it also.

Only let men cease to be hypocrites, and they would at once see that this cruel social organization, which holds them in bondage, and is represented to them as something stable, necessary, and ordained of God, is already tottering and is only propped up by the falsehood of hypocrisy, with which we, and others like us, support it.

But if this is so, if it is true that it depends on us to break down the existing organization of life, have we the right to destroy it, without knowing clearly what we shall set up in its place? What will become of human society when the existing order of things is at an end?

"What shall we find the other side of the walls of the world we are abandoning?

"Fear will come upon us--a void, a vast emptiness, freedom--how are we to go forward not knowing whither, how face loss, not seeing hope of gain? . . . If Columbus had reasoned thus he would never have weighed anchor. It was madness to set off upon the ocean, not knowing the route, on the ocean on which no one had sailed, to sail toward a land whose existence was doubtful. By this madness he discovered a new world. Doubtless if the peoples of the world could simply transfer themselves from one furnished mansion to another and better one--it would make it much easier; but unluckily there is no one to get humanity's new dwelling ready for it. The future is even worse than the ocean--there is nothing there--it will be what men and circumstances make it.

"If you are content with the old world, try to preserve it, it is very sick and cannot hold out much longer. But if you

cannot bear to live in everlasting dissonance between your beliefs and your life, thinking one thing and doing another, get out of the mediaeval whited sepulchers, and face your fears. I know very well it is not easy.

"It is not a little thing to cut one's self off from all to which a man has been accustomed from his birth, with which he has grown up to maturity. Men are ready for tremendous sacrifices, but not for those which life demands of them. Are they ready to sacrifice modern civilization, their manner of life, their religion, the received conventional morality?

"Are we ready to give up all the results we have attained with such effort, results of which we have been boasting for three centuries; to give up every convenience and charm of our existence, to prefer savage youth to the senile decay of civilization, to pull down the palace raised for us by our ancestors only for the pleasure of having a hand in the founding of a new house, which will doubtless be built long after we are gone?" (Herzen, vol. v. p. 55.)

Thus wrote almost half a century ago the Russian writer, who with prophetic insight saw clearly then, what even the most unreflecting man sees to-day, the impossibility, that is, of life continuing on its old basis, and the necessity of establishing new forms of life.

It is clear now from the very simplest, most commonplace point of view, that it is madness to remain under the roof of a building which cannot support its weight, and that we must leave it. And indeed it is difficult to imagine a position more wretched than that of the Christian world to-day, with its nations armed against one another, with its constantly increasing taxation to maintain its armies, with the hatred of the working class for the rich ever growing more intense, with the Damocles sword of war forever hanging over the heads of all, ready every instant to fall, certain to fall sooner or later.

Hardly could any revolution be more disastrous for the great mass of the population than the present order or rather disorder of our life, with its daily sacrifices to exhausting and unnatural toil, to poverty, drunkenness, and profligacy, with all the horrors of the war that is at hand, which will swallow up in one year more victims than all the revolutions of the century.

What will become of humanity if each of us performs the duty God demands of us through the conscience implanted within us? Will not harm come if, being wholly in the power of a master, I carry out, in the workshop erected and directed by him, the orders he gives me, strange though they may seem to me who do not know the Master's final aims?

But it is not even this question "What will happen?" that agitates men when they hesitate to fulfill the Master's will. They are troubled by the question how to live without those habitual conditions of life which we call civilization, culture, art, and science. We feel ourselves all the burdensomeness of life as it is; we see also that this organization of life must inevitably be our ruin, if it continues. At the same time we want the conditions of our life which arise out of this organization--our civilization, culture, art, and science--to remain intact. It is as though a man, living in an old house and suffering from cold and all sorts of inconvenience in it, knowing, too, that it is on the point of falling to pieces, should consent to its being rebuilt, but only on the condition that he should not be required to leave it: a condition which is equivalent to refusing to have it rebuilt at all.

