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Please be advised that David sent the two Moscow Census pieces to me

as one file, and that I split it into two, since some people have a

bit of trouble when we put two titles in one file. However, I did NOT

change the numbering of the footnotes, so they all appear at the end

of each file.

This etext was produced by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk,

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THE MOSCOW CENSUS--FROM "WHAT TO DO?"

by Count Lyof N. Tolstoi

Translated from the Russian by

Isabel F. Hapgood

THOUGHTS EVOKED BY THE CENSUS OF MOSCOW. [1884-1885.]

And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him

impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do

likewise--LUKE iii. 10. 11.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust

doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor

rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single,

thy whole body shall be full of light.

But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.

If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that

darkness!

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and

love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the

other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye

shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye

shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than

raiment?--MATT. vi. 19-25.

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall

we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly

Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all

these things shall be added unto you.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take

thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the

evil thereof.--MATT. vi. 31-34.

For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a

rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.--MATT. xix. 24; MARK x.

25; LUKE xviii. 25.

CHAPTER I.

I had lived all my life out of town. When, in 1881, I went to live

in Moscow, the poverty of the town greatly surprised me. I am

familiar with poverty in the country; but city poverty was new and

incomprehensible to me. In Moscow it was impossible to pass along

the street without encountering beggars, and especially beggars who

are unlike those in the country. These beggars do not go about with

their pouches in the name of Christ, as country beggars are

accustomed to do, but these beggars are without the pouch and the

name of Christ. The Moscow beggars carry no pouches, and do not ask

for alms. Generally, when they meet or pass you, they merely try to

catch your eye; and, according to your look, they beg or refrain from

it. I know one such beggar who belongs to the gentry. The old man

walks slowly along, bending forward every time he sets his foot down.

When he meets you, he rests on one foot and makes you a kind of

salute. If you stop, he pulls off his hat with its cockade, and bows

and begs: if you do not halt, he pretends that that is merely his

way of walking, and he passes on, bending forward in like manner on

the other foot. He is a real Moscow beggar, a cultivated man. At

first I did not know why the Moscow beggars do not ask alms directly;

afterwards I came to understand why they do not beg, but still I did

not understand their position.

Once, as I was passing through Afanasievskaya Lane, I saw a policeman

putting a ragged peasant, all swollen with dropsy, into a cab. I

inquired: "What is that for?"

The policeman answered: "For asking alms."

"Is that forbidden?"

"Of course it is forbidden," replied the policeman.

The sufferer from dropsy was driven off. I took another cab, and

followed him. I wanted to know whether it was true that begging alms

was prohibited and how it was prohibited. I could in no wise

understand how one man could be forbidden to ask alms of any other

man; and besides, I did not believe that it was prohibited, when

Moscow is full of beggars. I went to the station-house whither the

beggar had been taken. At a table in the station-house sat a man

with a sword and a pistol. I inquired:

"For what was this peasant arrested?"

The man with the sword and pistol gazed sternly at me, and said:

"What business is it of yours?"

But feeling conscious that it was necessary to offer me some

explanation, he added:

"The authorities have ordered that all such persons are to be

arrested; of course it had to be done."

I went out. The policeman who had brought the beggar was seated on

the window-sill in the ante-chamber, staring gloomily at a note-book.

I asked him:

"Is it true that the poor are forbidden to ask alms in Christ's

name?"

The policeman came to himself, stared at me, then did not exactly

frown, but apparently fell into a doze again, and said, as he sat on

the window-sill:-

"The authorities have so ordered, which shows that it is necessary,"

and betook himself once more to his note-book. I went out on the

porch, to the cab.

"Well, how did it turn out? Have they arrested him?" asked the

cabman. The man was evidently interested in this affair also.

"Yes," I answered. The cabman shook his head. "Why is it forbidden

here in Moscow to ask alms in Christ's name?" I inquired.

"Who knows?" said the cabman.

"How is this?" said I, "he is Christ's poor, and he is taken to the

station-house."

"A stop has been put to that now, it is not allowed," said the cab-

driver.

On several occasions afterwards, I saw policemen conducting beggars

to the station house, and then to the Yusupoff house of correction.

Once I encountered on the Myasnitzkaya a company of these beggars,

about thirty in number. In front of them and behind them marched

policemen. I inquired: "What for?"--"For asking alms."

It turned out that all these beggars, several of whom you meet with

in every street in Moscow, and who stand in files near every church

during services, and especially during funeral services, are

forbidden to ask alms.

But why are some of them caught and locked up somewhere, while others

are left alone?

This I could not understand. Either there are among them legal and

illegal beggars, or there are so many of them that it is impossible

to apprehend them all; or do others assemble afresh when some are

removed?

There are many varieties of beggars in Moscow: there are some who

live by this profession; there are also genuine poor people, who have

chanced upon Moscow in some manner or other, and who are really in

want.

Among these poor people, there are many simple, common peasants, and

women in their peasant costume. I often met such people. Some of

them have fallen ill here, and on leaving the hospital they can

neither support themselves here, nor get away from Moscow. Some of

them, moreover, have indulged in dissipation (such was probably the

case of the dropsical man); some have not been ill, but are people

who have been burnt out of their houses, or old people, or women with

children; some, too, were perfectly healthy and able to work. These

perfectly healthy peasants who were engaged in begging, particularly

interested me. These healthy, peasant beggars, who were fit for

work, also interested me, because, from the date of my arrival in

Moscow, I had been in the habit of going to the Sparrow Hills with

two peasants, and sawing wood there for the sake of exercise. These

two peasants were just as poor as those whom I encountered on the

streets. One was Piotr, a soldier from Kaluga; the other Semyon, a

peasant from Vladimir. They possessed nothing except the wages of

their body and hands. And with these hands they earned, by dint of

very hard labor, from forty to forty-five kopeks a day, out of which

each of them was laying by savings, the Kaluga man for a fur coat,

the Vladimir man in order to get enough to return to his village.

Therefore, on meeting precisely such men in the streets, I took an

especial interest in them.

Why did these men toil, while those others begged?

On encountering a peasant of this stamp, I usually asked him how he

had come to that situation. Once I met a peasant with some gray in

his beard, but healthy. He begs. I ask him who is he, whence comes

he? He says that he came from Kaluga to get work. At first he found

employment chopping up old wood for use in stoves. He and his

comrade finished all the chopping which one householder had; then

they sought other work, but found none; his comrade had parted from

him, and for two weeks he himself had been struggling along; he had

spent all his money, he had no saw, and no axe, and no money to buy

anything. I gave him money for a saw, and told him of a place where

he could find work. I had already made arrangements with Piotr and

Semyon, that they should take an assistant, and they looked up a mate

for him.

"See that you come. There is a great deal of work there."

"I will come; why should I not come? Do you suppose I like to beg?

I can work."

The peasant declares that he will come, and it seems to me that he is

not deceiving me, and that he intents to come.

On the following day I go to my peasants, and inquire whether that

man has arrived. He has not been there; and in this way several men

deceived me. And those also deceived me who said that they only

required money for a ticket in order to return home, and who chanced

upon me again in the street a week later. Many of these I

recognized, and they recognized me, and sometimes, having forgotten

me, they repeated the same trick on me; and others, on catching sight

of me, beat a retreat. Thus I perceived, that in the ranks of this

class also deceivers existed. But these cheats were very pitiable

creatures: all of them were but half-clad, poverty-stricken, gaunt,

sickly men; they were the very people who really freeze to death, or

hang themselves, as we learn from the newspapers.

CHAPTER II.

When I mentioned this poverty of the town to inhabitants of the town,

they always said to me: "Oh, all that you have seen is nothing. You

ought to see the Khitroff market-place, and the lodging-houses for

the night there. There you would see a regular 'golden company.'"

{1} One jester told me that this was no longer a company, but a

GOLDEN REGIMENT: so greatly had their numbers increased. The jester

was right, but he would have been still more accurate if he had said

that these people now form in Moscow neither a company nor a

regiment, but an entire army, almost fifty thousand in number, I

think. [The old inhabitants, when they spoke to me about the poverty

in town, always referred to it with a certain satisfaction, as though

pluming themselves over me, because they knew it. I remember that

when I was in London, the old inhabitants there also rather boasted

when they spoke of the poverty of London. The case is the same with

us.] {2}

And I wanted to have a sight of this poverty of which I had been

told. Several times I set out in the direction of the Khitroff

market-place, but on every occasion I began to feel uncomfortable and

ashamed. "Why am I going to gaze on the sufferings of people whom I

cannot help?" said one voice. "No, if you live here, and see all the

charms of city life, go and view this also," said another voice. In

December three years ago, therefore, on a cold and windy day, I

betook myself to that centre of poverty, the Khitroff market-place.

This was at four o'clock in the afternoon of a week-day. As I passed

through the Solyanka, I already began to see more and more people in

old garments which had not originally belonged to them, and in still

stranger foot-gear, people with a peculiar, unhealthy hue of

countenance, and especially with a singular indifference to every

thing around them, which was peculiar to them all. A man in the

strangest of all possible attire, which was utterly unlike any thing

else, walked along with perfect unconcern, evidently without a

thought of the appearance which he must present to the eyes of

others. All these people were making their way towards a single

point. Without inquiring the way, with which I was not acquainted, I

followed them, and came out on the Khitroff market-place. On the

market-place, women both old and young, of the same description, in

tattered cloaks and jackets of various shapes, in ragged shoes and

overshoes, and equally unconcerned, notwithstanding the hideousness

of their attire, sat, bargained for something, strolled about, and

scolded. There were not many people in the market itself. Evidently

market-hours were over, and the majority of the people were ascending

the rise beyond the market and through the place, all still

proceeding in one direction. I followed them. The farther I

advanced, the greater in numbers were the people of this sort who

flowed together on one road. Passing through the market-place and

proceeding along the street, I overtook two women; one was old, the

other young. Both wore something ragged and gray. As they walked

they were discussing some matter. After every necessary word, they

uttered one or two unnecessary ones, of the most improper character.

They were not intoxicated, but merely troubled about something; and

neither the men who met them, nor those who walked in front of them

and behind them, paid any attention to the language which was so

strange to me. In these quarters, evidently, people always talked

so. Ascending the rise, we reached a large house on a corner. The

greater part of the people who were walking along with me halted at

this house. They stood all over the sidewalk of this house, and sat

on the curbstone, and even the snow in the street was thronged with

the same kind of people. On the right side of the entrance door were

the women, on the left the men. I walked past the women, past the

men (there were several hundred of them in all) and halted where the

line came to an end. The house before which these people were

waiting was the Lyapinsky free lodging-house for the night. The

throng of people consisted of night lodgers, who were waiting to be

let in. At five o'clock in the afternoon, the house is opened, and

the people permitted to enter. Hither had come nearly all the people

whom I had passed on my way.

I halted where the line of men ended. Those nearest me began to

stare at me, and attracted my attention to them by their glances.

The fragments of garments which covered these bodies were of the most

varied sorts. But the expression of all the glances directed towards

me by these people was identical. In all eyes the question was

expressed: "Why have you, a man from another world, halted here

beside us? Who are you? Are you a self-satisfied rich man who wants

to enjoy our wretchedness, to get rid of his tedium, and to torment

us still more? or are you that thing which does not and can not

exist,--a man who pities us?" This query was on every face. You

glance about, encounter some one's eye, and turn away. I wished to

talk with some one of them, but for a long time I could not make up

my mind to it. But our glances had drawn us together already while

our tongues remained silent. Greatly as our lives had separated us,

after the interchange of two or three glances we felt that we were

both men, and we ceased to fear each other. The nearest of all to me

was a peasant with a swollen face and a red beard, in a tattered

caftan, and patched overshoes on his bare feet. And the weather was

eight degrees below zero. {3} For the third or fourth time I

encountered his eyes, and I felt so near to him that I was no longer

ashamed to accost him, but ashamed not to say something to him. I

inquired where he came from? he answered readily, and we began to

talk; others approached. He was from Smolensk, and had come to seek

employment that he might earn his bread and taxes. "There is no

work," said he: "the soldiers have taken it all away. So now I am

loafing about; as true as I believe in God, I have had nothing to eat

for two days." He spoke modestly, with an effort at a smile. A

sbiten{4}-seller, an old soldier, stood near by. I called him up.

He poured out his sbiten. The peasant took a boiling-hot glassful in

his hands, and as he tried before drinking not to let any of the heat

escape in vain, and warmed his hands over it, he related his

adventures to me. These adventures, or the histories of them, are

almost always identical: the man has been a laborer, then he has

changed his residence, then his purse containing his money and ticket

has been stolen from him in the night lodging-house; now it is

impossible to get away from Moscow. He told me that he kept himself

warm by day in the dram-shops; that he nourished himself on the bits

of bread in these drinking places, when they were given to him; and

when he was driven out of them, he came hither to the Lyapinsky house

for a free lodging. He was only waiting for the police to make their

rounds, when, as he had no passport, he would be taken to jail, and

then despatched by stages to his place of settlement. "They say that

the inspection will be made on Friday," said he, "then they will

arrest me. If I can only get along until Friday." (The jail, and

the journey by stages, represent the Promised Land to him.)

As he told his story, three men from among the throng corroborated

his statements, and said that they were in the same predicament. A

gaunt, pale, long-nosed youth, with merely a shirt on the upper

portion of his body, and that torn on the shoulders, and a cap

without a visor, forced his way sidelong through the crowd. He

shivered violently and incessantly, but tried to smile disdainfully

at the peasants' remarks, thinking by this means to adopt the proper

tone with me, and he stared at me. I offered him some sbiten; he

also, on taking the glass, warmed his hands over it; but no sooner

had he begun to speak, than he was thrust aside by a big, black,

hook-nosed individual, in a chintz shirt and waistcoat, without a

hat. The hook-nosed man asked for some sbiten also. Then came a

tall old man, with a mass of beard, clad in a great-coat girded with

a rope, and in bast shoes, who was drunk. Then a small man with a

swollen face and tearful eyes, in a brown nankeen round-jacket, with

his bare knees protruding from the holes in his summer trousers, and

knocking together with cold. He shivered so that he could not hold

his glass, and spilled it over himself. The men began to reproach

him. He only smiled in a woe-begone way, and went on shivering.

Then came a crooked monster in rags, with pattens on his bare feet;

then some sort of an officer; then something in the ecclesiastical

line; then something strange and nose-less,--all hungry and cold,

beseeching and submissive, thronged round me, and pressed close to

the sbiten. They drank up all the sbiten. One asked for money, and

I gave it. Then another asked, then a third, and the whole crowd

besieged me. Confusion and a press resulted. The porter of the

adjoining house shouted to the crowd to clear the sidewalk in front

of his house, and the crowd submissively obeyed his orders. Some

managers stepped out of the throng, and took me under their

protection, and wanted to lead me forth out of the press; but the

crowd, which had at first been scattered over the sidewalk, now

became disorderly, and hustled me. All stared at me and begged; and

each face was more pitiful and suffering and humble than the last. I

distributed all that I had with me. I had not much money, something

like twenty rubles; and in company with the crowd, I entered the

Lyapinsky lodging-house. This house is huge. It consists of four

sections. In the upper stories are the men's quarters; in the lower,

the women's. I first entered the women's place; a vast room all

occupied with bunks, resembling the third-class bunks on the railway.

These bunks were arranged in two rows, one above the other. The

women, strange, tattered creatures, both old and young, wearing

nothing over their dresses, entered and took their places, some below

and some above. Some of the old ones crossed themselves, and uttered

a petition for the founder of this refuge; some laughed and scolded.

I went up-stairs. There the men had installed themselves; among them

I espied one of those to whom I had given money. [On catching sight

of him, I all at once felt terribly abashed, and I made haste to

leave the room. And it was with a sense of absolute crime that I

quitted that house and returned home. At home I entered over the

carpeted stairs into the ante-room, whose floor was covered with

cloth; and having removed my fur coat, I sat down to a dinner of five

courses, waited on by two lackeys in dress-coats, white neckties, and

white gloves.

Thirty years ago I witnessed in Paris a man's head cut off by the

guillotine in the presence of thousands of spectators. I knew that

the man was a horrible criminal. I was acquainted with all the

arguments which people have been devising for so many centuries, in

order to justify this sort of deed. I knew that they had done this

expressly, deliberately. But at the moment when head and body were

severed, and fell into the trough, I groaned, and apprehended, not

with my mind, but with my heart and my whole being, that all the

arguments which I had heard anent the death-penalty were arrant

nonsense; that, no matter how many people might assemble in order to

perpetrate a murder, no matter what they might call themselves,

murder is murder, the vilest sin in the world, and that that crime

had been committed before my very eyes. By my presence and non-

interference, I had lent my approval to that crime, and had taken

part in it. So now, at the sight of this hunger, cold, and

degradation of thousands of persons, I understood not with my mind,

but with my heart and my whole being, that the existence of tens of

thousands of such people in Moscow, while I and other thousands dined

on fillets and sturgeon, and covered my horses and my floors with

cloth and rugs,--no matter what the wise ones of this world might say

to me about its being a necessity,--was a crime, not perpetrated a

single time, but one which was incessantly being perpetrated over and

over again, and that I, in my luxury, was not only an accessory, but

a direct accomplice in the matter. The difference for me between

these two impressions was this, that I might have shouted to the

assassins who stood around the guillotine, and perpetrated the

murder, that they were committing a crime, and have tried with all my

might to prevent the murder. But while so doing I should have known

that my action would not prevent the murder. But here I might not

only have given sbiten and the money which I had with me, but the

coat from my back, and every thing that was in my house. But this I

had not done; and therefore I felt, I feel, and shall never cease to

feel, myself an accomplice in this constantly repeated crime, so long

as I have superfluous food and any one else has none at all, so long

as I have two garments while any one else has not even one.] {5}

CHAPTER III.

That very evening, on my return from the Lyapinsky house, I related

my impressions to a friend. The friend, an inhabitant of the city,

began to tell me, not without satisfaction, that this was the most

natural phenomenon of town life possible, that I only saw something

extraordinary in it because of my provincialism, that it had always

been so, and always would be so, and that such must be and is the

inevitable condition of civilization. In London it is even worse.

Of course there is nothing wrong about it, and it is impossible to be

displeased with it. I began to reply to my friend, but with so much

heat and ill-temper, that my wife ran in from the adjoining room to

inquire what had happened. It appears that, without being conscious

of it myself, I had been shouting, with tears in my voice, and

flourishing my hands at my friend. I shouted: "It's impossible to

live thus, impossible to live thus, impossible!" They made me feel

ashamed of my unnecessary warmth; they told me that I could not talk

quietly about any thing, that I got disagreeably excited; and they

proved to me, especially, that the existence of such unfortunates

could not possibly furnish any excuse for imbittering the lives of

those about me.

I felt that this was perfectly just, and held my peace; but in the

depths of my soul I was conscious that I was in the right, and I

could not regain my composure.

And the life of the city, which had, even before this, been so

strange and repellent to me, now disgusted me to such a degree, that

all the pleasures of a life of luxury, which had hitherto appeared to

me as pleasures, become tortures to me. And try as I would, to

discover in my own soul any justification whatever for our life, I

could not, without irritation, behold either my own or other people's

drawing-rooms, nor our tables spread in the lordly style, nor our

equipages and horses, nor shops, theatres, and assemblies. I could

not behold alongside these the hungry, cold, and down-trodden

inhabitants of the Lyapinsky house. And I could not rid myself of

the thought that these two things were bound up together, that the

one arose from the other. I remember, that, as this feeling of my

own guilt presented itself to me at the first blush, so it persisted

in me, but to this feeling a second was speedily added which

overshadowed it.

When I mentioned my impressions of the Lyapinsky house to my nearest

friends and acquaintances, they all gave me the same answer as the

first friend at whom I had begun to shout; but, in addition to this,

they expressed their approbation of my kindness of heart and my

sensibility, and gave me to understand that this sight had so

especially worked upon me because I, Lyof Nikolaevitch, was very kind

and good. And I willingly believed this. And before I had time to

look about me, instead of the feeling of self-reproach and regret,

which I had at first experienced, there came a sense of satisfaction

with my own kindliness, and a desire to exhibit it to people.

"It really must be," I said to myself, "that I am not especially

responsible for this by the luxury of my life, but that it is the

indispensable conditions of existence that are to blame. In truth, a

change in my mode of life cannot rectify the evil which I have seen:

by altering my manner of life, I shall only make myself and those

about me unhappy, and the other miseries will remain the same as

ever. And therefore my problem lies not in a change of my own life,

as it had first seemed to me, but in aiding, so far as in me lies, in

the amelioration of the situation of those unfortunate beings who

have called forth my compassion. The whole point lies here,--that I

am a very kind, amiable man, and that I wish to do good to my

neighbors." And I began to think out a plan of beneficent activity,

in which I might exhibit my benevolence. I must confess, however,

that while devising this plan of beneficent activity, I felt all the

time, in the depths of my soul, that that was not the thing; but, as

often happens, activity of judgment and imagination drowned that

voice of conscience within me. At that juncture, the census came up.

This struck me as a means for instituting that benevolence in which I

proposed to exhibit my charitable disposition. I knew of many

charitable institutions and societies which were in existence in

Moscow, but all their activity seemed to me both wrongly directed and

insignificant in comparison with what I intended to do. And I

devised the following scheme: to arouse the sympathy of the wealthy

for the poverty of the city, to collect money, to get people together

who were desirous of assisting in this matter, and to visit all the

refuges of poverty in company with the census, and, in addition to

the work of the census, to enter into communion with the unfortunate,

to learn the particulars of their necessities, and to assist them

with money, with work, by sending them away from Moscow, by placing

their children in school, and the old people in hospitals and

asylums. And not only that, I thought, but these people who

undertake this can be formed into a permanent society, which, by

dividing the quarters of Moscow among its members, will be able to

see to it that this poverty and beggary shall not be bred; they will

incessantly annihilate it at its very inception; then they will

fulfil their duty, not so much by healing as by a course of hygiene

for the wretchedness of the city. I fancied that there would be no

more simply needy, not to mention abjectly poor persons, in the town,

and that all of us wealthy individuals would thereafter be able to

sit in our drawing-rooms, and eat our five-course dinners, and ride

in our carriages to theatres and assemblies, and be no longer annoyed

with such sights as I had seen at the Lyapinsky house.

Having concocted this plan, I wrote an article on the subject; and

before sending it to the printer, I went to some acquaintances, from

whom I hoped for sympathy. I said the same thing to every one whom I

met that day (and I applied chiefly to the rich), and nearly the same

that I afterwards printed in my memoir; proposed to take advantage of

the census to inquire into the wretchedness of Moscow, and to succor

it, both by deeds and money, and to do it in such a manner that there

should be no poor people in Moscow, and so that we rich ones might be

able, with a quiet conscience, to enjoy the blessings of life to

which we were accustomed. All listened to me attentively and

seriously, but nevertheless the same identical thing happened with

every one of them without exception. No sooner did my hearers

comprehend the question, than they seemed to feel awkward and

somewhat mortified. They seemed to be ashamed, and principally on my

account, because I was talking nonsense, and nonsense which it was

impossible to openly characterize as such. Some external cause

appeared to compel my hearers to be forbearing with this nonsense of

mine.

"Ah, yes! of course. That would be very good," they said to me. "It

is a self-understood thing that it is impossible not to sympathize

with this. Yes, your idea is a capital one. I have thought of that

myself, but . . . we are so indifferent, as a rule, that you can

hardly count on much success . . . however, so far as I am concerned,

I am, of course, ready to assist."

They all said something of this sort to me. They all agreed, but

agreed, so it seemed to me, not in consequence of my convictions, and

not in consequence of their own wish, but as the result of some

outward cause, which did not permit them not to agree. I had already

noticed this, and, since not one of them stated the sum which he was

willing to contribute, I was obliged to fix it myself, and to ask:

"So I may count on you for three hundred, or two hundred, or one

hundred, or twenty-five rubles?" And not one of them gave me any

money. I mention this because, when people give money for that which

they themselves desire, they generally make haste to give it. For a

box to see Sarah Bernhardt, they will instantly place the money in

your hand, to clinch the bargain. Here, however, out of all those

who agreed to contribute, and who expressed their sympathy, not one

of them proposed to give me the money on the spot, but they merely

assented in silence to the sum which I suggested. In the last house

which I visited on that day, in the evening, I accidentally came upon

a large company. The mistress of the house had busied herself with

charity for several years. Numerous carriages stood at the door,

several lackeys in rich liveries were sitting in the ante-chamber.

In the vast drawing-room, around two tables and lamps, sat ladies and

young girls, in costly garments, dressing small dolls; and there were

several young men there also, hovering about the ladies. The dolls

prepared by these ladies were to be drawn in a lottery for the poor.

The sight of this drawing-room, and of the people assembled in it,

struck me very unpleasantly. Not to mention the fact that the

property of the persons there congregated amounted to many millions,

not to mention the fact that the mere income from the capital here

expended on dresses, laces, bronzes, brooches, carriages, horses,

liveries, and lackeys, was a hundred-fold greater than all that these

ladies could earn; not to mention the outlay, the trip hither of all

these ladies and gentlemen; the gloves, linen, extra time, the

candles, the tea, the sugar, and the cakes had cost the hostess a

hundred times more than what they were engaged in making here. I saw

all this, and therefore I could understand, that precisely here I

should find no sympathy with my mission: but I had come in order to

make my proposition, and, difficult as this was for me, I said what I

intended. (I said very nearly the same thing that is contained in my

printed article.)

Out of all the persons there present, one individual offered me

money, saying that she did not feel equal to going among the poor

herself on account of her sensibility, but that she would give money;

how much money she would give, and when, she did not say. Another

individual and a young man offered their services in going about

among the poor, but I did not avail myself of their offer. The

principal person to whom I appealed, told me that it would be

impossible to do much because means were lacking. Means were lacking

because all the rich people in Moscow were already on the lists, and

all of them were asked for all that they could possibly give; because

on all these benefactors rank, medals, and other dignities were

bestowed; because in order to secure financial success, some new

dignities must be secured from the authorities, and that this was the

only practical means, but this was extremely difficult.

On my return home that night, I lay down to sleep not only with a

presentment that my idea would come to nothing, but with shame and a

consciousness that all day long I had been engaged in a very

repulsive and disgraceful business. But I did not give up this

undertaking. In the first place, the matter had been begun, and

false shame would have prevented my abandoning it; in the second

place, not only the success of this scheme, but the very fact that I

was busying myself with it, afforded me the possibility of continuing

to live in the conditions under which I was then living; failure

entailed upon me the necessity of renouncing my present existence and

of seeking new paths of life. And this I unconsciously dreaded, and

I could not believe the inward voice, and I went on with what I had

begun.

Having sent my article to the printer, I read the proof of it to the

City Council (Dum). I read it, stumbling, and blushing even to

tears, I felt so awkward. And I saw that it was equally awkward for

all my hearers. In answer to my question at the conclusion of my

reading, as to whether the superintendents of the census would accept

my proposition to retain their places with the object of becoming

mediators between society and the needy, an awkward silence ensued.

Then two orators made speeches. These speeches in some measure

corrected the awkwardness of my proposal; sympathy for me was

expressed, but the impracticability of my proposition, which all had

approved, was demonstrated. Everybody breathed more freely. But

when, still desirous of gaining my object, I afterwards asked the

superintendents separately: Were they willing, while taking the

census, to inquire into the needs of the poor, and to retain their

posts, in order to serve as go-betweens between the poor and the

rich? they all grew uneasy again. They seemed to say to me with

their glances: "Why, we have just condoned your folly out of respect

to you, and here you are beginning it again!" Such was the

expression of their faces, but they assured me in words that they

agreed; and two of them said in the very same words, as though they

had entered into a compact together: "We consider ourselves MORALLY

BOUND to do this." The same impression was produced by my

communication to the student-census-takers, when I said to them, that

while taking our statistics, we should follow up, in addition to the

objects of the census, the object of benevolence. When we discussed

this, I observed that they were ashamed to look the kind-hearted man,

who was talking nonsense, in the eye. My article produced the same

impression on the editor of the newspaper, when I handed it to him;

on my son, on my wife, on the most widely different persons. All

felt awkward, for some reason or other; but all regarded it as

indispensable to applaud the idea itself, and all, immediately after

this expression of approbation, began to express their doubts as to

its success, and began for some reason (and all of them, too, without

exception) to condemn the indifference and coldness of our society

and of every one, apparently, except themselves.

In the depths of my own soul, I still continued to feel that all this

was not at all what was needed, and that nothing would come of it;

but the article was printed, and I prepared to take part in the

census; I had contrived the matter, and now it was already carrying

me a way with it.

CHAPTER IV.

At my request, there had been assigned to me for the census, a

portion of the Khamovnitchesky quarter, at the Smolensk market, along

the Prototchny cross-street, between Beregovoy Passage and Nikolsky

Alley. In this quarter are situated the houses generally called the

Rzhanoff Houses, or the Rzhanoff fortress. These houses once

belonged to a merchant named Rzhanoff, but now belong to the Zimins.

I had long before heard of this place as a haunt of the most terrible

poverty and vice, and I had accordingly requested the directors of

the census to assign me to this quarter. My desire was granted.

On receiving the instructions of the City Council, I went alone, a

few days previous to the beginning of the census, to reconnoitre my

section. I found the Rzhanoff fortress at once, from the plan with

which I had been furnished.

I approached from Nikolsky Alley. Nikolsky Alley ends on the left in

a gloomy house, without any gates on that side; I divined from its

appearance that this was the Rzhanoff fortress.

Passing down Nikolsky Street, I overtook some lads of from ten to

fourteen years of age, clad in little caftans and great-coats, who

were sliding down hill, some on their feet, and some on one skate,

along the icy slope beside this house. The boys were ragged, and,

like all city lads, bold and impudent. I stopped to watch them. A

ragged old woman, with yellow, pendent cheeks, came round the corner.

She was going to town, to the Smolensk market, and she groaned

terribly at every step, like a foundered horse. As she came

alongside me, she halted and drew a hoarse sigh. In any other

locality, this old woman would have asked money of me, but here she

merely addressed me.

"Look there," said she, pointing at the boys who were sliding, "all

they do is to play their pranks! They'll turn out just such Rzhanoff

fellows as their fathers."

One of the boys clad in a great-coat and a visorless cap, heard her

words and halted: "What are you scolding about?" he shouted to the

old woman. "You're an old Rzhanoff nanny-goat yourself!"

I asked the boy:

"And do you live here?"

"Yes, and so does she. She stole boot-legs," shouted the boy; and

raising his foot in front, he slid away.

The old woman burst forth into injurious words, interrupted by a

cough. At that moment, an old man, all clad in rags, and as white as

snow, came down the hill in the middle of the street, flourishing his

hands [in one of them he held a bundle with one little kalatch and

baranki" {6}]. This old man bore the appearance of a person who had

just strengthened himself with a dram. He had evidently heard the

old woman's insulting words, and he took her part.

"I'll give it to you, you imps, that I will!" he screamed at the

boys, seeming to direct his course towards them, and taking a circuit

round me, he stepped on to the sidewalk. This old man creates

surprise on the Arbata by his great age, his weakness, and his

indigence. Here he was a cheery laboring-man returning from his

daily toil.

I followed the old man. He turned the corner to the left, into

Prototchny Alley, and passing by the whole length of the house and

the gate, he disappeared through the door of the tavern.

Two gates and several doors open on Prototchny Alley: those

belonging to a tavern, a dram-shop, and several eating and other

shops. This is the Rzhanoff fortress itself. Every thing here is

gray, dirty, and malodorous--both buildings and locality, and court-

yards and people. The majority of the people whom I met here were

ragged and half-clad. Some were passing through, others were running

from door to door. Two were haggling over some rags. I made the

circuit of the entire building from Prototchny Alley and Beregovoy

Passage, and returning I halted at the gate of one of these houses.

I wished to enter, and see what was going on inside, but I felt that

it would be awkward. What should I say when I was asked what I

wanted there? I hesitated, but went in nevertheless. As soon as I

entered the court-yard, I became conscious of a disgusting odor. The

yard was frightfully dirty. I turned a corner, and at the same

instant I heard to my left and overhead, on the wooden balcony, the

tramp of footsteps of people running, at first along the planks of

the balcony, and then on the steps of the staircase. There emerged,

first a gaunt woman, with her sleeves rolled up, in a faded pink

gown, and little boots on her stockingless feet. After her came a

tattered man in a red shirt and very full trousers, like a petticoat,

and with overshoes. The man caught the woman at the bottom of the

steps.

"You shall not escape," he said laughing.

"See here, you cock-eyed devil," began the woman, evidently flattered

by this pursuit; but catching sight of me, she shrieked viciously,

"What do you want?"

As I wanted nothing, I became confused and beat a retreat. There was

nothing remarkable about the place; but this incident, after what I

had witnessed on the other side of the yard, the cursing old woman,

the jolly old man, and the lads sliding, suddenly presented the

business which I had concocted from a totally different point of

view. I then comprehended for the first time, that all these

unfortunates to whom I was desirous of playing the part of

benefactor, besides the time, when, suffering from cold and hunger,

they awaited admission into the house, had still other time, which

they employed to some other purpose, that there were four and twenty

hours in every day, that there was a whole life of which I had never

thought, up to that moment. Here, for the first time, I understood,

that all those people, in addition to their desire to shelter

themselves from the cold and to obtain a good meal, must still, in

some way, live out those four and twenty hours each day, which they

must pass as well as everybody else. I comprehended that these

people must lose their tempers, and get bored, show courage, and

grieve and be merry. Strange as this may seem, when put into words,

I understood clearly for the first time, that the business which I

had undertaken could not consist alone in feeding and clothing

thousands of people, as one would feed and drive under cover a

thousand sheep, but that it must consist in doing good to them.

And then I understood that each one of those thousand people was

exactly such a man,--with precisely the same past, with the same

passions, temptations, failings, with the same thoughts, the same

perplexities,--exactly such a man as myself, and then the thing that

I had undertaken suddenly presented itself to me as so difficult that

I felt my powerlessness; but the thing had been begun, and I went on

with it.

CHAPTER V.

On the first appointed day, the student enumerators arrived in the

morning, and I, the benefactor, joined them at twelve o'clock. I

could not go earlier, because I had risen at ten o'clock, then I had

drunk my coffee and smoked, while waiting on digestion. At twelve

o'clock I reached the gates of the Rzhanoff house. A policeman

pointed out to me the tavern with a side entrance on Beregovoy

Passage, where the census-takers had ordered every one who asked for

them to be directed. I entered the tavern. It was very dark, ill-

smelling, and dirty. Directly opposite the entrance was the counter,

on the left was a room with tables, covered with soiled cloths, on

the right a large apartment with pillars, and the same sort of little

tables at the windows and along the walls. Here and there at the

tables sat men both ragged and decently clad, like laboring-men or

petty tradesmen, and a few women drinking tea. The tavern was very

filthy, but it was instantly apparent that it had a good trade.

There was a business-like expression on the face of the clerk behind

the counter, and a clever readiness about the waiters. No sooner had

I entered, than one waiter prepared to remove my coat and bring me

whatever I should order. It was evident that they had been trained

to brisk and accurate service. I inquired for the enumerators.

"Vanya!" shouted a small man, dressed in German fashion, who was

engaged in placing something in a cupboard behind the counter; this

was the landlord of the tavern, a Kaluga peasant, Ivan Fedotitch, who

hired one-half of the Zimins' houses and sublet them to lodgers. The

waiter, a thin, hooked-nosed young fellow of eighteen, with a yellow

complexion, hastened up.

"Conduct this gentleman to the census-takers; they went into the main

building over the well." The young fellow threw down his napkin, and

donned a coat over his white jacket and white trousers, and a cap

with a large visor, and, tripping quickly along with his white feet,

he led me through the swinging door in the rear. In the dirty,

malodorous kitchen, in the out-building, we encountered an old woman

who was carefully carrying some very bad-smelling tripe, wrapped in a

rag, off somewhere. From the out-building we descended into a

sloping court-yard, all encumbered with small wooden buildings on

lower stories of stone. The odor in this whole yard was extremely

powerful. The centre of this odor was an out-house, round which

people were thronging whenever I passed it. It merely indicated the

spot, but was not altogether used itself. It was impossible, when

passing through the yard, not to take note of this spot; one always

felt oppressed when one entered the penetrating atmosphere which was

emitted by this foul smell.

The waiter, carefully guarding his white trousers, led me cautiously

past this place of frozen and unfrozen uncleanness to one of the

buildings. The people who were passing through the yard and along

the balconies all stopped to stare at me. It was evident that a

respectably dressed man was a curiosity in these localities.

The young man asked a woman "whether she had seen the census-takers?"

And three men simultaneously answered his question: some said that

they were over the well, but others said that they had been there,

but had come out and gone to Nikita Ivanovitch. An old man dressed

only in his shirt, who was wandering about the centre of the yard,

said that they were in No. 30. The young man decided that this was

the most probable report, and conducted me to No. 30 through the

basement entrance, and darkness and bad smells, different from that

which existed outside. We went down-stairs, and proceeded along the

earthen floor of a dark corridor. As we were passing along the

corridor, a door flew open abruptly, and an old drunken man, in his

shirt, probably not of the peasant class, thrust himself out. A

washerwoman, wringing her soapy hands, was pursuing and hustling the

old man with piercing screams. Vanya, my guide, pushed the old man

aside, and reproved him.

"It's not proper to make such a row," said me, "and you an officer,

too!" and we went on to the door of No. 30.

Vanya gave it a little pull. The door gave way with a smack, opened,

and we smelled soapy steam, and a sharp odor of spoilt food and

tobacco, and we entered into total darkness. The windows were on the

opposite side; but the corridors ran to right and left between board

partitions, and small doors opened, at various angles, into the rooms

made of uneven whitewashed boards. In a dark room, on the left, a

woman could be seen washing in a tub. An old woman was peeping from

one of these small doors on the right. Through another open door we

could see a red-faced, hairy peasant, in bast shoes, sitting on his

wooden bunk; his hands rested on his knees, and he was swinging his

feet, shod in bast shoes, and gazing gloomily at them.

At the end of the corridor was a little door leading to the apartment

where the census-takers were. This was the chamber of the mistress

of the whole of No. 30; she rented the entire apartment from Ivan

Feodovitch, and let it out again to lodgers and as night-quarters.

In her tiny room, under the tinsel images, sat the student census-

taker with his charts; and, in his quality of investigator, he had

just thoroughly interrogated a peasant wearing a shirt and a vest.

This latter was a friend of the landlady, and had been answering

questions for her. The landlady herself, an elderly woman, was there

also, and two of her curious tenants. When I entered, the room was

already packed full. I pushed my way to the table. I exchanged

greetings with the student, and he proceeded with his inquiries. And

I began to look about me, and to interrogate the inhabitants of these

quarters for my own purpose.

It turned out, that in this first set of lodgings, I found not a

single person upon whom I could pour out my benevolence. The

landlady, in spite of the fact that the poverty, smallness and dirt

of these quarters struck me after the palatial house in which I

dwell, lived in comfort, compared with many of the poor inhabitants

of the city, and in comparison with the poverty in the country, with

which I was thoroughly familiar, she lived luxuriously. She had a

feather-bed, a quilted coverlet, a samovar, a fur cloak, and a

dresser with crockery. The landlady's friend had the same

comfortable appearance. He had a watch and a chain. Her lodgers

were not so well off, but there was not one of them who was in need

of immediate assistance: the woman who was washing linen in a tub,

and who had been abandoned by her husband and had children, an aged

widow without any means of livelihood, as she said, and that peasant

in bast shoes, who told me that he had nothing to eat that day. But

on questioning them, it appeared that none of these people were in

special want, and that, in order to help them, it would be necessary

to become well acquainted with them.

When I proposed to the woman whose husband had abandoned her, to

place her children in an asylum, she became confused, fell into

thought, thanked me effusively, but evidently did not wish to do so;

she would have preferred pecuniary assistance. The eldest girl

helped her in her washing, and the younger took care of the little

boy. The old woman begged earnestly to be taken to the hospital, but

on examining her nook I found that the old woman was not particularly

poor. She had a chest full of effects, a teapot with a tin spout,

two cups, and caramel boxes filled with tea and sugar. She knitted

stockings and gloves, and received monthly aid from some benevolent

lady. And it was evident that what the peasant needed was not so

much food as drink, and that whatever might be given him would find

its way to the dram-shop. In these quarters, therefore, there were

none of the sort of people whom I could render happy by a present of

money. But there were poor people who appeared to me to be of a

doubtful character. I noted down the old woman, the woman with the

children, and the peasant, and decided that they must be seen to; but

later on, as I was occupied with the peculiarly unfortunate whom I

expected to find in this house, I made up my mind that there must be

some order in the aid which we should bestow; first came the most

wretched, and then this kind. But in the next quarters, and in the

next after that, it was the same story, all the people had to be

narrowly investigated before they could be helped. But unfortunates

of the sort whom a gift of money would convert from unfortunate into

fortunate people, there were none. Mortifying as it is to me to avow

this, I began to get disenchanted, because I did not find among these

people any thing of the sort which I had expected. I had expected to

find peculiar people here; but, after making the round of all the

apartments, I was convinced that the inhabitants of these houses were

not peculiar people at all, but precisely such persons as those among

whom I lived. As there are among us, just so among them; there were

here those who were more or less good, more or less stupid, happy and

unhappy. The unhappy were exactly such unhappy beings as exist among

us, that is, unhappy people whose unhappiness lies not in their

external conditions, but in themselves, a sort of unhappiness which

it is impossible to right by any sort of bank-note whatever.

CHAPTER VI.

The inhabitants of these houses constitute the lower class of the

city, which numbers in Moscow, probably, one hundred thousand.

There, in that house, are representatives of every description of

this class. There are petty employers, and master-artisans,

bootmakers, brush-makers, cabinet-makers, turners, shoemakers,

tailors, blacksmiths; there are cab-drivers, young women living

alone, and female pedlers, laundresses, old-clothes dealers, money-

lenders, day-laborers, and people without any definite employment;

and also beggars and dissolute women.

Here were many of the very people whom I had seen at the entrance to

the Lyapinsky house; but here these people were scattered about among

the working-people. And moreover, I had seen these people at their

most unfortunate time, when they had eaten and drunk up every thing,

and when, cold, hungry, and driven forth from the taverns, they were

awaiting admission into the free night lodging-house, and thence into

the promised prison for despatch to their places of residence, like

heavenly manna; but here I beheld them and a majority of workers, and

at a time, when by one means or another, they had procured three or

five kopeks for a lodging for the night, and sometimes a ruble for

food and drink.

And strange as the statement may seem, I here experienced nothing

resembling that sensation which I had felt in the Lyapinsky house;

but, on the contrary, during the first round, both I and the students

experienced an almost agreeable feeling,--yes, but why do I say

"almost agreeable"? This is not true; the feeling called forth by

intercourse with these people, strange as it may sound, was a

distinctly agreeable one.

Our first impression was, that the greater part of the dwellers here

were working people and very good people at that.

We found more than half the inhabitants at work: laundresses bending

over their tubs, cabinet-makers at their lathes, cobblers on their

benches. The narrow rooms were full of people, and cheerful and

energetic labor was in progress. There was an odor of toilsome sweat

and leather at the cobbler's, of shavings at the cabinet-maker's;

songs were often to be heard, and glimpses could be had of brawny

arms with sleeves roiled high, quickly and skilfully making their

accustomed movements. Everywhere we were received cheerfully and

politely: hardly anywhere did our intrusion into the every-day life

of these people call forth that ambition, and desire to exhibit their

importance and to put us down, which the appearance of the

enumerators in the quarters of well-to-do people evoked. It not only

did not arouse this, but, on the contrary, they answered all other

questions properly, and without attributing any special significance

to them. Our questions merely served them as a subject of mirth and

jesting as to how such and such a one was to be set down in the list,

when he was to be reckoned as two, and when two were to be reckoned

as one, and so forth.

We found many of them at dinner, or tea; and on every occasion to our

greeting: "bread and salt," or "tea and sugar," they replied: "we

beg that you will partake," and even stepped aside to make room for

us. Instead of the den with a constantly changing population, which

we had expected to find here, it turned out, that there were a great

many apartments in the house where people had been living for a long

time. One cabinet-maker with his men, and a boot-maker with his

journeymen, had lived there for ten years. The boot-maker's quarters

were very dirty and confined, but all the people at work were very

cheerful. I tried to enter into conversation with one of the

workmen, being desirous of inquiring into the wretchedness of his

situation and his debt to his master, but the man did not understand

me and spoke of his master and his life from the best point of view.

In one apartment lived an old man and his old woman. They peddled

apples. Their little chamber was warm, clean, and full of goods. On

the floor were spread straw mats: they had got them at the apple-

warehouse. They had chests, a cupboard, a samovar, and crockery. In

the corner there were numerous images, and two lamps were burning

before them; on the wall hung fur coats covered with sheets. The old

woman, who had star-shaped wrinkles, and who was polite and

talkative, evidently delighted in her quiet, comfortable, existence.