"But what if I leave the house and give up every convenience for a time, and the new house is not built, or is built on a different plan so that I do not find in it the comforts to which I am accustomed?" But seeing that the materials and the builders are here, there is every likelihood that the new house will on the contrary be better built than the old one. And at the same time, there is not only the likelihood but the certainty that the old house will fall down and crush those who remain within it. Whether the old habitual conditions of life are supported, or whether they are abolished and altogether new and better

conditions arise; in any case, there is no doubt we shall be forced to leave the old forms of life which have become impossible and fatal, and must go forward to meet the future.

"Civilization, art, science, culture, will disappear!"

Yes, but all these we know are only various manifestations of truth, and the change that is before us is only to be made for the sake of a closer attainment and realization of truth. How then can the manifestations of truth disappear through our realizing it? These manifestations will be different, higher, better, but they will not cease to be. Only what is false in them will be destroyed; all the truth there was in them will only be stronger and more flourishing.

Take thought, oh, men, and have faith in the Gospel, in whose teaching is your happiness. If you do not take thought, you will perish just as the men perished, slain by Pilate, or crushed by the tower of Siloam; as millions of men have perished, slayers and slain, executing and executed, torturers and tortured alike, and as the man foolishly perished, who filled his granaries full and made ready for a long life and died the very night that he planned to begin his life. Take thought and have faith in the Gospel, Christ said eighteen hundred years ago, and he says it with even greater force now that the calamities foretold by him have come to pass, and the senselessness of our life has reached the furthest



point of suffering and madness.

Nowadays, after so many centuries of fruitless efforts to make our life secure by the pagan organization of life, it must be evident to everyone that all efforts in that direction only introduce fresh dangers into personal and social life, and do not render it more secure in any way.

Whatever names we dignify ourselves with, whatever uniforms we wear, whatever priests we anoint ourselves before, however many millions we possess, however many guards are stationed along our road, however many policemen guard our wealth, however many so-called criminals, revolutionists, and anarchists we punish, whatever exploits we have performed, whatever states we may have founded, fortresses and towers we may have erected--from Babel to the Eiffel Tower--there are two inevitable conditions of life, confronting all of us, which destroy its whole meaning; (1) death, which may at any moment pounce upon each of us; and (2) the transitoriness of all our works, which so soon pass away and leave no trace. Whatever we may do--found companies, build palaces and monuments, write songs and poems--it is all not for long time. Soon it passes away, leaving no trace. And therefore, however we may conceal it from ourselves, we cannot help seeing that the significance of our life cannot lie in our personal fleshly existence, the prey of incurable suffering and inevitable death, nor in any social institution or organization. Whoever you may be who are reading these lines, think of your position and of your duties--not of your position as landowner,

merchant, judge, emperor, president, minister, priest, soldier, which has been temporarily allotted you by men, and not of the imaginary duties laid on you by those positions, but of your real positions in eternity as a creature who at the will of Someone has been called out of unconsciousness after an eternity of non-existence to which you may return at any moment at his will. Think of your duties--not your supposed duties as a landowner to your estate, as a merchant to your business, as emperor, minister, or official to the state, but of your real duties, the duties that follow from your real position as a being called into life and endowed with reason and love.

Are you doing what he demands of you who has sent you into the world, and to whom you will soon return? Are you doing what he wills? Are you doing his will, when as landowner or manufacturer you rob the poor of the fruits of their toil, basing your life on this plunder of the workers, or when, as judge or governor, you ill treat men, sentence them to execution, or when as soldiers you prepare for war, kill and plunder?

You will say that the world is so made that this is inevitable, and that you do not do this of your own free will, but because you are forced to do so. But can it be that you have such a strong aversion to men's sufferings, ill treatment, and murder, that you have such an intense need of love and co-operation with your fellows that you see clearly that only by the recognition of the equality of all, and by mutual services, can the greatest possible

happiness be realized; that your head and your heart, the faith you profess, and even science itself tell you the same thing, and yet that in spite of it all you can be forced by some confused and complicated reasoning to act in direct opposition to all this; that as landowner or capitalist you are bound to base your whole life on the oppression of the people; that as emperor or president you are to command armies, that is, to be the head and commander of murderers; or that as government official you are forced to take from the poor their last pence for rich men to profit and share them among themselves; or that as judge or juryman you could be forced to sentence erring men to ill treatment and death because the truth was not revealed to them, or above all, for that is the basis of all the evil, that you could be forced to become a soldier, and renouncing your free will and your human sentiments, could undertake to kill anyone at the command of other men?