Ivan Fedotitch, the landlord of the tavern and of these quarters,

left his establishment and came with us. He jested in a friendly

manner with many of the landlords of apartments, addressing them all

by their Christian names and patronymics, and he gave us brief

sketches of them. All were ordinary people, like everybody else,--

Martin Semyonovitches, Piotr Piotrovitches, Marya Ivanovnas,--people

who did not consider themselves unhappy, but who regarded themselves,

and who actually were, just like the rest of mankind.

We had been prepared to witness nothing except what was terrible.

And, all of a sudden, there was presented to us, not only nothing

that was terrible, but what was good,--things which involuntarily

compelled our respect. And there were so many of these good people,

that the tattered, corrupt, idle people whom we came across now and

then among them, did not destroy the principal impression.

This was not so much of a surprise to the students as to me. They

simply went to fulfil a useful task, as they thought, in the

interests of science, and, at the same time, they made their own

chance observations; but I was a benefactor, I went for the purpose

of aiding the unfortunate, the corrupt, vicious people, whom I

supposed that I should meet with in this house. And, behold, instead

of unfortunate, corrupt, and vicious people, I saw that the majority

were laborious, industrious, peaceable, satisfied, contented,

cheerful, polite, and very good folk indeed.

I felt particularly conscious of this when, in these quarters, I

encountered that same crying want which I had undertaken to

alleviate.

When I encountered this want, I always found that it had already been

relieved, that the assistance which I had intended to render had

already been given. This assistance had been rendered before my

advent, and rendered by whom? By the very unfortunate, depraved

creatures whom I had undertaken to reclaim, and rendered in such a

manner as I could not compass.

In one basement lay a solitary old man, ill with the typhus fever.

There was no one with the old man. A widow and her little daughter,

strangers to him, but his neighbors round the corner, looked after

him, gave him tea and purchased medicine for him out of their own

means. In another lodging lay a woman in puerperal fever. A woman

who lived by vice was rocking the baby, and giving her her bottle;

and for two days, she had been unremitting in her attention. The

baby girl, on being left an orphan, was adopted into the family of a

tailor, who had three children of his own. So there remained those

unfortunate idle people, officials, clerks, lackeys out of place,

beggars, drunkards, dissolute women, and children, who cannot be

helped on the spot with money, but whom it is necessary to know

thoroughly, to be planned and arranged for. I had simply sought

unfortunate people, the unfortunates of poverty, those who could be

helped by sharing with them our superfluity, and, as it seemed to me,

through some signal ill-luck, none such were to be found; but I hit

upon unfortunates to whom I should be obliged to devote my time and

care.

CHAPTER VII.

The unfortunates whom I noted down, divided themselves, according to

my ideas, into three sections, namely: people who had lost their

former advantageous position, and who were awaiting a return to it

(there were people of this sort from both the lower and the higher

class); next, dissolute women, of whom there are a great many in

these houses; and a third division, children. More than all the

rest, I found and noted down people of the first division, who had

forfeited their former advantageous position, and who hoped to regain

it. Of such persons, especially from the governmental and official

world, there are a very great number in these houses. In almost all

the lodgings which we entered, with the landlord, Ivan Fedotitch, he

said to us: "Here you need not write down the lodger's card

yourself; there is a man here who can do it, if he only happens not

to be intoxicated to-day."

And Ivan Fedotitch called by name and patronymic this man, who was

always one of those persons who had fallen from a lofty position. At

Ivan Fedotitch's call, there crawled forth from some dark corner, a

former wealthy member of the noble or official class, generally

intoxicated and always undressed. If he was not drunk, he always

readily acceded to the task proposed to him, nodded significantly,

frowned, set down his remarks in learned phraseology, held the card

neatly printed on red paper in his dirty, trembling hands, and

glanced round at his fellow-lodgers with pride and contempt, as

though now triumphing in his education over those who had so often

humiliated him. He evidently enjoyed intercourse with that world in

which cards are printed on red paper, and with that world of which he

had once formed a part. Nearly always, in answer to my inquiries

about his life, the man began, not only willingly, but eagerly, to

relate the story of the misfortunes which he had undergone,--which he

had learned by rote like a prayer,--and particularly of his former

position, in which he ought still to be by right of his education.

A great many such people were scattered over all the corners of the

Rzhanoff house. But one lodging was densely occupied by them alone--

both men and women. After we had already entered, Ivan Fedotitch

said to us: "Now, here are some of the nobility." The lodging was

perfectly crammed; nearly all of the people, forty in number, were at

home. More demoralized countenances, unhappy, aged, and swollen,

young, pallid, and distracted, were not to be seen in the whole

building. I conversed with several of them. The story was nearly

identical in all cases, only in various stages of development. Every

one of them had been rich, or his father, his brother or his uncle

was still wealthy, or his father or he himself had had a very fine

position. Then misfortune had overtaken him, the blame for which

rested either on envious people, or on his own kind-heartedness, or

some special chance, and so he had lost every thing, and had been

forced to condescend to these surroundings to which he was not

accustomed, and which were hateful to him--among lice, rags, among

drunkards and corrupt persons, and to nourish himself on bread and

liver, and to extend his hand in beggary. All the thoughts, desires,

memories of these people were directed exclusively to the past. The

present appeared to them something unreal, repulsive, and not worthy

of attention. Not one of them had any present. They had only

memories of the past, and expectations from the future, which might

be realized at any moment, and for the realization of which only a

very little was required; but this little they did not possess, it

was nowhere to be obtained, and this had been ruining their whole

future life in vain, in the case of one man, for a year, of a second

for five years, and of a third for thirty years. All one needed was

merely to dress respectably, so that he could present himself to a

certain personage, who was well-disposed towards him another only

needed to be able to dress, pay off his debts, and get to Orel; a

third required to redeem a small property which was mortgaged, for

the continuation of a law-suit, which must be decided in his favor,

and then all would be well once more. They all declare that they

merely require something external, in order to stand once more in the

position which they regard as natural and happy in their own case.

Had my mind not been obscured by my pride as a benefactor, a glance

at their faces, both old and young, which were mostly weak and

sensitive, but amiable, would have given me to understand that their

misfortunes were irreparable by any external means, that they could

not be happy in any position whatever, if their views of life were to

remain unchanged, that they were in no wise remarkable people, in

remarkably unfortunate circumstances, but that they were the same

people who surround us on all sides, and just like ourselves. I

remember that intercourse with this sort of unfortunates was

peculiarly difficult for me. I now understand why this was so; in

them I beheld myself, as in a mirror. If I had reflected on my own

life and on the life of the people in our circle, I should have seen

that no real difference existed between them.

If those about me dwell in spacious quarters, and in their own houses

on the Sivtzevy Vrazhok and on the Dimitrovka, and not in the

Rzhanoff house, and still eat and drink dainties, and not liver and

herrings with bread, that does not prevent them from being exactly as

unhappy. They are just as dissatisfied with their own positions,

they mourn over the past, and pine for better things, and the

improved position for which they long is precisely the same as that

which the inhabitants of the Rzhanoff house long for; that is to say,

one in which they may do as little work as possible themselves, and

derive the utmost advantage from the labors of others. The

difference is merely one of degrees and time. If I had reflected at

that time, I should have understood this; but I did not reflect, and

I questioned these people, and wrote them down, supposing, that,

having learned all the particulars of their various conditions and

necessities, I could aid them LATER ON. I did not understand that

such a man can only be helped by changing his views of the world.

But in order to change the views of another, one must needs have

better views himself, and live in conformity with them; but mine were

precisely the same as theirs, and I lived in accordance with those

views, which must undergo a change, in order that these people might

cease to be unhappy.

I did not see that these people were unhappy, not because they had

not, so to speak, nourishing food, but because their stomachs had

been spoiled, and because their appetites demanded not nourishing but

irritating viands; and I did not perceive that, in order to help

them, it was not necessary to give them food, but that it was

necessary to heal their disordered stomachs. Although I am

anticipating by so doing, I will mention here, that, out of all these

persons whom I noted down, I really did not help a single one, in

spite of the fact that for some of them, that was done which they

desired, and that which, apparently, might have raised them. Three

of their number were particularly well known to me. All three, after

repeated rises and falls, are now in precisely the same situation in

which they were three years ago.

CHAPTER VIII.

The second class of unfortunates whom I also expected to assist later

on, were the dissolute women; there were a very great many of them,

of all sorts, in the Rzhanoff house--from those who were young and

who resembled women, to old ones, who were frightful and horrible,

and who had lost every semblance of humanity. The hope of being of

assistance to these women, which I had not at first entertained,

occurred to me later. This was in the middle of our rounds. We had

already worked out several mechanical tricks of procedure.

When we entered a new establishment, we immediately questioned the

landlady of the apartment; one of us sat down, clearing some sort of

a place for himself where he could write, and another penetrated the

corners, and questioned each man in all the nooks of the apartment

separately, and reported the facts to the one who did the writing.

On entering a set of rooms in the basement, a student went to hunt up

the landlady, while I began to interrogate all who remained in the

place. The apartment was thus arranged: in the centre was a room

six arshins square, {7} and a small oven. From the oven radiated

four partitions, forming four tiny compartments. In the first, the

entrance slip, which had four bunks, there were two persons--an old

man and a woman. Immediately adjoining this, was a rather long slip

of a room; in it was the landlord, a young fellow, dressed in a

sleeveless gray woollen jacket, a good-looking, very pale citizen.

{8} On the left of the first corner, was a third tiny chamber; there

was one person asleep there, probably a drunken peasant, and a woman

in a pink blouse which was loose in front and close-fitting behind.

The fourth chamber was behind the partition; the entrance to it was

from the landlord's compartment.

The student went into the landlord's room, and I remained in the

entrance compartment, and questioned the old man and woman. The old

man had been a master-printer, but now had no means of livelihood.

The woman was the wife of a cook. I went to the third compartment,

and questioned the woman in the blouse about the sleeping man. She

said that he was a visitor. I asked the woman who she was. She

replied that she was a Moscow peasant. "What is your business?" She

burst into a laugh, and did not answer me. "What do you live on?" I

repeated, thinking that she had not understood my question. "I sit

in the taverns," she said. I did not comprehend, and again I

inquired: "What is your means of livelihood?" She made no reply and

laughed. Women's voices in the fourth compartment which we had not

yet entered, joined in the laugh. The landlord emerged from his

cabin and stepped up to us. He had evidently heard my questions and

the woman's replies. He cast a stern glance at the woman and turned

to me: "She is a prostitute," said he, apparently pleased that he

knew the word in use in the language of the authorities, and that he

could pronounce it correctly. And having said this, with a

respectful and barely perceptible smile of satisfaction addressed to

me, he turned to the woman. And no sooner had he turned to her, than

his whole face altered. He said, in a peculiar, scornful, hasty

tone, such as is employed towards dogs: "What do you jabber in that

careless way for? 'I sit in the taverns.' You do sit in the

taverns, and that means, to talk business, that you are a

prostitute," and again he uttered the word. "She does not know the

name for herself." This tone offended me. "It is not our place to

abuse her," said I. "If all of us lived according to the laws of

God, there would be none of these women."

"That's the very point," said the landlord, with an awkward smile.

"Therefore, we should not reproach but pity them. Are they to

blame?"

I do not recollect just what I said, but I do remember that I was

vexed by the scornful tone of the landlord of these quarters which

were filled with women, whom he called prostitutes, and that I felt

compassion for this woman, and that I gave expression to both

feelings. No sooner had I spoken thus, than the boards of the bed in

the next compartment, whence the laugh had proceeded, began to creak,

and above the partition, which did not reach to the ceiling, there

appeared a woman's curly and dishevelled head, with small, swollen

eyes, and a shining, red face, followed by a second, and then by a

third. They were evidently standing on their beds, and all three

were craning their necks, and holding their breath with strained

attention, and gazing silently at us.

A troubled pause ensued. The student, who had been smiling up to

this time, became serious; the landlord grew confused and dropped his

eyes. All the women held their breath, stared at me, and waited. I

was more embarrassed than any of them. I had not, in the least,

anticipated that a chance remark would produce such an effect. Like

Ezekiel's field of death, strewn with dead men's bones, there was a

quiver at the touch of the spirit, and the dead bones stirred. I had

uttered an unpremeditated word of love and sympathy, and this word

had acted on all as though they had only been waiting for this very

remark, in order that they might cease to be corpses and might live.

They all stared at me, and waited for what would come next. They

waited for me to utter those words, and to perform those actions by

reason of which these bones might draw together, clothe themselves

with flesh, and spring into life. But I felt that I had no such

words, no such actions, by means of which I could continue what I had

begun; I was conscious, in the depths of my soul, that I had lied

[that I was just like them], {9} and there was nothing further for me

to say; and I began to inscribe on the cards the names and callings

of all the persons in this set of apartments.

This incident led me into a fresh dilemma, to the thought of how

these unfortunates also might be helped. In my self-delusion, I

fancied that this would be very easy. I said to myself: "Here, we

will make a note of all these women also, and LATER ON when we [I did

not specify to myself who "we" were] write every thing out, we will

attend to these persons too." I imagined that we, the very ones who

have brought and have been bringing these women to this condition for

several generations, would take thought some fine day and reform all

this. But, in the mean time, if I had only recalled my conversation

with the disreputable woman who had been rocking the baby of the

fever-stricken patient, I might have comprehended the full extent of

the folly of such a supposition.

When we saw this woman with the baby, we thought that it was her

child. To the question, "Who was she?" she had replied in a

straightforward way that she was unmarried. She did not say--a

prostitute. Only the master of the apartment made use of that

frightful word. The supposition that she had a child suggested to me

the idea of removing her from her position. I inquired:

"Is this your child?"

"No, it belongs to that woman yonder."

"Why are you taking care of it?"

"Because she asked me; she is dying."

Although my supposition proved to be erroneous, I continued my

conversation with her in the same spirit. I began to question her as

to who she was, and how she had come to such a state. She related

her history very readily and simply. She was a Moscow myeshchanka,

the daughter of a factory hand. She had been left an orphan, and had

been adopted by an aunt. From her aunt's she had begun to frequent

the taverns. The aunt was now dead. When I asked her whether she

did not wish to alter her mode of life, my question, evidently, did

not even arouse her interest. How can one take an interest in the

proposition of a man, in regard to something absolutely impossible?

She laughed, and said: "And who would take me in with my yellow

ticket?"

"Well, but if a place could be found somewhere as cook?" said I.

This thought occurred to me because she was a stout, ruddy woman,

with a kindly, round, and rather stupid face. Cooks are often like

that. My words evidently did not please her. She repeated:

"A cook--but I don't know how to make bread," said she, and she

laughed. She said that she did not know how; but I saw from the

expression of her countenance that she did not wish to become a cook,

that she regarded the position and calling of a cook as low.

This woman, who in the simplest possible manner was sacrificing every

thing that she had for the sick woman, like the widow in the Gospels,

at the same time, like many of her companions, regarded the position

of a person who works as low and deserving of scorn. She had been

brought up to live not by work, but by this life which was considered

the natural one for her by those about her. In that lay her

misfortune. And she fell in with this misfortune and clung to her

position. This led her to frequent the taverns. Which of us--man or

woman--will correct her false view of life? Where among us are the

people to be found who are convinced that every laborious life is

more worthy of respect than an idle life,--who are convinced of this,

and who live in conformity with this belief, and who in conformity

with this conviction value and respect people? If I had thought of

this, I might have understood that neither I, nor any other person

among my acquaintances, could heal this complaint.

I might have understood that these amazed and affected heads thrust

over the partition indicated only surprise at the sympathy expressed

for them, but not in the least a hope of reclamation from their

dissolute life. They do not perceive the immorality of their life.

They see that they are despised and cursed, but for what they are

thus despised they cannot comprehend. Their life, from childhood,

has been spent among just such women, who, as they very well know,

always have existed, and are indispensable to society, and so

indispensable that there are governmental officials to attend to

their legal existence. Moreover, they know that they have power over

men, and can bring them into subjection, and rule them often more

than other women. They see that their position in society is

recognized by women and men and the authorities, in spite of their

continual curses, and therefore, they cannot understand why they

should reform.

In the course of one of the tours, one of the students told me that

in a certain lodging, there was a woman who was bargaining for her

thirteen-year-old daughter. Being desirous of rescuing this girl, I

made a trip to that lodging expressly. Mother and daughter were

living in the greatest poverty. The mother, a small, dark-

complexioned, dissolute woman of forty, was not only homely, but

repulsively homely. The daughter was equally disagreeable. To all

my pointed questions about their life, the mother responded curtly,

suspiciously, and in a hostile way, evidently feeling that I was an

enemy, with evil intentions; the daughter made no reply, did not look

at her mother, and evidently trusted the latter fully. They inspired

me with no sincere pity, but rather with disgust. But I made up my

mind that the daughter must be rescued, and that I would interest

ladies who pitied the sad condition of these women, and send them

hither. But if I had reflected on the mother's long life in the

past, of how she had given birth to, nursed and reared this daughter

in her situation, assuredly without the slightest assistance from

outsiders, and with heavy sacrifices--if I had reflected on the view

of life which this woman had formed, I should have understood that

there was, decidedly, nothing bad or immoral in the mother's act:

she had done and was doing for her daughter all that she could, that

is to say, what she considered the best for herself. This daughter

could be forcibly removed from her mother; but it would be impossible

to convince the mother that she was doing wrong, in selling her

daughter. If any one was to be saved, then it must be this woman--

the mother ought to have been saved; [and that long before, from that

view of life which is approved by every one, according to which a

woman may live unmarried, that is, without bearing children and

without work, and simply for the satisfaction of the passions. If I

had thought of this, I should have understood that the majority of

the ladies whom I intended to send thither for the salvation of that

little girl, not only live without bearing children and without

working, and serving only passion, but that they deliberately rear

their daughters for the same life; one mother takes her daughter to

the taverns, another takes hers to balls. But both mothers hold the

same view of the world, namely, that a woman must satisfy man's

passions, and that for this she must be fed, dressed, and cared for.

Then how are our ladies to reform this woman and her daughter? {10} ]

CHAPTER IX.

Still more remarkable were my relations to the children. In my role

of benefactor, I turned my attention to the children also, being

desirous to save these innocent beings from perishing in that lair of

vice, and noting them down in order to attend to them AFTERWARDS.

Among the children, I was especially struck with a twelve-year-old

lad named Serozha. I was heartily sorry for this bold, intelligent

lad, who had lived with a cobbler, and who had been left without a

shelter because his master had been put in jail, and I wanted to do

good to him.

I will here relate the upshot of my benevolence in his case, because

my experience with this child is best adapted to show my false

position in the role of benefactor. I took the boy home with me and

put him in the kitchen. It was impossible, was it not, to take a

child who had lived in a den of iniquity in among my own children?

And I considered myself very kind and good, because he was a care,

not to me, but to the servants in the kitchen, and because not I but

the cook fed him, and because I gave him some cast-off clothing to

wear. The boy staid a week. During that week I said a few words to

him as I passed on two occasions and in the course of my strolls, I

went to a shoemaker of my acquaintance, and proposed that he should

take the lad as an apprentice. A peasant who was visiting me,

invited him to go to the country, into his family, as a laborer; the

boy refused, and at the end of the week he disappeared. I went to

the Rzhanoff house to inquire after him. He had returned there, but

was not at home when I went thither. For two days already, he had

been going to the Pryesnensky ponds, where he had hired himself out

at thirty kopeks a day in some procession of savages in costume, who

led about elephants. Something was being presented to the public

there. I went a second time, but he was so ungrateful that he

evidently avoided me. Had I then reflected on the life of that boy

and on my own, I should have understood that this boy was spoiled

because he had discovered the possibility of a merry life without

labor, and that he had grown unused to work. And I, with the object

of benefiting and reclaiming him, had taken him to my house, where he

saw--what? My children,--both older and younger than himself, and of

the same age,--who not only never did any work for themselves, but

who made work for others by every means in their power, who soiled

and spoiled every thing about them, who ate rich, dainty, and sweet

viands, broke china, and flung to the dogs food which would have been

a tidbit to this lad. If I had rescued him from the abyss, and had

taken him to that nice place, then he must acquire those views which

prevailed in the life of that nice place; but by these views, he

understood that in that fine place he must so live that he should not

toil, but eat and drink luxuriously, and lead a joyous life. It is

true that he did not know that my children bore heavy burdens in the

acquisition of the declensions of Latin and Greek grammar, and that

he could not have understood the object of these labors. But it is

impossible not to see that if he had understood this, the influence

of my children's example on him would have been even stronger. He

would then have comprehended that my children were being educated in

this manner, so that, while doing no work now, they might be in a

position hereafter, also profiting by their diplomas, to work as

little as possible, and to enjoy the pleasures of life to as great an

extent as possible. He did understand this, and he would not go with

the peasant to tend cattle, and to eat potatoes and kvas with him,

but he went to the zoological garden in the costume of a savage, to

lead the elephant at thirty kopeks a day.

I might have understood how clumsy I was, when I was rearing my

children in the most utter idleness and luxury, to reform other

people and their children, who were perishing from idleness in what I

called the den of the Rzhanoff house, where, nevertheless, three-

fourths of the people toil for themselves and for others. But I

understood nothing of this.

There were a great many children in the Rzhanoff house, who were in

the same pitiable plight; there were the children of dissolute women,

there were orphans, there were children who had been picked up in the

streets by beggars. They were all very wretched. But my experience

with Serozha showed me that I, living the life I did, was not in a

position to help them.

While Serozha was living with us, I noticed in myself an effort to

hide our life from him, in particular the life of our children. I

felt that all my efforts to direct him towards a good, industrious

life, were counteracted by the examples of our lives and by that of

our children. It is very easy to take a child away from a

disreputable woman, or from a beggar. It is very easy, when one has

the money, to wash, clean and dress him in neat clothing, to support

him, and even to teach him various sciences; but it is not only

difficult for us, who do not earn our own bread, but quite the

reverse, to teach him to work for his bread, but it is impossible,

because we, by our example, and even by those material and valueless

improvements of his life, inculcate the contrary. A puppy can be

taken, tended, fed, and taught to fetch and carry, and one may take

pleasure in him: but it is not enough to tend a man, to feed and

teach him Greek; we must teach the man how to live,--that is, to take

as little as possible from others, and to give as much as possible;

and we cannot help teaching him to do the contrary, if we take him

into our houses, or into an institution founded for this purpose.

CHAPTER X.

This feeling of compassion for people, and of disgust with myself,

which I had experienced in the Lyapinsky house, I experienced no

longer. I was completely absorbed in the desire to carry out the

scheme which I had concocted,--to do good to those people whom I

should meet here. And, strange to say, it would appear, that, to do

good--to give money to the needy--is a very good deed, and one that

should dispose me to love for the people, but it turned out the

reverse: this act produced in me ill-will and an inclination to

condemn people. But during our first evening tour, a scene occurred

exactly like that in the Lyapinsky house, and it called forth a

wholly different sentiment.

It began by my finding in one set of apartments an unfortunate

individual, of precisely the sort who require immediate aid. I found

a hungry woman who had had nothing to eat for two days.

It came about thus: in one very large and almost empty night-

lodging, I asked an old woman whether there were many poor people who

had nothing to eat? The old woman reflected, and then told me of

two; and then, as though she had just recollected, "Why, here is one

of them," said she, glancing at one of the occupied bunks. "I think

that woman has had no food."

"Really? Who is she?"

"She was a dissolute woman: no one wants any thing to do with her

now, so she has no way of getting any thing. The landlady has had

compassion on her, but now she means to turn her out . . . Agafya,

hey there, Agafya!" cried the woman.

We approached, and something rose up in the bunk. It was a woman

haggard and dishevelled, whose hair was half gray, and who was as

thin as a skeleton, dressed in a ragged and dirty chemise, and with

particularly brilliant and staring eyes. She looked past us with her

staring eyes, clutched at her jacket with one thin hand, in order to

cover her bony breast which was disclosed by her tattered chemise,

and oppressed, she cried, "What is it? what is it?" I asked her

about her means of livelihood. For a long time she did not

understand, and said, "I don't know myself; they persecute me." I

asked her,--it puts me to shame, my hand refuses to write it,--I

asked her whether it was true that she had nothing to eat? She

answered in the same hurried, feverish tone, staring at me the

while,--"No, I had nothing yesterday, and I have had nothing to-day."

The sight of this woman touched me, but not at all as had been the

case in the Lyapinsky house; there, my pity for these people made me

instantly feel ashamed of myself: but here, I rejoiced because I had

at last found what I had been seeking,--a hungry person.

I gave her a ruble, and I recollect being very glad that others saw

it. The old woman, on seeing this, immediately begged money of me

also. It afforded me such pleasure to give, that, without finding

out whether it was necessary to give or not, I gave something to the

old woman too. The old woman accompanied me to the door, and the

people standing in the corridor heard her blessing me. Probably the

questions which I had put with regard to poverty, had aroused

expectation, and several persons followed us. In the corridor also,

they began to ask me for money. Among those who begged were some

drunken men, who aroused an unpleasant feeling in me; but, having

once given to the old woman, I had no might to refuse these people,

and I began to give. As long as I continued to give, people kept

coming up; and excitement ran through all the lodgings. People made

them appearance on the stairs and galleries, and followed me. As I

emerged into the court-yard, a little boy ran swiftly down one of the

staircases thrusting the people aside. He did not see me, and

exclaimed hastily: "He gave Agashka a ruble!" When he reached the

ground, the boy joined the crowd which was following me. I went out

into the street: various descriptions of people followed me, and

asked for money. I distributed all my small change, and entered an

open shop with the request that the shopkeeper would change a ten-

ruble bill for me. And then the same thing happened as at the

Lyapinsky house. A terrible confusion ensued. Old women, noblemen,

peasants, and children crowded into the shop with outstretched hands;

I gave, and interrogated some of them as to their lives, and took

notes. The shopkeeper, turning up the furred points of the collar of

his coat, sat like a stuffed creature, glancing at the crowd

occasionally, and then fixing his eyes beyond them again. He

evidently, like every one else, felt that this was foolish, but he

could not say so.

The poverty and beggary in the Lyapinsky house had horrified me, and

I felt myself guilty of it; I felt the desire and the possibility of

improvement. But now, precisely the same scene produced on me an

entirely different effect; I experienced, in the first place, a

malevolent feeling towards many of those who were besieging me; and

in the second place, uneasiness as to what the shopkeepers and

porters would think of me.

On my return home that day, I was troubled in my soul. I felt that

what I had done was foolish and immoral. But, as is always the

result of inward confusion, I talked a great deal about the plan

which I had undertaken, as though I entertained not the slightest

doubt of my success.

On the following day, I went to such of the people whom I had

inscribed on my list, as seemed to me the most wretched of all, and

those who, as it seemed to me, would be the easiest to help. As I

have already said, I did not help any of these people. It proved to

be more difficult to help them than I had thought. And either

because I did not know how, or because it was impossible, I merely

imitated these people, and did not help any one. I visited the

Rzhanoff house several times before the final tour, and on every

occasion the very same thing occurred: I was beset by a throng of

beggars in whose mass I was completely lost. I felt the

impossibility of doing any thing, because there were too many of

them, and because I felt ill-disposed towards them because there were

so many of them; and in addition to this, each one separately did not

incline me in his favor. I was conscious that every one of them was

telling me an untruth, or less than the whole truth, and that he saw

in me merely a purse from which money might be drawn. And it very

frequently seemed to me, that the very money which they squeezed out

of me, rendered their condition worse instead of improving it. The

oftener I went to that house, the more I entered into intercourse

with the people there, the more apparent became to me the

impossibility of doing any thing; but still I did not give up any

scheme until the last night tour.

The remembrance of that last tour is particularly mortifying to me.

On other occasions I had gone thither alone, but twenty of us went

there on this occasion. At seven o'clock, all who wished to take

part in this final night round, began to assemble at my house.

Nearly all of them were strangers to me,--students, one officer, and

two of my society acquaintances, who, uttering the usual, "C'est tres

interessant!" had asked me to include them in the number of the

census-takers.

My worldly acquaintances had dressed up especially for this, in some

sort of hunting-jacket, and tall, travelling boots, in a costume in

which they rode and went hunting, and which, in their opinion, was

appropriate for an excursion to a night-lodging-house. They took

with them special note-books and remarkable pencils. They were in

that peculiarly excited state of mind in which men set off on a hunt,

to a duel, or to the wars. The most apparent thing about them was

their folly and the falseness of our position, but all the rest of us

were in the same false position. Before we set out, we held a

consultation, after the fashion of a council of war, as to how we

should begin, how divide our party, and so on.

This consultation was exactly such as takes place in councils,

assemblages, committees; that is to say, each person spoke, not

because he had any thing to say or to ask, but because each one

cudgelled his brain for something that he could say, so that he might

not fall short of the rest. But, among all these discussions, no one

alluded to that beneficence of which I had so often spoken to them

all. Mortifying as this was to me, I felt that it was indispensable

that I should once more remind them of benevolence, that is, of the

point, that we were to observe and take notes of all those in

destitute circumstances whom we should encounter in the course of our

rounds. I had always felt ashamed to speak of this; but now, in the

midst of all our excited preparations for our expedition, I could

hardly utter the words. All listened to me, as it seemed to me, with

sorrow, and, at the same time, all agreed in words; but it was

evident that they all knew that it was folly, and that nothing would

come of it, and all immediately began again to talk about something

else. This went on until the time arrived for us to set out, and we

started.

We reached the tavern, roused the waiters, and began to sort our

papers. When we were informed that the people had heard about this

round, and were leaving their quarters, we asked the landlord to lock

the gates; and we went ourselves into the yard to reason with the

fleeing people, assuring them that no one would demand their tickets.

I remember the strange and painful impression produced on me by these

alarmed night-lodgers: ragged, half-dressed, they all seemed tall to

me by the light of the lantern and the gloom of the court-yard.

Frightened and terrifying in their alarm, they stood in a group

around the foul-smelling out-house, and listened to our assurances,

but they did not believe us, and were evidently prepared for any

thing, like hunted wild beasts, provided only that they could escape

from us. Gentlemen in divers shapes--as policemen, both city and

rural, and as examining judges, and judges--hunt them all their

lives, in town and country, on the highway and in the streets, and in

the taverns, and in night-lodging houses; and now, all of a sudden,

these gentlemen had come and locked the gates, merely in order to

count them: it was as difficult for them to believe this, as for

hares to believe that dogs have come, not to chase but to count them.

But the gates were locked, and the startled lodgers returned: and

we, breaking up into groups, entered also. With me were the two

society men and two students. In front of us, in the dark, went

Vanya, in his coat and white trousers, with a lantern, and we

followed. We went to quarters with which I was familiar. I knew all

the establishments, and some of the people; but the majority of the

people were new, and the spectacle was new, and more dreadful than

the one which I had witnessed in the Lyapinsky house. All the

lodgings were full, all the bunks were occupied, not by one person

only, but often by two. The sight was terrible in that narrow space

into which the people were huddled, and men and women were mixed

together. All the women who were not dead drunk slept with men; and

women with two children did the same. The sight was terrible, on

account of the poverty, dirt, rags, and terror of the people. And it

was chiefly dreadful on account of the vast numbers of people who

were in this situation. One lodging, and then a second like it, and

a third, and a tenth, and a twentieth, and still there was no end to

them. And everywhere there was the same foul odor, the same close

atmosphere, the same crowding, the same mingling of the sexes, the

same men and women intoxicated to stupidity, and the same terror,

submission and guilt on all faces; and again I was overwhelmed with

shame and pain, as in the Lyapinsky house, and I understood that what

I had undertaken was abominable and foolish and therefore

impracticable. And I no longer took notes of anybody, and I asked no

questions, knowing that nothing would come of this.

I was deeply pained. In the Lyapinsky house I had been like a man

who has seen a fearful wound, by chance, on the body of another man.

He is sorry for the other man, he is ashamed that he has not pitied

the man before, and he can still rise to the succor of the sufferer.

But now I was like a physician, who has come with his medicine to the

sick man, has uncovered his sore, and examined it, and who must

confess to himself that every thing that he has done has been in

vain, and that his remedy is good for nothing.

CHAPTER XI.

This visit dealt the final blow to my self-delusion. It now appeared

indisputable to me, that what I had undertaken was not only foolish

but loathsome.

But, in spite of the fact that I was aware of this, it seemed to me

that I could not abandon the whole thing on the spot. It seemed to

me that I was bound to carry out this enterprise, in the first place,

because by my article, by my visits and promises, I had aroused the

expectations of the poor; in the second, because by my article also,

and by my talk, I had aroused the sympathies of benevolent persons,

many of whom had promised me their co-operation both in personal

labor and in money. And I expected that both sets of people would

turn to me for an answer to this.

What happened to me, so far as the appeal of the needy to me is

concerned, was as follows: By letter and personal application I

received more than a hundred; these applications were all from the

wealthy-poor, if I may so express myself. I went to see some of

them, and some of them received no answer. Nowhere did I succeed in

doing any thing. All applications to me were from persons who had

once occupied privileged positions (I thus designate those in which

people receive more from others than they give), who had lost them,

and who wished to occupy them again. To one, two hundred rubles were

indispensable, in order that he might prop up a failing business, and

complete the education of his children which had been begun; another

wanted a photographic outfit; a third wanted his debts paid, and

respectable clothing purchased for him; a fourth needed a piano, in

order to perfect himself and support his family by giving lessons.

But the majority did not stipulate for any given sum of money, and

simply asked for assistance; and when I came to examine into what was

required, it turned out that their demands grew in proportion to the

aid, and that there was not and could not be any way of satisfying

them. I repeat, that it is very possible that this arose from the

fact that I did not understand how; but I did not help any one,

although I sometimes endeavored to do so.

A very strange and unexpected thing happened to me as regards the co-

operation of the benevolently disposed. Out of all the persons who

had promised me financial aid, and who had even stated the number of

rubles, not a single one handed to me for distribution among the poor

one solitary ruble. But according to the pledges which had been

given me, I could reckon on about three thousand rubles; and out of

all these people, not one remembered our former discussions, or gave

me a single kopek. Only the students gave the money which had been

assigned to them for their work on the census, twelve rubles, I

think. So my whole scheme, which was to have been expressed by tens

of thousands of rubles contributed by the wealthy, for hundreds and

thousands of poor people who were to be rescued from poverty and

vice, dwindled down to this, that I gave away, haphazard, a few

scores of rubles to those people who asked me for them, and that

there remained in my hands twelve rubies contributed by the students,

and twenty-five sent to me by the City Council for my labor as a

superintendent, and I absolutely did not know to whom to give them.

The whole matter came to an end. And then, before my departure for

the country, on the Sunday before carnival, I went to the Rzhanoff

house in the morning, in order to get rid of those thirty-seven

rubles before I should leave Moscow, and to distribute them to the

poor. I made the round of the quarters with which I was familiar,

and in them found only one sick man, to whom I gave five rubles.

There was no one else there to give any to. Of course many began to

beg of me. But as I had not known them at first, so I did not know

them now, and I made up my mind to take counsel with Ivan Fedotitch,

the landlord of the tavern, as to the persons upon whom it would be

proper to bestow the remaining thirty-two rubies.

It was the first day of the carnival. Everybody was dressed up, and

everybody was full-fed, and many were already intoxicated. In the

court-yard, close to the house, stood an old man, a rag-picker, in a

tattered smock and bast shoes, sorting over the booty in his basket,

tossing out leather, iron, and other stuff in piles, and breaking

into a merry song, with a fine, powerful voice. I entered into

conversation with him. He was seventy years old, he was alone in the

world, and supported himself by his calling of a rag-picker; and not

only did he utter no complaints, but he said that he had plenty to

eat and drink. I inquired of him as to especially needy persons. He

flew into a rage, and said plainly that there were no needy people,

except drunkards and lazy men; but, on learning my object, he asked

me for a five-kopek piece to buy a drink, and ran off to the tavern.

I too entered the tavern to see Ivan Fedotitch, and commission him to

distribute the money which I had left. The tavern was full; gayly-

dressed, intoxicated girls were flitting in and out; all the tables

were occupied; there were already a great many drunken people, and in

the small room the harmonium was being played, and two persons were

dancing. Out of respect to me, Ivan Fedotitch ordered that the dance

should be stopped, and seated himself with me at a vacant table. I

said to him, that, as he knew his tenants, would not he point out to

me the most needy among them; that I had been entrusted with the

distribution of a little money, and, therefore, would he indicate the

proper persons? Good-natured Ivan Fedotitch (he died a year later),

although he was pressed with business, broke away from it for a time,

in order to serve me. He meditated, and was evidently undecided. An

elderly waiter heard us, and joined the conference.

They began to discuss the claims of persons, some of whom I knew, but

still they could not come to any agreement. "The Paramonovna,"

suggested the waiter. "Yes, that would do. Sometimes she has

nothing to eat. Yes, but then she tipples."--"Well, what of that?

That makes no difference."--"Well, Sidoron Ivanovitch has children.

He would do." But Ivan Fedotitch had his doubts about Sidoron

Ivanovitch also. "Akulina shall have some. There, now, give

something to the blind." To this I responded. I saw him at once.

He was a blind old man of eighty years, without kith or kin. It

seemed as though no condition could be more painful, and I went

immediately to see him. He was lying on a feather-bed, on a high

bedstead, drunk; and, as he did not see me, he was scolding his

comparatively youthful female companion in a frightful bass voice,

and in the very worst kind of language. They also summoned an

armless boy and his mother. I saw that Ivan Fedotitch was in great

straits, on account of his conscientiousness, for me knew that

whatever was given would immediately pass to his tavern. But I had

to get rid of my thirty-two rubles, so I insisted; and in one way and

another, and half wrongfully to boot, we assigned and distributed

them. Those who received them were mostly well dressed, and we had

not far to go to find them, as they were there in the tavern. The

armless boy appeared in wrinkled boots, and a red shirt and vest.

With this my charitable career came to an end, and I went off to the

country; irritated at others, as is always the case, because I myself

had done a stupid and a bad thing. My benevolence had ended in

nothing, and it ceased altogether, but the current of thoughts and

feelings which it had called up with me not only did not come to an

end, but the inward work went on with redoubled force.

CHAPTER XII.

What was its nature?

I had lived in the country, and there I was connected with the rustic

poor. Not out of humility, which is worse than pride, but for the

sake of telling the truth, which is indispensable for the

understanding of the whole course of my thoughts and sentiments, I

will say that in the country I did very little for the poor, but the

demands which were made upon me were so modest that even this little

was of use to the people, and formed around me an atmosphere of

affection and union with the people, in which it was possible to

soothe the gnawing sensation of remorse at the independence of my

life. On going to the city, I had hoped to be able to live in the

same manner. But here I encountered want of an entirely different

sort. City want was both less real, and more exacting and cruel,

than country poverty. But the principal point was, that there was so

much of it in one spot, that it produced on me a frightful

impression. The impression which I experienced in the Lyapinsky

house had, at the very first, made me conscious of the deformity of

my own life. This feeling was genuine and very powerful. But,

notwithstanding its genuineness and power, I was, at that time, so

weak that I feared the alteration in my life to which this feeling

commended me, and I resorted to a compromise. I believed what

everybody told me, and everybody has said, ever since the world was

made,--that there is nothing evil in wealth and luxury, that they are

given by God, that one may continue to live as a rich man, and yet

help the needy. I believed this, and I tried to do it. I wrote an

essay, in which I summoned all rich people to my assistance. The

rich people all acknowledged themselves morally bound to agree with

me, but evidently they either did not wish to do any thing, or they

could not do any thing or give any thing to the poor. I began to

visit the poor, and I beheld what I had not in the least expected.

On the one hand, I beheld in those dens, as I called them, people

whom it was not conceivable that I should help, because they were

working people, accustomed to labor and privation, and therefore

standing much higher and having a much firmer foothold in life than

myself; on the other hand, I saw unfortunate people whom I could not

aid because they were exactly like myself. The majority of the

unfortunates whom I saw were unhappy only because they had lost the

capacity, desire, and habit of earning their own bread; that is to

say, their unhappiness consisted in the fact that they were precisely

such persons as myself.

I found no unfortunates who were sick, hungry, or cold, to whom I

could render immediate assistance, with the solitary exception of

hungry Agafya. And I became convinced, that, on account of my

remoteness from the lives of those people whom I desired to help, it

would be almost impossible to find any such unfortunates, because all

actual wants had already been supplied by the very people among whom

these unfortunates live; and, most of all, I was convinced that money

cannot effect any change in the life led by these unhappy people.

I was convinced of all this, but out of false shame at abandoning

what I had once undertaken, because of my self-delusion as a

benefactor, I went on with this matter for a tolerably long time,--

and would have gone on with it until it came to nothing of itself,--

so that it was with the greatest difficulty that, with the help of

Ivan Fedotitch, I got rid, after a fashion, as well as I could, in

the tavern of the Rzhanoff house, of the thirty-seven rubles which I

did not regard as belonging to me.

Of course I might have gone on with this business, and have made out

of it a semblance of benevolence; by urging the people who had

promised me money, I might have collected more, I might have

distributed this money, and consoled myself with my charity; but I

perceived, on the one hand, that we rich people neither wish nor are

able to share a portion of our a superfluity with the poor (we have

so many wants of our own), and that money should not be given to any

one, if the object really be to do good and not to give money itself

at haphazard, as I had done in the Rzhanoff tavern. And I gave up

the whole thing, and went off to the country with despair in my

heart.

In the country I tried to write an essay about all this that I had

experienced, and to tell why my undertaking had not succeeded. I

wanted to justify myself against the reproaches which had been made

to me on the score of my article on the census; I wanted to convict

society of its in difference, and to state the causes in which this

city poverty has its birth, and the necessity of combating it, and

the means of doing so which I saw.

I began this essay at once, and it seemed to me that in it I was

saying a very great deal that was important. But toil as I would

over it, and in spite of the abundance of materials, in spite of the

superfluity of them even, I could not get though that essay; and so I

did not finish it until the present year, because of the irritation

under the influence of which I wrote, because I had not gone through

all that was requisite in order to bear myself properly in relation

to this essay, because I did not simply and clearly acknowledge the

cause of all this,--a very simple cause, which had its root in

myself.

In the domain of morals, one very remarkable and too little noted

phenomenon presents itself.

If I tell a man who knows nothing about it, what I know about

geology, astronomy, history, physics, and mathematics, that man

receives entirely new information, and he never says to me: "Well,

what is there new in that? Everybody knows that, and I have known it

this long while." But tell that same man the most lofty truth,

expressed in the clearest, most concise manner, as it has never

before been expressed, and every ordinary individual, especially one

who takes no particular interest in moral questions, or, even more,

one to whom the moral truth stated by you is displeasing, will

infallibly say to you: "Well, who does not know that? That was

known and said long ago." It really seems to him that this has been

said long ago and in just this way. Only those to whom moral truths

are dear and important know how important and precious they are, and

with what prolonged labor the elucidation, the simplification, of

moral truths, their transit from the state of a misty, indefinitely

recognized supposition, and desire, from indistinct, incoherent

expressions, to a firm and definite expression, unavoidably demanding

corresponding concessions, are attained.

We have all become accustomed to think that moral instruction is a

most absurd and tiresome thing, in which there can be nothing new or

interesting; and yet all human life, together with all the varied and

complicated activities, apparently independent, of morality, both

governmental and scientific, and artistic and commercial, has no

other aim than the greater and greater elucidation, confirmation,

simplification, and accessibility of moral truth.

I remember that I was once walking along the street in Moscow, and in

front of me I saw a man come out and gaze attentively at the stones

of the sidewalk, after which he selected one stone, seated himself on

it, and began to plane (as it seemed to me) or to rub it with the

greatest diligence and force. "What is he doing to the sidewalk?" I

said to myself. On going close to him, I saw what the man was doing.

He was a young fellow from a meat-shop; he was whetting his knife on

the stone of the pavement. He was not thinking at all of the stones

when he scrutinized them, still less was he thinking of them when he

was accomplishing his task: he was whetting his knife. He was

obliged to whet his knife so that he could cut the meat; but to me it

seemed as though he were doing something to the stones of the

sidewalk. Just so it appears as though humanity were occupied with

commerce, conventions, wars, sciences, arts; but only one business is

of importance to it, and with only one business is it occupied: it

is elucidating to itself those moral laws by which it lives. The

moral laws are already in existence; humanity is only elucidating

them, and this elucidation seems unimportant and imperceptible for

any one who has no need of moral laws, who does not wish to live by

them. But this elucidation of the moral law is not only weighty, but

the only real business of all humanity. This elucidation is

imperceptible just as the difference between the dull and the sharp

knife is imperceptible. The knife is a knife all the same, and for a

person who is not obliged to cut any thing with this knife, the

difference between the dull and the sharp one is imperceptible. For

the man who has come to an understanding that his whole life depends

on the greater or less degree of sharpness in the knife,--for such a

man, every whetting of it is weighty, and that man knows that the

knife is a knife only when it is sharp, when it cuts that which needs

cutting.

This is what happened to me, when I began to write my essay. It

seemed to me that I knew all about it, that I understood every thing

connected with those questions which had produced on me the

impressions of the Lyapinsky house, and the census; but when I

attempted to take account of them and to demonstrate them, it turned

out that the knife would not cut, and that it must be whetted. And

it is only now, after the lapse of three years, that I have felt that

my knife is sufficiently sharp, so that I can cut what I choose. I

have learned very little that is new. My thoughts are all exactly

the same, but they were duller then, and they all scattered and would

not unite on any thing; there was no edge to them; they would not

concentrate on one point, on the simplest and clearest decision, as

they have now concentrated themselves.