It cannot be.

Even if you are told that all this is necessary for the maintenance of the existing order of things, and that this social order with its pauperism, famines, prisons, gallows, armies, and wars is necessary to society; that still greater disasters would ensue if this organization were destroyed; all that is said only by those who profit by this organization, while those who suffer from it--and they are ten times as numerous--think and say quite the contrary. And at the bottom of your heart you know yourself

that it is not true, that the existing organization has outlived its time, and must inevitably be reconstructed on new principles, and that consequently there is no obligation upon you to sacrifice your sentiments of humanity to support it.

Above all, even if you allow that this organization is necessary, why do you believe it to be your duty to maintain it at the cost of your best feelings? Who has made you the nurse in charge of this sick and moribund organization? Not society nor the state nor anyone; no one has asked you to undertake this; you who fill your position of landowner, merchant, tzar, priest, or soldier know very well that you occupy that position by no means with the unselfish aim of maintaining the organization of life necessary to men's happiness, but simply in your own interests, to satisfy your own covetousness or vanity or ambition or indolence or cowardice. If you did not desire that position, you would not be doing your utmost to retain it. Try the experiment of ceasing to commit the cruel, treacherous, and base actions that you are constantly committing in order to retain your position, and you will lose it at once. Try the simple experiment, as a government official, of giving up lying, and refusing to take a part in executions and acts of violence; as a priest, of giving up deception; as a soldier, of giving up murder; as landowner or manufacturer, of giving up defending your property by fraud and force; and you will at once lose the position which you pretend is forced upon you, and which seems burdensome to you.

A man cannot be placed against his will in a situation opposed to his conscience.

If you find yourself in such a position it is not because it is necessary to anyone whatever, but simply because you wish it. And therefore knowing that your position is repugnant to your heart and your head, and to your faith, and even to the science in which you believe, you cannot help reflecting upon the question whether in retaining it, and above all trying to justify it, you are doing what you ought to do.

You might risk making a mistake if you had time to see and retrieve your fault, and if you ran the risk for something of some value. But when you know beyond all doubt that you may disappear any minute, without the least possibility either for yourself or those you draw after you into your error, of retrieving the mistake, when you know that whatever you may do in the external organization of life it will all disappear as quickly and surely as you will yourself, and will leave no trace behind, it is clear that you have no reasonable ground for running the risk of such a fearful mistake.

It would be perfectly simple and clear if you did not by your hypocrisy disguise the truth which has so unmistakably been revealed to us.

Share all that you have with others, do not heap up riches, do not steal, do not cause suffering, do not kill, do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you, all that has been said not eighteen hundred, but five thousand years ago, and there could be no doubt of the truth of this law if it were not for hypocrisy. Except for hypocrisy men could not have failed, if not to put the law in practice, at least to recognize it, and admit that it is wrong not to put it in practice.

But you will say that there is the public good to be considered, and that on that account one must not and ought not to conform to these principles; for the public good one may commit acts of violence and murder. It is better for one man to die than that the whole people perish, you will say like Caiaphas, and you sign the sentence of death of one man, of a second, and a third; you load your gun against this man who is to perish for the public good, you imprison him, you take his possessions. You say that you commit these acts of cruelty because you are a part of the society and of the state; that it is your duty to serve them, and as landowner, judge, emperor, or soldier to conform to their laws. But besides belonging to the state and having duties created by that position, you belong also to eternity and to God, who also lays duties upon you. And just as your duties to your family and to society are subordinate to your superior duties to the state, in the same way the latter must necessarily be subordinated to the

duties dictated to you by the eternal life and by God. And just as it would be senseless to pull up the telegraph posts for fuel for a family or society and thus to increase its welfare at the expense of public interests, in the same way it is senseless to do violence, to execute, and to murder to increase the welfare of the nation, because that is at the expense of the interests of humanity.