CHAPTER XIII.

I remember that during the entire period of my unsuccessful efforts

at helping the inhabitants of the city, I presented to myself the

aspect of a man who should attempt to drag another man out of a swamp

while he himself was standing on the same unstable ground. Every

attempt of mine had made me conscious of the untrustworthy character

of the soil on which I stood. I felt that I was in the swamp myself,

but this consciousness did not cause me to look more narrowly at my

own feet, in order to learn upon what I was standing; I kept on

seeking some external means, outside myself, of helping the existing

evil.

I then felt that my life was bad, and that it was impossible to live

in that manner. But from the fact that my life was bad, and that it

was impossible to live in that manner, I did not draw the very simple

and clear deduction that it was necessary to amend my life and to

live better, but I knew the terrible deduction that in order to live

well myself, I must needs reform the lives of others; and so I began

to reform the lives of others. I lived in the city, and I wished to

reform the lives of those who lived in the city; but I soon became

convinced that this I could not by any possibility accomplish, and I

began to meditate on the inherent characteristics of city life and

city poverty.

"What are city life and city poverty? Why, when I am living in the

city, cannot I help the city poor?"

I asked myself. I answered myself that I could not do any thing for

them, in the first place, because there were too many of them here in

one spot; in the second place, because all the poor people here were

entirely different from the country poor. Why were there so many of

them here? and in what did their peculiarity, as opposed to the

country poor, consist? There was one and the same answer to both

questions. There were a great many of them here, because here all

those people who have no means of subsistence in the country collect

around the rich; and their peculiarity lies in this, that they are

not people who have come from the country to support themselves in

the city (if there are any city paupers, those who have been born

here, and whose fathers and grandfathers were born here, then those

fathers and grandfathers came hither for the purpose of earning their

livelihood). What is the meaning of this: TO EARN ONE'S LIVELIHOOD

IN THE CITY? In the words "to earn one's livelihood in the city,"

there is something strange, resembling a jest, when you reflect on

their significance. How is it that people go from the country,--that

is to say, from the places where there are forests, meadows, grain,

and cattle, where all the wealth of the earth lies,--to earn their

livelihood in a place where there are neither trees, nor grass, nor

even land, and only stones and dust? What is the significance of the

words "to earn a livelihood in the city," which are in such constant

use, both by those who earn the livelihood, and by those who furnish

it, as though it were something perfectly clear and comprehensible?

I recall the hundreds and thousands of city people, both those who

live well and the needy, with whom I have conversed on the reason why

they came hither: and all without exception said, that they had come

from the country to earn their living; that in Moscow, where people

neither sow nor reap,--that in Moscow there is plenty of every thing,

and that, therefore, it is only in Moscow that they can earn the

money which they require in the country for bread and a cottage and a

horse, and articles of prime necessity. But assuredly, in the

country lies the source of all riches; there only is real wealth,--

bread, and forests, and horses, and every thing. And why, above all,

take away from the country that which dwellers in the country need,--

flour, oats, horses, and cattle?

Hundreds of times did I discuss this matter with peasants living in

town; and from my discussions with them, and from my observations, it

has been made apparent to me, that the congregation of country people

in the city is partly indispensable because they cannot otherwise

support themselves, partly voluntary, and that they are attracted to

the city by the temptations of the city.

It is true, that the position of the peasant is such that, for the

satisfaction of his demands made on him in the country, he cannot

extricate himself otherwise than by selling the grain and the cattle

which he knows will be indispensable to him; and he is forced,

whether he will or no, to go to the city in order there to win back

his bread. But it is also true, that the luxury of city life, and

the comparative ease with which money is there to be earned, attract

him thither; and under the pretext of gaining his living in the town,

he betakes himself thither in order that he may have lighter work,

better food, and drink tea three times a day, and dress well, and

even lead a drunken and dissolute life. The cause of both is

identical,--the transfer of the riches of the producers into the

hands of non-producers, and the accumulation of wealth in the cities.

And, in point of fact, when autumn has come, all wealth is collected

in the country. And instantly there arise demands for taxes,

recruits, the temptations of vodka, weddings, festivals; petty

pedlers make their rounds through the villages, and all sorts of

other temptations crop up; and by this road, or, if not, by some

other, wealth of the most varied description--vegetables, calves,

cows, horses, pigs, chickens, eggs, butter, hemp, flax, rye, oats,

buckwheat, pease, hempseed, and flaxseed--all passes into the hands

of strangers, is carried off to the towns, and thence to the

capitals. The countryman is obliged to surrender all this to satisfy

the demands that are made upon him, and temptations; and, having

parted with his wealth, he is left with an insufficiency, and he is

forced to go whither his wealth has been carried and there he tries,

in part, to obtain the money which he requires for his first needs in

the country, and in part, being himself led away by the blandishments

of the city, he enjoys, in company with others, the wealth that has

there accumulated. Everywhere, throughout the whole of Russia,--yes,

and not in Russia alone, I think, but throughout the whole world,--

the same thing goes on. The wealth of the rustic producers passes

into the hands of traders, landed proprietors, officials, and

factory-owners; and the people who receive this wealth wish to enjoy

it. But it is only in the city that they can derive full enjoyment

from this wealth. In the country, in the first place, it is

difficult to satisfy all the requirements of rich people, on account

of the sparseness of the population; banks, shops, hotels, every sort

of artisan, and all sorts of social diversions, do not exist there.

In the second place, one of the chief pleasures procured by wealth--

vanity, the desire to astonish and outshine other people--is

difficult to satisfy in the country; and this, again, on account of

the lack of inhabitants. In the country, there is no one to

appreciate elegance, no one to be astonished. Whatever adornments in

the way of pictures and bronzes the dweller in the country may

procure for his house, whatever equipages and toilets he may provide,

there is no one to see them and envy them, and the peasants cannot

judge of them. [And, in the third place, luxury is even disagreeable

and dangerous in the country for the man possessed of a conscience

and fear. It is an awkward and delicate matter, in the country, to

have baths of milk, or to feed your puppies on it, when directly

beside you there are children who have no milk; it is an awkward and

delicate matter to build pavilions and gardens in the midst of people

who live in cots banked up with dung, which they have no means of

warming. In the country there is no one to keep the stupid peasants

in order, and in their lack of cultivation they might disarrange all

this.] {11}

And accordingly rich people congregate, and join themselves to other

rich people with similar requirements, in the city, where the

gratification of every luxurious taste is carefully protected by a

numerous police force. Well-rooted inhabitants of the city of this

sort, are the governmental officials; every description of artisan

and professional man has sprung up around them, and with them the

wealthy join their forces. All that a rich man has to do there is to

take a fancy to a thing, and he can get it. It is also more

agreeable for a rich man to live there, because there he can gratify

his vanity; there is some one with whom he can vie in luxury; there

is some one to astonish, and there is some one to outshine. But the

principal reason why it is more comfortable in the city for a rich

man is that formerly, in the country, his luxury made him awkward and

uneasy; while now, on the contrary, it would be awkward for him not

to live luxuriously, not to live like all his peers around him. That

which seemed dreadful and awkward in the country, here appears to be

just as it should be. [Rich people congregate in the city; and

there, under the protection of the authorities, they calmly demand

every thing that is brought thither from the country. And the

countryman is, in some measure, compelled to go thither, where this

uninterrupted festival of the wealthy which demands all that is taken

from him is in progress, in order to feed upon the crumbs which fall

from the tables of the rich; and partly, also, because, when he

beholds the care-free, luxurious life, approved and protected by

everybody, he himself becomes desirous of regulating his life in such

a way as to work as little as possible, and to make as much use as

possible of the labors of others.

And so he betakes himself to the city, and finds employment about the

wealthy, endeavoring, by every means in his power, to entice from

them that which he is in need of, and conforming to all those

conditions which the wealthy impose upon him, he assists in the

gratification of all their whims; he serves the rich man in the bath

and in the inn, and as cab-driver and prostitute, and he makes for

him equipages, toys, and fashions; and he gradually learns from the

rich man to live in the same manner as the latter, not by labor, but

by divers tricks, getting away from others the wealth which they have

heaped together; and he becomes corrupt, and goes to destruction.

And this colony, demoralized by city wealth, constitutes that city

pauperism which I desired to aid and could not.

All that is necessary, in fact, is for us to reflect on the condition

of these inhabitants of the country, who have removed to the city in

order to earn their bread or their taxes,--when they behold,

everywhere around them, thousands squandered madly, and hundreds won

by the easiest possible means; when they themselves are forced by

heavy toil to earn kopeks,--and we shall be amazed that all these

people should remain working people, and that they do not all of them

take to an easier method of getting gain,--by trading, peddling,

acting as middlemen, begging, vice, rascality, and even robbery.

Why, we, the participants in that never-ceasing orgy which goes on in

town, can become so accustomed to our life, that it seems to us

perfectly natural to dwell alone in five huge apartments, heated by a

quantity of beech logs sufficient to cook the food for and to warm

twenty families; to drive half a verst with two trotters and two men-

servants; to cover the polished wood floor with rugs; and to spend, I

will not say, on a ball, five or ten thousand rubles, and twenty-five

thousand on a Christmas-tree. But a man who is in need of ten rubles

to buy bread for his family, or whose last sheep has been seized for

a tax-debt of seven rubles, and who cannot raise those rubles by hard

labor, cannot grow accustomed to this. We think that all this

appears natural to poor people there are even some ingenuous persons

who say in all seriousness, that the poor are very grateful to us for

supporting them by this luxury.] {12}

But poor people are not devoid of human understanding simply because

they are poor, and they judge precisely as we do. As the first

thought that occurs to us on hearing that such and such a man has

gambled away or squandered ten or twenty thousand rubles, is: "What

a foolish and worthless fellow he is to uselessly squander so much

money! and what a good use I could have made of that money in a

building which I have long been in need of, for the improvement of my

estate, and so forth!"--just so do the poor judge when they behold

the wealth which they need, not for caprices, but for the

satisfaction of their actual necessities, of which they are

frequently deprived, flung madly away before their eyes. We make a

very great mistake when we think that the poor can judge thus, reason

thus, and look on indifferently at the luxury which surrounds them.

They never have acknowledged, and they never will acknowledge, that

it can be just for some people to live always in idleness, and for

other people to fast and toil incessantly; but at first they are

amazed and insulted by this; then they scrutinize it more

attentively, and, seeing that these arrangements are recognized as

legitimate, they endeavor to free themselves from toil, and to take

part in the idleness. Some succeed in this, and they become just

such carousers themselves; others gradually prepare themselves for

this state; others still fail, and do not attain their goal, and,

having lost the habit of work, they fill up the disorderly houses and

the night-lodging houses.

Two years ago, we took from the country a peasant boy to wait on

table. For some reason, he did not get on well with the footman, and

he was sent away: he entered the service of a merchant, won the

favor of his master, and now he goes about with a vest and a watch-

chain, and dandified boots. In his place, we took another peasant, a

married man: he became a drunkard, and lost money. We took a third:

he took to drunk, and, having drank up every thing he had, he

suffered for a long while from poverty in the night-lodging house.

An old man, the cook, took to drink and fell sick. Last year a

footman who had formerly been a hard drinker, but who had refrained

from liquor for five years in the country, while living in Moscow

without his wife who encouraged him, took to drink again, and ruined

his whole life. A young lad from our village lives with my brother

as a table-servant. His grandfather, a blind old man, came to me

during my sojourn in the country, and asked me to remind this

grandson that he was to send ten rubies for the taxes, otherwise it

would be necessary for him to sell his cow. "He keeps saying, I must

dress decently," said the old man: "well, he has had some shoes

made, and that's all right; but what does he want to set up a watch

for?" said the grandfather, expressing in these words the most

senseless supposition that it was possible to originate. The

supposition really was senseless, if we take into consideration that

the old man throughout Lent had eaten no butter, and that he had no

split wood because he could not possibly pay one ruble and twenty

kopeks for it; but it turned out that the old man's senseless jest

was an actual fact. The young fellow came to see me in a fine black

coat, and shoes for which he had paid eight rubles. He had recently

borrowed ten rubles from my brother, and had spent them on these

shoes. And my children, who have known the lad from childhood, told

me that he really considers it indispensable to fit himself out with

a watch. He is a very good boy, but he thinks that people will laugh

at him so long as he has no watch; and a watch is necessary. During

the present year, a chambermaid, a girl of eighteen, entered into a

connection with the coachman in our house. She was discharged. An

old woman, the nurse, with whom I spoke in regard to the unfortunate

girl, reminded me of a girl whom I had forgotten. She too, ten yeans

ago, during a brief stay of ours in Moscow, had become connected with

a footman. She too had been discharged, and she had ended in a

disorderly house, and had died in the hospital before reaching the

age of twenty. It is only necessary to glance about one, to be

struck with terror at the pest which we disseminate directly by our

luxurious life among the people whom we afterwards wish to help, not

to mention the factories and establishments which serve our luxurious

tastes.

[And thus, having penetrated into the peculiar character of city

poverty, which I was unable to remedy, I perceived that its prime

cause is this, that I take absolute necessaries from the dwellers in

the country, and carry them all to the city. The second cause is

this, that by making use here, in the city, of what I have collected

in the country, I tempt and lead astray, by my senseless luxury,

those country people who come hither because of me, in order in some

way to get back what they have been deprived of in the country.] {13}

CHAPTER XIV.

I reached the same conclusion from a totally different point. On

recalling all my relations with the city poor during that time, I saw

that one of the reasons why I could not help the city poor was, that

the poor were disingenuous and untruthful with me. They all looked

upon me, not as a man, but as means. I could not get near them, and

I thought that perhaps I did not understand how to do it; but without

uprightness, no help was possible. How can one help a man who does

not disclose his whole condition? At first I blamed them for this

(it is so natural to blame some one else); but a remark from an

observing man named Siutaeff, who was visiting me at the time,

explained this matter to me, and showed me where the cause of my want

of success lay. I remember that Siutaeff's remark struck me very

forcibly at the time; but I only understood its full significance

later on. It was at the height of my self-delusion. I was sitting

with my sister, and Siutaeff was there also at her house; and my

sister was questioning me about my undertaking. I told her about it,

and, as always happens when you have no faith in your course, I

talked to her with great enthusiasm and warmth, and at great length,

of what I had done, and of what might possibly come of it. I told

her every thing,--how we were going to keep track of pauperism in

Moscow, how we were going to keep an eye on the orphans and old

people, how we were going to send away all country people who had

grown poor here, how we were going to smooth the pathway to reform

for the depraved; how, if only the matter could be managed, there

would not be a man left in Moscow, who could not obtain assistance.

My sister sympathized with me, and we discussed it. In the middle of

our conversation, I glanced at Siutaeff. As I was acquainted with

his Christian life, and with the significance which he attached to

charity, I expected his sympathy, and spoke so that he understood

this; I talked to my sister, but directed my remarks more at him. He

sat immovable in his dark tanned sheepskin jacket,--which he wore,

like all peasants, both out of doors and in the house,--and as though

he did not hear us, but were thinking of his own affairs. His small

eyes did not twinkle, and seemed to be turned inwards. Having

finished what I had to say, I turned to him with a query as to what

he thought of it.

"It's all a foolish business," said he.

"Why?"

"Your whole society is foolish, and nothing good can come out of it,"

he repeated with conviction.

"Why not? Why is it a stupid business to help thousands, at any rate

hundreds, of unfortunate beings? Is it a bad thing, according to the

Gospel, to clothe the naked, and feed the hungry?"

"I know, I know, but that is not what you are doing. Is it necessary

to render assistance in that way? You are walking along, and a man

asks you for twenty kopeks. You give them to him. Is that alms? Do

you give spiritual alms,--teach him. But what is it that you have

given? It was only for the sake of getting rid of him."

"No; and, besides, that is not what we are talking about. We want to

know about this need, and then to help by both money and deeds; and

to find work."

"You can do nothing with those people in that way."

"So they are to be allowed to die of hunger and cold?"

"Why should they die? Are there many of them there?"

"What, many of them?" said I, thinking that he looked at the matter

so lightly because he was not aware how vast was the number of these

people.

"Why, do you know," said I, "I believe that there are twenty thousand

of these cold and hungry people in Moscow. And how about Petersburg

and the other cities?"

He smiled.

"Twenty thousand! And how many households are there in Russia alone,

do you think? Are there a million?"

"Well, what then?"

"What then?" and his eyes flashed, and he grew animated. "Come, let

us divide them among ourselves. I am not rich, I will take two

persons on the spot. There is the lad whom you took into your

kitchen; I invited him to come to my house, and he did not come.

Were there ten times as many, let us divide them among us. Do you

take some, and I will take some. We will work together. He will see

how I work, and he will learn. He will see how I live, and we will

sit down at the same table together, and he will hear my words and

yours. This charity society of yours is nonsense."

These simple words impressed me. I could not but admit their

justice; but it seemed to me at that time, that, in spite of their

truth, still that which I had planned might possibly prove of

service. But the further I carried this business, the more I

associated with the poor, the more frequently did this remark recur

to my mind, and the greater was the significance which it acquired

for me.

I arrive in a costly fur coat, or with my horses; or the man who

lacks shoes sees my two-thousand-ruble apartments. He sees how, a

little while ago, I gave five rubles without begrudging them, merely

because I took a whim to do so. He surely knows that if I give away

rubles in that manner, it is only because I have hoarded up so many

of them, that I have a great many superfluous ones, which I not only

have not given away, but which I have easily taken from other people.

[What else could he see in me but one of those persons who have got

possession of what belongs to him? And what other feeling can he

cherish towards me, than a desire to obtain from me as many of those

rubles, which have been stolen from him and from others, as possible?

I wish to get close to him, and I complain that he is not frank; and

here I am, afraid to sit down on his bed for fear of getting lice, or

catching something infectious; and I am afraid to admit him to my

room, and he, coming to me naked, waits, generally in the vestibule,

or, if very fortunate, in the ante-chamber. And yet I declare that

he is to blame because I cannot enter into intimate relations with

him, and because me is not frank.

Let the sternest man try the experiment of eating a dinner of five

courses in the midst of people who have had very little or nothing

but black bread to eat. Not a man will have the spirit to eat, and

to watch how the hungry lick their chops around him. Hence, then, in

order to eat daintily amid the famishing, the first indispensable

requisite is to hide from them, in order that they may not see it.

This is the very thing, and the first thing, that we do.

And I took a simpler view of our life, and perceived that an approach

to the poor is not difficult to us through accidental causes, but

that we deliberately arrange our lives in such a fashion so that this

approach may be rendered difficult.

Not only this; but, on taking a survey of our life, of the life of

the wealthy, I saw that every thing which is considered desirable in

that life consists in, or is inseparably bound up with, the idea of

getting as far away from the poor as possible. In fact, all the

efforts of our well-endowed life, beginning with our food, dress,

houses, our cleanliness, and even down to our education,--every thing

has for its chief object, the separation of ourselves from the poor.

In procuring this seclusion of ourselves by impassable barriers, we

spend, to put it mildly, nine-tenths of our wealth. The first thing

that a man who was grown wealthy does is to stop eating out of one

bowl, and he sets up crockery, and fits himself out with a kitchen

and servants. And he feeds his servants high, too, so that their

mouths may not water over his dainty viands; and he eats alone; and

as eating in solitude is wearisome, he plans how he may improve his

food and deck his table; and the very manner of taking his food

(dinner) becomes a matter for pride and vain glory with him, and his

manner of taking his food becomes for him a means of sequestering

himself from other men. A rich man cannot think of such a thing as

inviting a poor man to his table. A man must know how to conduct

ladies to table, how to bow, to sit down, to eat, to rinse out the

mouth; and only rich people know all these things. The same thing

occurs in the matter of clothing. If a rich man were to wear

ordinary clothing, simply for the purpose of protecting his body from

the cold,--a short jacket, a coat, felt and leather boots, an under-

jacket, trousers, shirt,--he would require but very little, and he

would not be unable, when he had two coats, to give one of them to a

man who had none. But the rich man begins by procuring for himself

clothing which consists entirely of separate pieces, and which is fit

only for separate occasions, and which is, therefore, unsuited to the

poor man. He has frock-coats, vests, pea-jackets, lacquered boots,

cloaks, shoes with French heels, garments that are chopped up into

bits to conform with the fashion, hunting-coats, travelling-coats,

and so on, which can only be used under conditions of existence far

removed from poverty. And his clothing also furnishes him with a

means of keeping at a distance from the poor. The same is the case,

and even more clearly, with his dwelling. In order that one may live

alone in ten rooms, it is indispensable that those who live ten in

one room should not see it. The richer a man is, the more difficult

is he of access; the more porters there are between him and people

who are not rich, the more impossible is it to conduct a poor man

over rugs, and seat him in a satin chair.

The case is the same with the means of locomotion. The peasant

driving in a cart, or a sledge, must be a very ill-tempered man when

he will not give a pedestrian a lift; and there is both room for this

and a possibility of doing it. But the richer the equipage, the

farther is a man from all possibility of giving a seat to any person

whatsoever. It is even said plainly, that the most stylish equipages

are those meant to hold only one person.

It is precisely the same thing with the manner of life which is

expressed by the word cleanliness.

Cleanliness! Who is there that does not know people, especially

women, who reckon this cleanliness in themselves as a great virtue?

and who is not acquainted with the devices of this cleanliness, which

know no bounds, when it can command the labor of others? Which of

the people who have become rich has not experienced in his own case,

with what difficulty he carefully trained himself to this

cleanliness, which only confirms the proverb, "Little white hands

love other people's work"?

To-day cleanliness consists in changing your shirt once a day; to-

morrow, in changing it twice a day. To-day it means washing the

face, and neck, and hands daily; to-morrow, the feet; and day after

to-morrow, washing the whole body every day, and, in addition and in

particular, a rubbing-down. To-day the table-cloth is to serve for

two days, to-morrow there must be one each day, then two a day. To-

day the footman's hands must be clean; to-morrow he must wear gloves,

and in his clean gloves he must present a letter on a clean salver.

And there are no limits to this cleanliness, which is useless to

everybody, and objectless, except for the purpose of separating

oneself from others, and of rendering impossible all intercourse with

them, when this cleanliness is attained by the labors of others.

Moreover, when I studied the subject, I because convinced that even

that which is commonly called education is the very same thing.

The tongue does not deceive; it calls by its real name that which men

understand under this name. What the people call culture is

fashionable clothing, political conversation, clean hands,--a certain

sort of cleanliness. Of such a man, it is said, in contradistinction

to others, that he is an educated man. In a little higher circle,

what they call education means the same thing as with the people;

only to the conditions of education are added playing on the

pianoforte, a knowledge of French, the writing of Russian without

orthographical errors, and a still greater degree of external

cleanliness. In a still more elevated sphere, education means all

this with the addition of the English language, and a diploma from

the highest educational institution. But education is precisely the

same thing in the first, the second, and the third case. Education

consists of those forms and acquirements which are calculated to

separate a man from his fellows. And its object is identical with

that of cleanliness,--to seclude us from the herd of poor, in order

that they, the poor, may not see how we feast. But it is impossible

to hide ourselves, and they do see us.

And accordingly I have become convinced that the cause of the

inability of us rich people to help the poor of the city lies in the

impossibility of our establishing intercourse with them; and that

this impossibility of intercourse is caused by ourselves, by the

whole course of our lives, by all the uses which we make of our

wealth. I have become convinced that between us, the rich and the

poor, there rises a wall, reared by ourselves out of that very

cleanliness and education, and constructed of our wealth; and that in

order to be in a condition to help the poor, we must needs, first of

all, destroy this wall; and that in order to do this, confrontation

after Siutaeff's method should be rendered possible, and the poor

distributed among us. And from another starting-point also I came to

the same conclusion to which the current of my discussions as to the

causes of the poverty in towns had led me: the cause was our

wealth.] {14}

CHAPTER XV.

I began to examine the matter from a third and wholly personal point

of view. Among the phenomena which particularly impressed me, during

the period of my charitable activity, there was yet another, and a

very strange one, for which I could for a long time find no

explanation. It was this: every time that I chanced, either on the

street on in the house, to give some small coin to a poor man,

without saying any thing to him, I saw, or thought that I saw,

contentment and gratitude on the countenance of the poor man, and I

myself experienced in this form of benevolence an agreeable

sensation. I saw that I had done what the man wished and expected

from me. But if I stopped the poor man, and sympathetically

questioned him about his former and his present life, I felt that it

was no longer possible to give three or twenty kopeks, and I began to

fumble in my purse for money, in doubt as to how much I ought to

give, and I always gave more; and I always noticed that the poor man

left me dissatisfied. But if I entered into still closer intercourse

with the poor man, then my doubts as to how much to give increased

also; and, no matter how much I gave, the poor man grew ever more

sullen and discontented. As a general rule, it always turned out

thus, that if I gave, after conversation with a poor man, three

rubles or even more, I almost always beheld gloom, displeasure, and

even ill-will, on the countenance of the poor man; and I have even

known it to happen, that, having received ten rubles, he went off

without so much as saying "Thank you," exactly as though I had

insulted him.

And thereupon I felt awkward and ashamed, and almost guilty. But if

I followed up a poor man for weeks and months and years, and assisted

him, and explained my views to him, and associated with him, our

relations became a torment, and I perceived that the man despised me.

And I felt that he was in the right.

If I go out into the street, and he, standing in that street, begs of

me among the number of the other passers-by, people who walk and ride

past him, and I give him money, I then am to him a passer-by, and a

good, kind passer-by, who bestows on him that thread from which a

shirt is made for the naked man; he expects nothing more than the

thread, and if I give it he thanks me sincerely. But if I stop him,

and talk with him as man with man, I thereby show him that I desire

to be something more than a mere passer-by. If, as often happens, he

weeps while relating to me his woes, then he sees in me no longer a

passer-by, but that which I desire that he should see: a good man.

But if I am a good man, my goodness cannot pause at a twenty-kopek

piece, nor at ten rubles, nor at ten thousand; it is impossible to be

a little bit of a good man. Let us suppose that I have given him a

great deal, that I have fitted him out, dressed him, set him on his

feet so that the can live without outside assistance; but for some

reason or other, though misfortune or his own weakness or vices, he

is again without that coat, that linen, and that money which I have

given him; he is again cold and hungry, and he has come again to me,-

-how can I refuse him? [For if the cause of my action consisted in

the attainment of a definite, material end, on giving him so many

rubles or such and such a coat I might be at ease after having

bestowed them. But the cause of my action is not this: the cause

is, that I want to be a good man, that is to say, I want to see

myself in every other man. Every man understands goodness thus, and

in no other manner.] {15} And therefore, if he should drink away

every thing that you had given him twenty times, and if he should

again be cold and hungry, you cannot do otherwise than give him more,

if you are a good man; you can never cease giving to him, if you have

more than he has. And if you draw back, you will thereby show that

every thing that you have done, you have done not because you are a

good man, but because you wished to appear a good man in his sight,

and in the sight of men.

And thus in the case with the men from whom I chanced to recede, to

whom I ceased to give, and, by this action, denied good, I

experienced a torturing sense of shame.

What sort of shame was this? This shame I had experienced in the

Lyapinsky house, and both before and after that in the country, when

I happened to give money or any thing else to the poor, and in my

expeditions among the city poor.

A mortifying incident that occurred to me not long ago vividly

reminded me of that shame, and led me to an explanation of that shame

which I had felt when bestowing money on the poor.

[This happened in the country. I wanted twenty kopeks to give to a

poor pilgrim; I sent my son to borrow them from some one; he brought

the pilgrim a twenty-kopek piece, and told me that he had borrowed it

from the cook. A few days afterwards some more pilgrims arrived, and

again I was in want of a twenty-kopek piece. I had a ruble; I

recollected that I was in debt to the cook, and I went to the

kitchen, hoping to get some more small change from the cook. I said:

"I borrowed a twenty-kopek piece from you, so here is a ruble." I

had not finished speaking, when the cook called in his wife from

another room: "Take it, Parasha," said he. I, supposing that she

understood what I wanted, handed her the ruble. I must state that

the cook had only lived with me a week, and, though I had seen his

wife, I had never spoken to her. I was just on the point of saying

to her that she was to give me some small coins, when she bent

swiftly down to my hand, and tried to kiss it, evidently imaging that

I had given her the ruble. I muttered something, and quitted the

kitchen. I was ashamed, ashamed to the verge of torture, as I had

not been for a long time. I shrank together; I was conscious that I

was making grimaces, and I groaned with shame as I fled from the

kitchen. This utterly unexpected, and, as it seemed to me, utterly

undeserved shame, made a special impression on me, because it was a

long time since I had been mortified, and because I, as an old man,

had so lived, it seemed to me, that I had not merited this shame. I

was forcibly struck by this. I told the members of my household

about it, I told my acquaintances, and they all agreed that they

should have felt the same. And I began to reflect: why had this

caused me such shame? To this, something which had happened to me in

Moscow furnished me with an answer.

I meditated on that incident, and the shame which I had experienced

in the presence of the cook's wife was explained to me, and all those

sensations of mortification which I had undergone during the course

of my Moscow benevolence, and which I now feel incessantly when I

have occasion to give any one any thing except that petty alms to the

poor and to pilgrims, which I have become accustomed to bestow, and

which I consider a deed not of charity but of courtesy. If a man

asks you for a light, you must strike a match for him, if you have

one. If a man asks for three or for twenty kopeks, or even for

several rubles, you must give them if you have them. This is an act

of courtesy and not of charity.] {16}

This was the case in question: I have already mentioned the two

peasants with whom I was in the habit of sawing wood three yeans ago.

One Saturday evening at dusk, I was returning to the city in their

company. They were going to their employer to receive their wages.

As we were crossing the Dragomilovsky bridge, we met an old man. He

asked alms, and I gave him twenty kopeks. I gave, and reflected on

the good effect which my charity would have on Semyon, with whom I

had been conversing on religious topics. Semyon, the Vladimir

peasant, who had a wife and two children in Moscow, halted also,

pulled round the skirt of his kaftan, and got out his purse, and from

this slender purse he extracted, after some fumbling, three kopeks,

handed it to the old man, and asked for two kopeks in change. The

old man exhibited in his hand two three-kopek pieces and one kopek.

Semyon looked at them, was about to take the kopek, but thought

better of it, pulled off his hat, crossed himself, and walked on,

leaving the old man the three-kopek piece.

I was fully acquainted with Semyon's financial condition. He had no

property at home at all. The money which he had laid by on the day

when he gave three kopeks amounted to six rubles and fifty kopeks.

Accordingly, six rubles and twenty kopeks was the sum of his savings.

My reserve fund was in the neighborhood of six hundred thousand. I

had a wife and children, Semyon had a wife and children. He was

younger than I, and his children were fewer in number than mine; but

his children were small, and two of mine were of an age to work, so

that our position, with the exception of the savings, was on an

equality; mine was somewhat the more favorable, if any thing. He

gave three kopeks, I gave twenty. What did he really give, and what

did I really give? What ought I to have given, in order to do what

Semyon had done? he had six hundred kopeks; out of this he gave one,

and afterwards two. I had six hundred thousand rubles. In order to

give what Semyon had given, I should have been obliged to give three

thousand rubles, and ask for two thousand in change, and then leave

the two thousand with the old man, cross myself, and go my way,

calmly conversing about life in the factories, and the cost of liver

in the Smolensk market.

I thought of this at the time; but it was only long afterwards that I

was in a condition to draw from this incident that deduction which

inevitably results from it. This deduction is so uncommon and so

singular, apparently, that, in spite of its mathematical

infallibility, one requires time to grow used to it. It does seem as

though there must be some mistake, but mistake there is none. There

is merely the fearful mist of error in which we live.

[This deduction, when I arrived at it, and when I recognized its

undoubted truth, furnished me with an explanation of my shame in the

presence of the cook's wife, and of all the poor people to whom I had

given and to whom I still give money.

What, in point of fact, is that money which I give to the poor, and

which the cook's wife thought I was giving to her? In the majority

of cases, it is that portion of my substance which it is impossible

even to express in figures to Semyon and the cook's wife,--it is

generally one millionth part or about that. I give so little that

the bestowal of any money is not and cannot be a deprivation to me;

it is only a pleasure in which I amuse myself when the whim seizes

me. And it was thus that the cook's wife understood it. If I give

to a man who steps in from the street one ruble or twenty kopeks, why

should not I give her a ruble also? In the opinion of the cook's

wife, such a bestowal of money is precisely the same as the flinging

of honey-cakes to the people by gentlemen; it furnishes the people

who have a great deal of superfluous cash with amusement. I was

mortified because the mistake made by the cook's wife demonstrated to

me distinctly the view which she, and all people who are not rich,

must take of me: "He is flinging away his folly, i.e., his unearned

money."

As a matter of fact, what is my money, and whence did it come into my

possession? A portion of it I accumulated from the land which I

received from my father. A peasant sold his last sheep or cow in

order to give the money to me. Another portion of my money is the

money which I have received for my writings, for my books. If my

books are hurtful, I only lead astray those who purchase them, and

the money which I receive for them is ill-earned money; but if my

books are useful to people, then the issue is still more disastrous.

I do not give them to people: I say, "Give me seventeen rubles, and

I will give them to you." And as the peasant sells his last sheep,

in this case the poor student or teacher, or any other poor man,

deprives himself of necessaries in order to give me this money. And

so I have accumulated a great deal of money in that way, and what do

I do with it? I take that money to the city, and bestow it on the

poor, only when they fulfil my caprices, and come hither to the city

to clean my sidewalk, lamps, and shoes; to work for me in factories.

And in return for this money, I force from them every thing that I

can; that is to say, I try to give them as little as possible, and to

receive as much as possible from them. And all at once I begin,

quite unexpectedly, to bestow this money as a simple gift, on these

same poor persons, not on all, but on those to whom I take a fancy.

Why should not every poor person expect that it is quite possible

that the luck may fall to him of being one of those with whom I shall

amuse myself by distributing my superfluous money? And so all look

upon me as the cook's wife did.

And I had gone so far astray that this taking of thousands from the

poor with one hand, and this flinging of kopeks with the other, to

those to whom the whim moved me to give, I called good. No wonder

that I felt ashamed.] {17}

Yes, before doing good it was needful for me to stand outside of

evil, in such conditions that I might cease to do evil. But my whole

life is evil. I may give away a hundred thousand rubles, and still I

shall not be in a position to do good because I shall still have five

hundred thousand left. Only when I have nothing shall I be in a

position to do the least particle of good, even as much as the

prostitute did which she nursed the sick women and her child for

three days. And that seemed so little to me! And I dared to think

of good myself! That which, on the first occasion, told me, at the

sight of the cold and hungry in the Lyapinsky house, that I was to

blame for this, and that to live as I live is impossible, and

impossible, and impossible,--that alone was true.

What, then, was I to do?

CHAPTER XVI.

It was hard for me to come to this confession, but when I had come to

it I was shocked at the error in which I had been living. I stood up

to my ears in the mud, and yet I wanted to drag others out of this

mud.

What is it that I wish in reality? I wish to do good to others. I

wish to do it so that other people may not be cold and hungry, so

that others may live as it is natural for people to live.

[I wish this, and I see that in consequence of the violence,

extortions, and various tricks in which I take part, people who toil

are deprived of necessaries, and people who do not toil, in whose

ranks I also belong, enjoy in superabundance the toil of other

people.

I see that this enjoyment of the labors of others is so arranged,

that the more rascally and complicated the trickery which is employed

by the man himself, or which has been employed by the person from

whom he obtained his inheritance, the more does he enjoy of the

labors of others, and the less does he contribute of his own labor.

First come the Shtiglitzy, Dervizy, Morozovy, the Demidoffs, the

Yusapoffs; then great bankers, merchants, officials, landed

proprietors, among whom I also belong; then the poor--very small

traders, dramshop-keepers, usurers, district judges, overseers,

teachers, sacristans, clerks; then house-porters, lackeys, coachmen,

watch-carriers, cab-drivers, peddlers; and last of all, the laboring

classes--factory-hands and peasants, whose numbers bear the relation

to the first named of ten to one. I see that the life of nine-tenths

of the working classes demands, by reason of its nature, application

and toil, as does every natural life; but that, in consequence of the

sharp practices which take from these people what is indispensable,

and place them in such oppressive conditions, this life becomes more

difficult every year, and more filled with deprivations; but our

life, the life of the non-laboring classes, thanks to the co-

operation of the arts and sciences which are directed to this object,

becomes more filled with superfluities, more attractive and careful,

with every year. I see, that, in our day, the life of the working-

man, and, in particular, the life of old men, of women, and of

children of the working population, is perishing directly from their

food, which is utterly inadequate to their fatiguing labor; and that

this life of theirs is not free from care as to its very first

requirements; and that, alongside of this, the life of the non-

laboring classes, to which I belong, is filled more and more, every

year, with superfluities and luxury, and becomes more and more free

from anxiety, and has finally reached such a point of freedom from

care, in the case of its fortunate members, of whom I am one, as was

only dreamed of in olden times in fairy-tales,--the state of the

owner of the purse with the inexhaustible ruble, that is, a condition

in which a man is not only utterly released from the law of labor,

but in which he possesses the possibility of enjoying, without toil,

all the blessings of life, and of transferring to his children, or to

any one whom he may see fit, this purse with the inexhaustible ruble.

I see that the products of the people's toil are more and more

transformed from the mass of the working classes to those who do not

work; that the pyramid of the social edifice seems to be

reconstructed in such fashion that the foundation stones are carried

to the apex, and the swiftness of this transfer is increasing in a

sort of geometrical ratio. I see that the result of this is

something like that which would take place in an ant-heap if the

community of ants were to lose their sense of the common law, if some

ants were to begin to draw the products of labor from the bottom to

the top of the heap, and should constantly contract the foundations

and broaden the apex, and should thereby also force the remaining

ants to betake themselves from the bottom to the summit.

I see that the ideal of the Fortunatus' purse has made its way among

the people, in the place of the ideal of a toilsome life. Rich

people, myself among the number, get possession of the inexhaustible

ruble by various devices, and for the purpose of enjoying it we go to

the city, to the place where nothing is produced and where every

thing is swallowed up.

The industrious poor man, who is robbed in order that the rich may

possess this inexhaustible ruble, yearns for the city in his train;

and there he also takes to sharp practices, and either acquires for

himself a position in which he can work little and receive much,

thereby rendering still more oppressive the situation of the laboring

classes, or, not having attained to such a position, he goes to ruin,

and falls into the ranks of those cold and hungry inhabitants of the

night-lodging houses, which are being swelled with such remarkable

rapidity.

I belong to the class of those people, who, by divers tricks, take

from the toiling masses the necessaries of life, and who have

acquired for themselves these inexhaustible rubles, and who lead

these unfortunates astray. I desire to aid people, and therefore it

is clear that, first of all, I must cease to rob them as I am doing.

But I, by the most complicated, and cunning, and evil practices,

which have been heaped up for centuries, have acquired for myself the

position of an owner of the inexhaustible ruble, that is to say, one

in which, never working myself, I can make hundreds and thousands of

people toil for me--which also I do; and I imagine that I pity

people, and I wish to assist them. I sit on a man's neck, I weigh

him down, and I demand that he shall carry me; and without descending

from his shoulders I assure myself and others that I am very sorry

for him, and that I desire to ameliorate his condition by all

possible means, only not by getting off of him.

Surely this is simple enough. If I want to help the poor, that is,

to make the poor no longer poor, I must not produce poor people. And

I give, at my own selection, to poor men who have gone astray from

the path of life, a ruble, or ten rubles, or a hundred; and I grasp

hundreds from people who have not yet left the path, and thereby I

render them poor also, and demoralize them to boot.

This is very simple; but it was horribly hard for me to understand

this fully without compromises and reservations, which might serve to

justify my position; but it sufficed for me to confess my guilt, and

every thing which had before seemed to me strange and complicated,

and lacking in cleanness, became perfectly comprehensible and simple.

But the chief point was, that my way of life, arising from this

interpretation, became simple, clear and pleasant, instead of

perplexed, inexplicable and full of torture as before.] {18}

Who am I, that I should desire to help others? I desire to help

people; and I, rising at twelve o'clock after a game of vint {19}

with four candles, weak, exhausted, demanding the aid of hundreds of

people,--I go to the aid of whom? Of people who rise at five

o'clock, who sleep on planks, who nourish themselves on bread and

cabbage, who know how to plough, to reap, to wield the axe, to chop,

to harness, to sew,--of people who in strength and endurance, and

skill and abstemiousness, are a hundred times superior to me,--and I

go to their succor! What except shame could I feel, when I entered

into communion with these people? The very weakest of them, a

drunkard, an inhabitant of the Rzhanoff house, the one whom they call

"the idler," is a hundred-fold more industrious than I; [his balance,

so to speak, that is to say, the relation of what he takes from

people and that which they give him, stands on a thousand times

better footing than my balance, if I take into consideration what I

take from people and what I give to them.] {18}

And these are the people to whose assistance I go. I go to help the

poor. But who is the poor man? There is no one poorer than myself.

I am a thoroughly enervated, good-for-nothing parasite, who can only

exist under the most special conditions, who can only exist when

thousands of people toil at the preservation of this life which is

utterly useless to every one. And I, that plant-louse, which devours

the foliage of trees, wish to help the tree in its growth and health,

and I wish to heal it.

I have passed my whole life in this manner: I eat, I talk and I

listen; I eat, I write or read, that is to say, I talk and listen

again; I eat, I play, I eat, again I talk and listen, I eat, and

again I go to bed; and so each day I can do nothing else, and I

understand how to do nothing else. And in order that I may be able

to do this, it is necessary that the porter, the peasant, the cook,

male or female, the footman, the coachman, and the laundress, should

toil from morning till night; I will not refer to the labors of the

people which are necessary in order that coachman, cooks, male and

female, footman, and the rest should have those implements and

articles with which, and over which, they toil for my sake; axes,

tubs, brushes, household utensils, furniture, wax, blacking,

kerosene, hay, wood, and beef. And all these people work hard all

day long and every day, so that I may be able to talk and eat and

sleep. And I, this cripple of a man, have imagined that I could help

others, and those the very people who support me!

It is not remarkable that I could not help any one, and that I felt

ashamed; but the remarkable point is that such an absurd idea could

have occurred to me. The woman who served the sick old man, helped

him; the mistress of the house, who cut a slice from the bread which

she had won from the soil, helped the beggar; Semyon, who gave three

kopeks which he had earned, helped the beggar, because those three

kopeks actually represented his labor: but I served no one, I toiled

for no one, and I was well aware that my money did not represent my

labor.

CHAPTER XVII. {20}

Into the delusion that I could help others I was led by the fact that

I fancied that my money was of the same sort as Semyon's. But this

was not the case.

A general idea prevails, that money represents wealth; but wealth is

the product of labor; and, therefore, money represents labor. But

this idea is as just as that every governmental regulation is the

result of a compact (contrat social).

Every one likes to think that money is only a medium of exchange for

labor. I have made shoes, you have raised grain, he has reared

sheep: here, in order that we may the more readily effect an

exchange, we will institute money, which represents a corresponding

quantity of labor, and, by means of it, we will barter our shoes for

a breast of lamb and ten pounds of flour. We will exchange our

products through the medium of money, and the money of each one of us

represents our labor.

This is perfectly true, but true only so long as, in the community

where this exchange is effected, the violence of one man over the

rest has not made its appearance; not only violence over the labors

of others, as happens in wars and slavery, but where he exercises no

violence for the protection of the products of their labor from

others. This will be true only in a community whose members fully

carry out the Christian law, in a community where men give to him who

asks, and where he who takes is not asked to make restitution. But

just so soon as any violence whatever is used in the community, the

significance of money for its possessor loses its significance as a

representative of labor, and acquires the significance of a right

founded, not on labor, but on violence.

As soon as there is war, and one man has taken any thing from any

other man, money can no longer be always the representative of labor;

money received by a warrior for the spoils of war, which he sells,

even if he is the commander of the warriors, is in no way a product

of labor, and possesses an entirely different meaning from money

received for work on shoes. As soon as there are slave-owners and

slaves, as there always have been throughout the whole world, it is

utterly impossible to say that money represents labor.

Women have woven linen, sold it, and received money; serfs have woven

for their master, and the master has sold them and received the

money. The money is identical in both cases; but in the one case it

is the product of labor, in the other the product of violence. In

exactly the same way, a stranger or my own father has given me money;

and my father, when he gave me that money, knew, and I know, and

everybody knows, that no one can take this money away from me; but if

it should occur to any one to take it away from me, or even not to

hand it over at the date when it was promised, the law would

intervene on my behalf, and would compel the delivery to me of the

money; and, again, it is evident that this money can in no wise be

called the equivalent of labor, on a level with the money received by

Semyon for chopping wood. So that in any community where there is

any thing that in any manner whatever controls the labor of others,

or where violence hedges in, by means of money, its possessions from

others, there money is no longer invariably the representative of

labor. In such a community, it is sometimes the representative of

labor, and sometimes of violence.