Your duties as a citizen cannot but be subordinated to the superior obligations of the eternal life of God, and cannot be in opposition to them. As Christ's disciples said eighteen centuries ago: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts iv. 19); and, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v. 29).

It is asserted that, in order that the unstable order of things, established in one corner of the world for a few men, may not be destroyed, you ought to commit acts of violence which destroy the eternal and immutable order established by God and by reason. Can that possibly be?

And therefore you cannot but reflect on your position as landowner, manufacturer, judge, emperor, president, minister, priest, and soldier, which is bound up with violence, deception, and murder, and recognize its unlawfulness.

I do not say that if you are a landowner you are bound to give up your lands immediately to the poor; if a capitalist or manufacturer, your money to your workpeople; or that if you are Tzar, minister, official, judge, or general, you are bound to renounce immediately the advantages of your position; or if a soldier, on whom all the system of violence is based, to refuse immediately to obey in spite of all the dangers of insubordination.

If you do so, you will be doing the best thing possible. But it may happen, and it is most likely, that you will not have the strength to do so. You have relations, a family, subordinates and superiors; you are under an influence so powerful that you cannot shake it off; but you can always recognize the truth and refuse to tell a lie about it. You need not declare that you are remaining a landowner, manufacturer, merchant, artist, or writer because it is useful to mankind; that you are governor, prosecutor, or tzar, not because it is agreeable to you, because you are used to it, but for the public good; that you continue to be a soldier, not from fear of punishment, but because you consider the army necessary to society. You can always avoid lying in this way to yourself and to others, and you ought to do so; because the one aim of your life ought to be to purify yourself from falsehood and to confess the truth. And you need only do that and your situation will change directly of itself.



There is one thing, and only one thing, in which it is granted to you to be free in life, all else being beyond your power: that is to recognize and profess the truth.

And yet simply from the fact that other men as misguided and as pitiful creatures as yourself have made you soldier, tzar, landowner, capitalist, priest, or general, you undertake to commit acts of violence obviously opposed to your reason and your heart, to base your existence on the misfortunes of others, and above all, instead of filling the one duty of your life, recognizing and professing the truth, you feign not to recognize it and disguise it from yourself and others.

And what are the conditions in which you are doing this? You who may die any instant, you sign sentences of death, you declare war, you take part in it, you judge, you punish, you plunder the working people, you live luxuriously in the midst of the poor, and teach weak men who have confidence in you that this must be so, that the duty of men is to do this, and yet it may happen at the moment when you are acting thus that a bacterium or a bull may attack you and you will fall and die, losing forever the chance of repairing the harm you have done to others, and above all to yourself, in uselessly wasting a life which has been given you only once in eternity, without having accomplished the only thing you ought to have done.

However commonplace and out of date it may seem to us, however confused we may be by hypocrisy and by the hypnotic suggestion which results from it, nothing can destroy the certainty of this simple and clearly defined truth. No external conditions can guarantee our life, which is attended with inevitable sufferings and infallibly terminated by death, and which consequently can have no significance except in the constant accomplishment of what is demanded by the Power which has placed us in life with a sole certain guide--the rational conscience.

That is why that Power cannot require of us what is irrational and impossible: the organization of our temporary external life, the life of society or of the state. That Power demands of us only what is reasonable, certain, and possible: to serve the kingdom of God, that is, to contribute to the establishment of the greatest possible union between all living beings--a union possible only in the truth; and to recognize and to profess the revealed truth, which is always in our power.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.)

The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity by contributing to the establishment of the kingdom of God, which can only be done by the recognition and profession of the truth by every man.

"The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke xvii. 20, 21.)

THE END.