Thus it would be where only one act of violence from one man against

others, in the midst of perfectly free relations, should have made

its appearance; but now, when centuries of the most varied deeds of

violence have passed for accumulations of money, when these deeds of

violence are incessant, and merely alter their forms; when, as every

one admits, money accumulated itself represents violence; when money,

as a representative of direct labor, forms but a very small portion

of the money which is derived from every sort of violence,--to say

nowadays that money represents the labor of the person who possesses

it, is a self-evident error or a deliberate lie.

It may be said, that thus it should be; it may be said, that this is

desirable; but by no means can it be said, that thus it is.

Money represents labor. Yes. Money does represent labor; but whose?

In our society only in the very rarest, rarest of instances, does

money represent the labor of its possessor, but it nearly always

represents the labor of other people, the past or future labor of

men; it is a representative of the obligation of others to labor,

which has been established by force.

Money, in its most accurate and at the same the simple application,

is the conventional stamp which confers a right, or, more correctly,

a possibility, of taking advantage of the labors of other people. In

its ideal significance, money should confer this right, or this

possibility, only when it serves as the equivalent of labor, and such

money might be in a community in which no violence existed. But just

as soon as violence, that is to say, the possibility of profiting by

the labors of others without toil of one's own, exists in a

community, then that profiting by the labors of other men is also

expressed by money, without any distinction of the persons on whom

that violence is exercised.

The landed proprietor has imposed upon his serfs natural debts, a

certain quantity of linen, grain, and cattle, or a corresponding

amount of money. One household has procured the cattle, but has paid

money in lieu of linen. The proprietor takes the money to a certain

amount only, because he knows that for that money they will make him

the same quantity of linen, (generally he takes a little more, in

order to be sure that they will make it for the same amount); and

this money, evidently, represents for the proprietor the obligation

of other people to toil.

The peasant gives the money as an obligation, to he knows not whom,

but to people, and there are many of them, who undertake for this

money to make so much linen. But the people who undertake to make

the linen, do so because they have not succeeded in raising sheep,

and in place of the sheep, they must pay money; but the peasant who

takes money for his sheep takes it because he must pay for grain

which did not bear well this year. The same thing goes on throughout

this realm, and throughout the whole world.

A man sells the product of his labor, past, present or to come,

sometimes his food, and generally not because money constitutes for

him a convenient means of exchange. He could have effected the

barter without money, but he does so because money is exacted from

him by violence as a lien on his labor.

When the sovereign of Egypt exacted labor from his slaves, the slaves

gave all their labor, but only their past and present labor, their

future labor they could not give. But with the dissemination of

money tokens, and the credit which had its rise in them, it became

possible to sell one's future toil for money. Money, with co-

existent violence in the community, only represents the possibility

of a new form of impersonal slavery, which has taken the place of

personal slavery. The slave-owner has a right to the labor of Piotr,

Ivan, and Sidor. But the owner of money, in a place where money is

demanded from all, has a right to the toil of all those nameless

people who are in need of money. Money has set aside all the

oppressive features of slavery, under which an owner knows his right

to Ivan, and with them it has set aside all humane relations between

the owner and the slave, which mitigated the burden of personal

thraldom.

I will not allude to the fact, that such a condition of things is,

possibly, necessary for the development of mankind, for progress, and

so forth,--that I do not contest. I have merely tried to elucidate

to myself the idea of money, and that universal error into which I

fell when I accepted money as the representative of labor. I became

convinced, after experience, that money is not the representative of

labor, but, in the majority of cases, the representative of violence,

or of especially complicated sharp practices founded on violence.

Money, in our day, has completely lost that significance which it is

very desirable that it should possess, as the representative of one's

own labor; such a significance it has only as an exception, but, as a

general rule, it has been converted into a right or a possibility of

profiting by the toil of others.

The dissemination of money, of credit, and of all sorts of money

tokens, confirms this significance of money ever more and more.

Money is a new form of slavery, which differs from the old form of

slavery only in its impersonality, its annihilation of all humane

relations with the slave.

Money--money, is a value which is always equal to itself, and is

always considered legal and righteous, and whose use is regarded as

not immoral, just as the right of slavery was regarded.

In my young days, the game of loto was introduced into the clubs.

Everybody rushed to play it, and, as it was said, many ruined

themselves, rendered their families miserable, lost other people's

money, and government funds, and committed suicide; and the game was

prohibited, and it remains prohibited to this day.

I remember to have seen old and unsentimental gamblers, who told me

that this game was particularly pleasing because you did not see from

whom you were winning, as is the case in other games; a lackey

brought, not money, but chips; each man lost a little stake, and his

disappointment was not visible . . . It is the same with roulette,

which is everywhere prohibited, and not without reason.

It is the same with money. I possess a magic, inexhaustible ruble; I

cut off my coupons, and have retired from all the business of the

world. Whom do I injure,--I, the most inoffensive and kindest of

men? But this is nothing more than playing at loto or roulette,

where I do not see the man who shoots himself, because of his losses,

after procuring for me those coupons which I cut off from the bonds

so accurately with a strictly right-angled corner.

I have done nothing, I do nothing, and I shall do nothing, except cut

off those coupons; and I firmly believe that money is the

representative of labor! Surely, this is amazing! And people talk

of madmen, after that! Why, what degree of lunacy can be more

frightful than this? A sensible, educated, in all other respects

sane man lives in a senseless manner, and soothes himself for not

uttering the word which it is indispensably necessary that he should

utter, with the idea that there is some sense in his conclusions, and

he considers himself a just man. Coupons--the representatives of

toil! Toil! Yes, but of whose toil? Evidently not of the man who

owns them, but of him who labors.

Slavery is far from being suppressed. It has been suppressed in Rome

and in America, and among us: but only certain laws have been

abrogated; only the word, not the thing, has been put down. Slavery

is the freeing of ourselves alone from the toil which is necessary

for the satisfaction of our demands, by the transfer of this toil to

others; and wherever there exists a man who does not work, not

because others work lovingly for him, but where he possesses the

power of not working, and forces others to work for him, there

slavery exists. There too, where, as in all European societies,

there are people who make use of the labor of thousands of men, and

regard this as their right,--there slavery exists in its broadest

measure.

And money is the same thing as slavery. Its object and its

consequences are the same. Its object is--that one may rid one's

self of the first born of all laws, as a profoundly thoughtful writer

from the ranks of the people has expressed it; from the natural law

of life, as we have called it; from the law of personal labor for the

satisfaction of our own wants. And the results of money are the same

as the results of slavery, for the proprietor; the creation, the

invention of new and ever new and never-ending demands, which can

never be satisfied; the enervation of poverty, vice, and for the

slaves, the persecution of man and their degradation to the level of

the beasts.

Money is a new and terrible form of slavery, and equally demoralizing

with the ancient form of slavery for both slave and slave-owner; only

much worse, because it frees the slave and the slave-owner from their

personal, humane relations.]

CHAPTER XVIII.

I am always surprised by the oft-repeated words: "Yes, this is so in

theory, but how is it in practice?" Just as though theory were fine

words, requisite for conversation, but not for the purpose of having

all practice, that is, all activity, indispensably founded on them.

There must be a fearful number of stupid theories current in the

world, that such an extraordinary idea should have become prevalent.

Theory is what a man thinks on a subject, but its practice is what he

does. How can a man think it necessary to do so and so, and then do

the contrary? If the theory of baking bread is, that it must first

be mixed, and then set to rise, no one except a lunatic, knowing this

theory, would do the reverse. But it has become the fashion with us

to say, that "this is so in theory, but how about the practice?"

In the matter which interests me now, that has been confirmed which I

have always thought,--that practice infallibly flows from theory, and

not that it justifies it, but it cannot possibly be otherwise, for if

I have understood the thing of which I have been thinking, then I

cannot carry out this thing otherwise than as I have understood it.

I wanted to help the unfortunate only because I had money, and I

shared the general belief that money was the representative of labor,

or, on the whole, something legal and good. But, having begun to

give away this money, I saw, when I gave the bills which I had

accumulated from poor people, that I was doing precisely that which

was done by some landed proprietors who made some of their serfs wait

on others. I saw that every use of money, whether for making

purchases, or for giving away without an equivalent to another, is

handing over a note for extortion from the poor, or its transfer to

another man for extortion from the poor. I saw that money in itself

was not only not good, but evidently evil, and that it deprives us of

our highest good,--labor, and thereby of the enjoyment of our labor,

and that that blessing I was not in a position to confer on any one,

because I was myself deprived of it: I do not work, and I take no

pleasure in making use of the labor of others.

It would appear that there is something peculiar in this abstract

argument as to the nature of money. But this argument which I have

made not for the sake of argument, but for the solution of the

problem of my life, of my sufferings, was for me an answer to my

question: What is to be done?

As soon as I grasped the meaning of riches, and of money, it not only

became clear and indisputable to me, what I ought to do, but also

clear and indisputable what others ought to do, because they would

infallibly do it. I had only actually come to understand what I had

known for a long time previously, the theory which was given to men

from the very earliest times, both by Buddha, and Isaiah, and Lao-

Tze, and Socrates, and in a peculiarly clear and indisputable manner

by Jesus Christ and his forerunner, John the Baptist. John the

Baptist, in answer to the question of the people,--What were they to

do? replied simply, briefly, and clearly: "He that hath two coats,

let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him

do likewise" (Luke iii. 10, 11). In a similar manner, but with even

greater clearness, and on many occasions, Christ spoke. He said:

"Blessed are the poor, and woe to the rich." He said that it is

impossible to serve God and mammon. He forbade his disciples to take

not only money, but also two garments. He said to the rich young

man, that he could not enter into the kingdom of heaven because he

was rich, and that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of

a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. He said

that he who should not leave every thing, houses and children and

lands, and follow him, could not be his disciple. He told the

parable of the rich man who did nothing bad, like our own rich men,

but who only arrayed himself in costly garments, and ate and drank

daintily, and who lost his soul thereby; and of poor Lazarus, who had

done nothing good, but who was saved merely because he was poor.

This theory was sufficiently familiar to me, but the false teachings

of the world had so obscured it that it had become for me a theory in

the sense which people are fond of attributing to that term, that is

to say, empty words. But as soon as I had succeeded in destroying in

my consciousness the sophisms of worldly teaching, theory conformed

to practice, and the truth with regard to my life and to the life of

the people about me became its conclusion.

I understood that man, besides life for his own personal good, is

unavoidably bound to serve the good of others also; that, if we take

an illustration from the animal kingdom,--as some people are fond of

doing, defending violence and conflict by the conflict for existence

in the animal kingdom,--the illustration must be taken from

gregarious animals, like bees; that consequently man, not to mention

the love to his neighbor incumbent on him, is called upon, both by

reason and by his nature, to serve other people and the common good

of humanity. I comprehended that the natural law of man is that

according to which only he can fulfil destiny, and therefore be

happy. I understood that this law has been and is broken hereby,--

that people get rid of labor by force (like the robber bees), make

use of the toil of others, directing this toil, not to the common

weal, but to the private satisfaction of swift-growing desires; and,

precisely as in the case of the robber bees, they perish in

consequence. [I understood that the original form of this

disinclination for the law is the brutal violence against weaker

individuals, against women, wars and imprisonments, whose sequel is

slavery, and also the present reign of money. I understood that

money is the impersonal and concealed enslavement of the poor. And,

once having perceived the significance of money as slavery, I could

not but hate it, nor refrain from doing all in my power to free

myself from it.] {21}

When I was a slave-owner, and comprehended the immorality of my

position, I tried to escape from it. My escape consisted in this,

that I, regarding it as immoral, tried to exercise my rights as

slave-owner as little as possible, but to live, and to allow other

people to live, as though that right did not exist. And I cannot

refrain from doing the same thing now in reference to the present

form of slavery,--exercising my right to the labor of others as

little as possible, i.e., hiring and purchasing as little as

possible.

The root of every slavery is the use of the labor of others; and

hence, the compelling others to it is founded indifferently on my

right to the slave, or on my possession of money which is

indispensable to him. If I really do not approve, and if I regard as

an evil, the employment of the labor of others, then I shall use

neither my right nor my money for that purpose; I shall not compel

others to toil for me, but I shall endeavor to free them from the

labor which they have performed for me, as far as possible, either by

doing without this labor or by performing it for myself.

And this very simple and unavoidable deduction enters into all the

details of my life, effects a total change in it, and at one blow

releases me from those moral sufferings which I have undergone at the

sight of the sufferings and the vice of the people, and instantly

annihilates all three causes of my inability to aid the poor, which I

had encountered while seeking the cause of my lack of success.

The first cause was the herding of the people in towns, and the

absorption there of the wealth of the country. All that a man needs

is to understand how every hiring or purchase is a handle to

extortion from the poor, and that therefore he must abstain from

them, and must try to fulfil his own requirements; and not a single

man will then quit the country, where all wants can be satisfied

without money, for the city, where it is necessary to buy every

thing: and in the country he will be in a position to help the

needy, as has been my own experience and the experience of every one

else.

The second cause is the estrangement of the rich from the poor. A

man needs but to refrain from buying, from hiring, and, disdaining no

sort of work, to satisfy his requirements himself, and the former

estrangement will immediately be annihilated, and the man, having

rejected luxury and the services of others, will amalgamate with the

mass of the working people, and, standing shoulder to shoulder with

the working people, he can help them.

The third cause was shame, founded on a consciousness of immorality

in my owning that money with which I desired to help people. All

that is required is: to understand the significance of money as

impersonal slavery, which it has acquired among us, in order to

escape for the future from falling into the error according to which

money, though evil in itself, can be an instrument of good, and in

order to refrain from acquiring money; and to rid one's self of it in

order to be in a position to do good to people, that is, to bestow on

them one's labor, and not the labor of another.

CHAPTER XIX.

[I saw that money is the cause of suffering and vice among the

people, and that, if I desired to help people, the first thing that

was required of me was not to create those unfortunates whom I wished

to assist.

I came to the conclusion that the man who does not love vice and the

suffering of the people should not make use of money, thus presenting

an inducement to extortion from the poor, by forcing them to work for

him; and that, in order not to make use of the toil of others, he

must demand as little from others as possible, and work as much as

possible himself.] {22}

By dint of a long course of reasoning, I came to this inevitable

conclusion, which was drawn thousands of years ago by the Chinese in

the saying, "If there is one idle man, there is another dying with

hunger to offset him.

[Then what are we to do? John the Baptist gave the answer to this

very question two thousand years ago. And when the people asked him,

"What are we to do?" he said, "Let him that hath two garments impart

to him that hath none, and let him that hath meat do the same." What

is the meaning of giving away one garment out of two, and half of

one's food? It means giving to others every superfluity, and

thenceforth taking nothing superfluous from people.

This expedient, which furnishes such perfect satisfaction to the

moral feelings, kept my eyes fast bound, and binds all our eyes; and

we do not see it, but gaze aside.

This is precisely like a personage on the stage, who had entered a

long time since, and all the spectators see him, and it is obvious

that the actors cannot help seeing him, but the point on the stage

lies in the acting characters pretending not to see him, and in

suffering from his absence.] {23}

Thus we, in our efforts to recover from our social diseases, search

in all quarters, governmental and anti-governmental, and in

scientific and in philanthropic superstitions; and we do not see what

is perfectly visible to every eye.

For the man who really suffers from the sufferings of the people who

surround us, there exists the very plainest, simplest, and easiest

means; the only possible one for the cure of the evil about us, and

for the acquisition of a consciousness of the legitimacy of his life;

the one given by John the Baptist, and confirmed by Christ: not to

have more than one garment, and not to have money. And not to have

any money, means, not to employ the labor of others, and hence, first

of all, to do with our own hands every thing that we can possibly do.

This is so clear and simple! But it is clear and simple when the

requirements are simple. I live in the country. I lie on the oven,

and I order my debtor, my neighbor, to chop wood and light my fire.

It is very clear that I am lazy, and that I tear my neighbor away

from his affairs, and I shall feel mortified, and I shall find it

tiresome to lie still all the time; and I shall go and split my wood

for myself.

But the delusion of slavery of all descriptions lies so far back, so

much of artificial exaction has sprung up upon it, so many people,

accustomed in different degrees to these habits, are interwoven with

each other, enervated people, spoiled for generations, and such

complicated delusions and justifications for their luxury and

idleness have been devised by people, that it is far from being so

easy for a man who stands at the summit of the ladder of idle people

to understand his sin, as it is for the peasant who has made his

neighbor build his fire.

It is terribly difficult for people at the top of this ladder to

understand what is required of them. [Their heads are turned by the

height of this ladder of lies, upon which they find themselves when a

place on the ground is offered to them, to which they must descend in

order to begin to live, not yet well, but no longer cruelly,

inhumanly; for this reason, this clear and simple truth appears

strange to these people. For the man with ten servants, liveries,

coachmen, cooks, pictures, pianofortes, that will infallibly appear

strange, and even ridiculous, which is the simplest, the first act

of--I will not say every good man--but of every man who is not

wicked: to cut his own wood with which his food is cooked, and with

which he warms himself; to himself clean those boots with which he

has heedlessly stepped in the mire; to himself fetch that water with

which he preserves his cleanliness, and to carry out that dirty water

in which he has washed himself.] {24}

But, besides the remoteness of people from the truth, there is

another cause which prevents people from seeing the obligation for

them of the simplest and most natural personal, physical labor for

themselves: this is the complication, the inextricability of the

conditions, the advantage of all the people who are bound together

among themselves by money, in which the rich man lives: My luxurious

life feeds people. What would become of my old valet if I were to

discharge him? What! we must all do every thing necessary,--make our

clothes and hew wood? . . . And how about the division of labor?"

[This morning I stepped out into the corridor where the fires were

being built. A peasant was making a fire in the stove which warms my

son's room. I went in; the latter was asleep. It was eleven o'clock

in the morning. To-day is a holiday: there is some excuse, there

are no lessons.

The smooth-skinned, eighteen-year-old youth, with a beard, who had

eaten his fill on the preceding evening, sleeps until eleven o'clock.

But the peasant of his age had been up at dawn, and had got through a

quantity of work, and was attending to his tenth stove, while the

former slept. "The peasant shall not make the fire in his stove to

warm that smooth, lazy body of his!" I thought. But I immediately

recollected that this stove also warmed the room of the housekeeper,

a woman forty years of age, who, on the evening before, had been

making preparations up to three o'clock in the morning for the supper

which my son had eaten, and that she had cleared the table, and risen

at seven, nevertheless. The peasant was building the fire for her

also. And under her name the lazybones was warming himself.

It is true that the interests of all are interwoven; but, even

without any prolonged reckoning, the conscience of each man will say

on whose side lies labor, and on whose idleness. But although

conscience says this, the account-book, the cash-book, says it still

more clearly. The more money any one spends, the more idle he is,

that is to say, the more he makes others work for him. The less he

spends, the more he works.] {25} But trade, but public undertakings,

and, finally, the most terrible of words, culture, the development of

sciences, and the arts,--what of them?

[If I live I will make answer to those points, and in detail; and

until such answer I will narrate the following.] {25}

CHAPTER XX.

LIFE IN THE CITY.

Last year, in March, I was returning home late at night. As I turned

from the Zubova into Khamovnitchesky Lane, I saw some black spots on

the snow of the Dyevitchy Pole (field). Something was moving about

in one place. I should not have paid any attention to this, if the

policeman who was standing at the end of the street had not shouted

in the direction of the black spots, -

"Vasily! why don't you bring her in?"

"She won't come!" answered a voice, and then the spot moved towards

the policeman.

I halted and asked the police-officer, "What is it?"

He said,--"They are taking a girl from the Rzhanoff house to the

station-house; and she is hanging back, she won't walk." A house-

porter in a sheepskin coat was leading her. She was walking forward,

and he was pushing her from behind. All of us, I and the porter and

the policeman, were dressed in winter clothes, but she had nothing on

over her dress. In the darkness I could make out only her brown

dress, and the kerchiefs on her head and neck. She was short in

stature, as is often the case with the prematurely born, with small

feet, and a comparatively broad and awkward figure.

"We're waiting for you, you carrion. Get along, what do you mean by

it? I'll give it to you!" shouted the policeman. He was evidently

tired, and he had had too much of her. She advanced a few paces, and

again halted.

The little old porter, a good-natured fellow (I know him), tugged at

her hand. "Here, I'll teach you to stop! On with you!" he repeated,

as though in anger. She staggered, and began to talk in a discordant

voice. At every sound there was a false note, both hoarse and

whining.

"Come now, you're shoving again. I'll get there some time!"

She stopped and then went on. I followed them.

"You'll freeze," said the porters

"The likes of us don't freeze: I'm hot."

She tried to jest, but her words sounded like scolding. She halted

again under the lantern which stands not far from our house, and

leaned against, almost hung over, the fence, and began to fumble for

something among her skirts, with benumbed and awkward hands. Again

they shouted at her, but she muttered something and did something.

In one hand she held a cigarette bent into a bow, in the other a

match. I paused behind her; I was ashamed to pass her, and I was

ashamed to stand and look on. But I made up my mind, and stepped

forward. Her shoulder was lying against the fence, and against the

fence it was that she vainly struck the match and flung it away. I

looked in her face. She was really a person prematurely born; but,

as it seemed to me, already an old woman. I credited her with thirty

years. A dirty hue of face; small, dull, tipsy eyes; a button-like

nose; curved moist lips with drooping corners, and a short wisp of

harsh hair escaping from beneath her kerchief; a long flat figure,

stumpy hands and feet. I paused opposite her. She stared at me, and

burst into a laugh, as though she knew all that was going on in my

mind.

I felt that it was necessary to say something to her. I wanted to

show her that I pitied her.

"Are your parents alive?" I inquired.

She laughed hoarsely, with an expression which said, "he's making up

queer things to ask."

"My mother is," said she. "But what do you want?"

"And how old are you?"

"Sixteen," said she, answering promptly to a question which was

evidently customary.

"Come, march, you'll freeze, you'll perish entirely," shouted the

policeman; and she swayed away from the fence, and, staggering along,

she went down Khamovnitchesky Lane to the police-station; and I

turned to the wicket, and entered the house, and inquired whether my

daughters had returned. I was told that they had been to an evening

party, had had a very merry time, had come home, and were in bed.

Next morning I wanted to go to the station-house to learn what had

been done with this unfortunate woman, and I was preparing to go out

very early, when there came to see me one of those unlucky noblemen,

who, through weakness, have dropped from the gentlemanly life to

which they are accustomed, and who alternately rise and fall. I had

been acquainted with this man for three years. In the course of

those three years, this man had several times made way with every

thing that he had, and even with all his clothes; the same thing had

just happened again, and he was passing the nights temporarily in the

Rzhanoff house, in the night-lodging section, and he had come to me

for the day. He met me as I was going out, at the entrance, and

without listening to me he began to tell me what had taken place in

the Rzhanoff house the night before. He began his narrative, and did

not half finish it; all at once (he is an old man who has seen men

under all sorts of aspects) he burst out sobbing, and flooded has

countenance with tears, and when he had become silent, turned has

face to the wall. This is what he told me. Every thing that he

related to me was absolutely true. I authenticated his story on the

spot, and learned fresh particulars which I will relate separately.

In that night-lodging house, on the lower floor, in No. 32, in which

my friend had spent the night, among the various, ever-changing

lodgers, men and women, who came together there for five kopeks,

there was a laundress, a woman thirty years of age, light-haired,

peaceable and pretty, but sickly. The mistress of the quarters had a

boatman lover. In the summer her lover kept a boat, and in the

winter they lived by letting accommodations to night-lodgers: three

kopeks without a pillow, five kopeks with a pillow.

The laundress had lived there for several months, and was a quiet

woman; but latterly they had not liked her, because she coughed and

prevented the women from sleeping. An old half-crazy woman eighty

years old, in particular, also a regular lodger in these quarters,

hated the laundress, and imbittered the latter's life because she

prevented her sleeping, and cleared her throat all night like a

sheep. The laundress held her peace; she was in debt for her

lodgings, and was conscious of her guilt, and therefore she was bound

to be quiet. She began to go more and more rarely to her work, as

her strength failed her, and therefore she could not pay her

landlady; and for the last week she had not been out to work at all,

and had only poisoned the existence of every one, especially of the

old woman, who also did not go out, with her cough. Four days before

this, the landlady had given the laundress notice to leave the

quarters: the latter was already sixty kopeks in debt, and she

neither paid them, nor did the landlady foresee any possibility of

getting them; and all the bunks were occupied, and the women all

complained of the laundress's cough.

When the landlady gave the laundress notice, and told her that she

must leave the lodgings if she did not pay up, the old woman rejoiced

and thrust the laundress out of doors. The laundress departed, but

returned in an hour, and the landlady had not the heart to put her

out again. And the second and the third day, she did not turn her

out. "Where am I to go?" said the laundress. But on the third day,

the landlady's lover, a Moscow man, who knew the regulations and how

to manage, sent for the police. A policeman with sword and pistol on

a red cord came to the lodgings, and with courteous words he led the

laundress into the street.

It was a clear, sunny, but freezing March day. The gutters were

flowing, the house-porters were picking at the ice. The cabman's

sleigh jolted over the icy snow, and screeched over the stones. The

laundress walked up the street on the sunny side, went to the church,

and seated herself at the entrance, still on the sunny side. But

when the sun began to sink behind the houses, the puddles began to be

skimmed over with a glass of frost, and the laundress grew cold and

wretched. She rose, and dragged herself . . . whither? Home, to the

only home where she had lived so long. While she was on her way,

resting at times, dusk descended. She approached the gates, turned

in, slipped, groaned and fell.

One man came up, and then another. "She must be drunk." Another man

came up, and stumbled over the laundress, and said to the potter:

"What drunken woman is this wallowing at your gate? I came near

breaking my head over her; take her away, won't you?"

The porter came. The laundress was dead. This is what my friend

told me. It may be thought that I have wilfully mixed up facts,--I

encounter a prostitute of fifteen, and the story of this laundress.

But let no one imagine this; it is exactly what happened in the

course of one night (only I do not remember which) in March, 1884.

And so, after hearing my friend's tale, I went to the station-house,

with the intention of proceeding thence to the Rzhanoff house to

inquire more minutely into the history of the laundress. The weather

was very beautiful and sunny; and again, through the stars of the

night-frost, water was to be seen trickling in the shade, and in the

glare of the sun on Khamovnitchesky square every thing was melting,

and the water was streaming. The river emitted a humming noise. The

trees of the Neskutchny garden looked blue across the river; the

reddish-brown sparrows, invisible in winter, attracted attention by

their sprightliness; people also seemed desirous of being merry, but

all of them had too many cares. The sound of the bells was audible,

and at the foundation of these mingling sounds, the sounds of shots

could be heard from the barracks, the whistle of rifle-balls and

their crack against the target.

I entered the station-house. In the station some armed policemen

conducted me to their chief. He was similarly armed with sword and

pistol, and he was engaged in taking some measures with regard to a

tattered, trembling old man, who was standing before him, and who

could not answer the questions put to him, on account of his

feebleness. Having finished his business with the old man, he turned

to me. I inquired about the girl of the night before. At first he

listened to me attentively, but afterwards he began to smile, at my

ignorance of the regulations, in consequence of which she had been

taken to the station-house; and particularly at my surprise at her

youth.

"Why, there are plenty of them of twelve, thirteen, or fourteen years

of age," he said cheerfully.

But in answer to my question about the girl whom I had seen on the

preceding evening, he explained to me that she must have been sent to

the committee (so it appeared). To my question where she had passed

the night, he replied in an undecided manner. He did not recall the

one to whom I referred. There were so many of them every day.

In No. 32 of the Rzhanoff house I found the sacristan already reading

prayers over the dead woman. They had taken her to the bunk which

she had formerly occupied; and the lodgers, all miserable beings, had

collected money for the masses for her soul, a coffin and a shroud,

and the old women had dressed her and laid her out. The sacristan

was reading something in the gloom; a woman in a long wadded cloak

was standing there with a wax candle; and a man (a gentleman, I must

state) in a clean coat with a lamb's-skin collar, polished overshoes,

and a starched shirt, was holding one like it. This was her brother.

They had hunted him up.

I went past the dead woman to the landlady's nook, and questioned her

about the whole business.

She was alarmed at my queries; she was evidently afraid that she

would be blamed for something; but afterwards she began to talk

freely, and told me every thing. As I passed back, I glanced at the

dead woman. All dead people are handsome, but this dead woman was

particularly beautiful and touching in her coffin; her pure, pale

face, with closed swollen eyes, sunken cheeks, and soft reddish hair

above the lofty brow,--a weary and kind and not a sad but a surprised

face. And in fact, if the living do not see, the dead are surprised.

On the same day that I wrote the above, there was a great ball in

Moscow.

That night I left the house at nine o'clock. I live in a locality

which is surrounded by factories, and I left the house after the

factory-whistles had sounded, releasing the people for a day of

freedom after a week of unremitting toil.

Factory-hands overtook me, and I overtook others of them, directing

their steps to the drinking-shops and taverns. Many were already

intoxicated, many were women. Every morning at five o'clock we can

hear one whistle, a second, a third, a tenth, and so forth, and so

forth. That means that the toil of women, children, and of old men

has begun. At eight o'clock another whistle, which signifies a

breathing-spell of half an hour. At twelve, a third: this means an

hour for dinner. And a fourth at eight, which denotes the end of the

day.

By an odd coincidence, all three of the factories which are situated

near me produce only articles which are in demand for balls.

In one factory, the nearest, only stockings are made; in another

opposite, silken fabrics; in the third, perfumes and pomades.

It is possible to listen to these whistles, and connect no other idea

with them than as denoting the time: "There's the whistle already,

it is time to go to walk." But one can also connect with those

whistles that which they signify in reality; that first whistle, at

five o'clock, means that people, often all without exception, both

men and women, sleeping in a damp cellar, must rise, and hasten to

that building buzzing with machines, and must take their places at

their work, whose end and use for themselves they do not see, and

thus toil, often in heat and a stifling atmosphere, in the midst of

dirt, and with the very briefest breathing-spells, an hour, two

hours, three hours, twelve, and even more hours in succession. They

fall into a doze, and again they rise. And this, for them, senseless

work, to which they are driven only by necessity, is continued over

and over again.

And thus one week succeeds another with the breaks of holidays; and I

see these work-people released on one of these holidays. They emerge

into the street. Everywhere there are drinking-shops, taverns, and

loose girls. And they, in their drunken state, drag by the hand each

other, and girls like the one whom I saw taken to the station-house;

they drag with them cabmen, and they ride and they walk from one

tavern to another; and they curse and stagger, and say they

themselves know not what. I had previously seen such unsteady gait

on the part of factory-hands, and had turned aside in disgust, and

had been on the point of rebuking them; but ever since I have been in

the habit of hearing those whistles every day, and understand their

meaning, I am only amazed that they, all the men, do not come to the

condition of the "golden squad," of which Moscow is full, {26} [and

the women to the state of the one whom I had seen near my house].

{27}

Thus I walked along, and scrutinized these factory-hands, as long as

they roamed the streets, which was until eleven o'clock. Then their

movements began to calm down. Some drunken men remained here and

there, and here and there I encountered men who were being taken to

the station-house. And then carriages began to make their appearance

on all sides, directing their course toward one point.

On the box sits a coachman, sometimes in a sheepskin coat; and a

footman, a dandy, with a cockade. Well-fed horses in saddle-cloths

fly through the frost at the rate of twenty versts an hour; in the

carriages sit ladies muffled in round cloaks, and carefully tending

their flowers and head-dresses. Every thing from the horse-

trappings, the carriages, the gutta-percha wheels, the cloth of the

coachman's coat, to the stockings, shoes, flowers, velvet, gloves,

and perfumes,--every thing is made by those people, some of whom

often roll drunk into their dens or sleeping-rooms, and some stay

with disreputable women in the night-lodging houses, while still

others are put in jail. Thus past them in all their work, and over

them all, ride the frequenters of balls; and it never enters their

heads, that there is any connection between these balls to which they

make ready to go, and these drunkards at whom their coachman shouts

so roughly.

These people enjoy themselves at the ball with the utmost composure

of spirit, and assurance that they are doing nothing wrong, but

something very good. Enjoy themselves! Enjoy themselves from eleven

o'clock until six in the morning, in the very dead of night, at the

very hour when people are tossing and turning with empty stomachs in

the night-lodging houses, and while some are dying, as did the

laundress.

Their enjoyment consists in this,--that the women and young girls,

having bared their necks and arms, and applied bustles behind, place

themselves in a situation in which no uncorrupted woman or maiden

would care to display herself to a man, on any consideration in the

world; and in this half-naked condition, with their uncovered bosoms

exposed to view, with arms bare to the shoulder, with a bustle behind

and tightly swathed hips, under the most brilliant light, women and

maidens, whose chief virtue has always been modesty, exhibit

themselves in the midst of strange men, who are also clad in

improperly tight-fitting garments; and to the sound of maddening

music, they embrace and whirl. Old women, often as naked as the

young ones, sit and look on, and eat and drink savory things; old men

do the same. It is not to be wondered at that this should take place

at night, when all the common people are asleep, so that no one may

see them. But this is not done with the object of concealment: it

seems to them that there is nothing to conceal; that it is a very

good thing; that by this merry-making, in which the labor of

thousands of toiling people is destroyed, they not only do not injure

any one, but that by this very act they furnish the poor with the

means of subsistence. Possibly it is very merry at balls. But how

does this come about? When we see that there is a man in the

community, in our midst, who has had no food, or who is freezing, we

regret our mirth, and we cannot be cheerful until he is fed and

warmed, not to mention the impossibility of imagining people who can

indulge in such mirth as causes suffering to others. The mirth of

wicked little boys, who pitch a dog's tail in a split stick, and make

merry over it, is repulsive and incomprehensible to us.

In the same manner here, in these diversions of ours, blindness has

fallen upon us, and we do not see the split stick with which we have

pitched all those people who suffer for our amusement.

[We live as though there were no connection between the dying

laundress, the prostitute of fourteen, and our own life; and yet the

connection between them strikes us in the face.

We may say: "But we personally have not pinched any tail in a

stick;" but we have no right, to deny that had the tail not been

pitched, our merry-making would not have taken place. We do not see

what connection exists between the laundress and our luxury; but that

is not because no such connection does exist, but because we have

placed a screen in front of us, so that we may not see.

If there were no screen, we should see that which it is impossible

not to see.] {28}

Surely all the women who attended that ball in dresses worth a

hundred and fifty rubles each were born not in a ballroom, or at

Madame Minanguoit's; but they have lived in the country, and have

seen the peasants; they know their own nurse and maid, whose father

and brother are poor, for whom the earning of a hundred and fifty

rubles for a cottage is the object of a long, laborious life. Each

woman knows this. How could she enjoy herself, when she knew that

she wore on her bared body at that ball the cottage which is the

dream of her good maid's father and brother? But let us suppose that

she could not make this reflection; but since velvet and silk and

flowers and lace and dresses do not grow of themselves, but are made

by people, it would seem that she could not help knowing what sort of

people make all these things, and under what conditions, and why they

do it. She cannot fail to know that the seamstress, with whom she

has already quarrelled, did not make her dress in the least out of

love for her; therefore, she cannot help knowing that all these

things were made for her as a matter of necessity, that her laces,

flowers, and velvet have been made in the same way as her dress.

But possibly they are in such darkness that they do not consider

this. One thing she cannot fail to know,--that five or six elderly

and respectable, often sick, lackeys and maids have had no sleep, and

have been put to trouble on her account. She has seen their weary,

gloomy faces. She could not help knowing this also, that the cold

that night reached twenty-eight degrees below zero, {29} and that the

old coachman sat all night long in that temperature on his box. But

I know that they really do not see this. And if they, these young

women and girls, do not see this, on account of the hypnotic state

superinduced in them by balls, it is impossible to condemn them.

They, poor things, have done what is considered right by their

elders; but how are their elders to explain away this their cruelty

to the people?

The elders always offer the explanation: "I compel no one. I

purchase my things; I hire my men, my maid-servants, and my coachman.

There is nothing wrong in buying and hiring. I force no one's

inclination: I hire, and what harm is there in that?"

I recently went to see an acquaintance. As I passed through one of

the rooms, I was surprised to see two women seated at a table, as I

knew that my friend was a bachelor. A thin, yellow, old-fashioned

woman, thirty years of age, in a dress that had been carelessly

thrown on, was doing something with her hands and fingers on the

table, with great speed, trembling nervously the while, as though in

a fit. Opposite her sat a young girl, who was also engaged in

something, and who trembled in the same manner. Both women appeared

to be afflicted with St. Vitus' dance. I stepped nearer to them, and

looked to see what they were doing. They raised their eyes to me,

but went on with their work with the same intentness. In front of

them lay scattered tobacco and paper cases. They were making

cigarettes. The woman rubbed the tobacco between her hands, pushed

it into the machine, slipped on the cover, thrust the tobacco

through, then tossed it to the girl. The girl twisted the paper,

and, making it fast, threw it aside, and took up another. All thus

was done with such swiftness, with such intentness, as it is

impossible to describe to a man who has never seen it done. I

expressed my surprise at their quickness.

"I have been doing nothing else for fourteen years," said the woman.

"Is it hard?"

"Yes: it pains my chest, and makes my breathing hard."

It was not necessary for her to add this, however. A look at the

girl sufficed. She had worked at this for three years, but any one

who had not seen her at this occupation would have said that here was

a strong organism which was beginning to break down.

My friend, a kind and liberal man, hires these women to fill his

cigarettes at two rubles fifty kopeks the thousand. He has money,

and he spends it for work. What harm is there in that? My friend

rises at twelve o'clock. He passes the evening, from six until two,

at cards, or at the piano. He eats and drinks savory things; others

do all his work for him. He has devised a new source of pleasure,--

smoking. He has taken up smoking within my memory.

Here is a woman, and here is a girl, who can barely support

themselves by turning themselves into machines, and they pass their

whole lives inhaling tobacco, and thereby running their health. He

has money which he never earned, and he prefers to play at whist to

making his own cigarettes. He gives these women money on condition

that they shall continue to live in the same wretched manner in which

they are now living, that is to say, by making his cigarettes.

I love cleanliness, and I give money only on the condition that the

laundress shall wash the shirt which I change twice a day; and that

shirt has destroyed the laundress's last remaining strength, and she

has died. What is there wrong about that? People who buy and hire

will continue to force other people to make velvet and confections,

and will purchase them, without me; and no matter what I may do, they

will hire cigarettes made and shirts washed. Then why should I

deprive myself of velvet and confections and cigarettes and clean

shirts, if things are definitively settled thus? This is the

argument which I often, almost always, hear. This is the very

argument which makes the mob which is destroying something, lose its

senses. This is the very argument by which dogs are guided when one

of them has flung himself on another dog, and overthrown him, and the

rest of the pack rush up also, and tear their comrade in pieces.

Other people have begun it, and have wrought mischief; then why

should not I take advantage of it? Well, what will happen if I wear

a soiled shirt, and make my own cigarettes? Will that make it easier

for anybody else? ask people who would like to justify their course.

If it were not so far from the truth, it would be a shame to answer

such a question, but we have become so entangled that this question

seems very natural to us; and hence, although it is a shame, it is

necessary to reply to it.

What difference will it make if I wear one shirt a week, and make may

own cigarettes, or do not smoke at all? This difference, that some

laundress and some cigarette-maker will exert their strength less,

and that what I have spent for washing and for the making of

cigarettes I can give to that very laundress, or even to other

laundresses and toilers who are worn out with their labor, and who,

instead of laboring beyond their strength, will then be able to rest,

and drink tea. But to this I hear an objection. (It is so

mortifying to rich and luxurious people to understand their

position.) To this they say: "If I go about in a dirty shirt, and

give up smoking, and hand over this money to the poor, the poor will

still be deprived of every thing, and that drop in the sea of yours

will help not at all."

Such an objection it is a shame to answer. It is such a common

retort. {30}

If I had gone among savages, and they had regaled me with cutlets

which struck me as savory, and if I should learn on the following day

that these savory cutlets had been made from a prisoner whom they had

slain for the sake of the savory cutlets, if I do not admit that it

is a good thing to eat men, then, no matter how dainty the cutlets,

no matter how universal the practice of eating men may be among my

fellows, however insignificant the advantage to prisoners, prepared

for consumption, may be my refusal to eat of the cutlets, I will not

and I can not eat any more of them. I may, possibly, eat human

flesh, when hunger compels me to it; but I will not make a feast, and

I will not take part in feasts, of human flesh, and I will not seek

out such feasts, and pride myself on my share in them.

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.

But what is to be done? Surely it is not we who have done this? And

if not we, who then?

We say: "We have not done this, this has done itself;" as the

children say, when they break any thing, that it broke itself. We

say, that, so long as there is a city already in existence, we, by

living in it, support the people, by purchasing their labor and

services. But this is not so. And this is why. We only need to

look ourselves, at the way we have in the country, and at the manner

in which we support people there.

The winter passes in town. Easter Week passes. On the boulevards,

in the gardens in the parks, on the river, there is music. There are

theatres, water-trips, walks, all sorts of illuminations and

fireworks. But in the country there is something even better,--there

are better air, trees and meadows, and the flowers are fresher. One

should go thither where all these things have unfolded and blossomed

forth. And the majority of wealthy people do go to the country to

breathe the superior air, to survey these superior forests and

meadows. And there the wealthy settle down in the country, and the

gray peasants, who nourish themselves on bread and onions, who toil

eighteen hours a day, who get no sound sleep by night, and who are

clad in blouses. Here no one has led these people astray. There

have been no factories nor industrial establishments, and there are

none of those idle hands, of which there are so many in the city.

Here the whole population never succeeds, all summer long, in

completing all their tasks in season; and not only are there no idle

hands, but a vast quantity of property is ruined for the lack of

hands, and a throng of people, children, old men, and women, will

perish through overstraining their powers in work which is beyond

their strength. How do the rich order their lives there? In this

fashion:-

If there is an old-fashioned house, built under the serf regime, that

house is repaired and embellished; if there is none, then a new one

is erected, of two or three stories. The rooms, of which there are

from twelve to twenty, and even more, are all six arshins in height.

{31} Wood floors are laid down. The windows consist of one sheet of

glass. There are rich rugs and costly furniture. The roads around

the house are macadamized, the ground is levelled, flower-beds are

laid out, croquet-grounds are prepared, swinging-rings for gymnastics

are erected, reflecting globes, often orangeries, and hotbeds, and

lofty stables always with complicated scroll-work on the gables and

ridges.

And here, in the country, an honest educated official, or noble

family dwells. All the members of the family and their guests have

assembled in the middle of June, because up to June, that is to say,

up to the beginning of mowing-time, they have been studying and

undergoing examinations; and they live there until September, that is

to say, until harvest and sowing-time. The members of this family

(as is the case with nearly every one in that circle) have lived in

the country from the beginning of the press of work, the suffering

time, not until the end of the season of toil (for in September

sowing is still in progress, as well as the digging of potatoes), but

until the strain of work has relaxed a little. During the whole of

their residence in the country, all around them and beside them, that

summer toil of the peasantry has been going on, of whose fatigues, no

matter how much we may have heard, no matter how much we may have

heard about it, no matter how much we may have gazed upon it, we can

form no idea, unless we have had personal experience of it. And the

members of this family, about ten in number, live exactly as they do

in the city.

At St. Peter's Day, {32} a strict fast, when the people's food

consists of kvas, bread, and onions, the mowing begins.

The business which is effected in mowing is one of the most important

in the commune. Nearly every year, through the lack of hands and

time, the hay crop may be lost by rain; and more or less strain of

toil decides the question, as to whether twenty or more per cent of

hay is to be added to the wealth of the people, or whether it is to

rot or die where it stands. And additional hay means additional meat

for the old, and additional milk for the children. Thus, in general

and in particular, the question of bread for each one of the mowers,

and of milk for himself and his children, in the ensuing winter, is

then decided. Every one of the toilers, both male and female, knows

this; even the children know that this is an important matter, and

that it is necessary to strain every nerve to carry the jug of kvas

to their father in the meadow at his mowing, and, shifting the heavy

pitcher from hand to hand, to run barefooted as rapidly as possible,

two versts from the village, in order to get there in season for

dinner, and so that their fathers may not scold them.

Every one knows, that, from the mowing season until the hay is got

in, there will be no break in the work, and that there will be no

time to breathe. And there is not the mowing alone. Every one of

them has other affairs to attend to besides the mowing: the ground

must be turned up and harrowed; and the women have linen and bread

and washing to attend to; and the peasants have to go to the mill,

and to town, and there are communal matters to attend to, and legal

matters before the judge and the commissary of police; and the wagons

to see to, and the horses to feed at night: and all, old and young,

and sickly, labor to the last extent of their powers. The peasants

toil so, that on every occasion, the mowers, before the end of the

third stint, whether weak, young, or old, can hardly walk as they

totter past the last rows, and only with difficulty are they able to

rise after the breathing-spell; and the women, often pregnant, or

nursing infants, work in the same way. The toil is intense and

incessant. All work to the extreme bounds of their strength, and

expend in this toil, not only the entire stock of their scanty

nourishment, but all their previous stock. All of them--and they are

not fat to begin with--grow gaunt after the "suffering" season.

Here a little association is working at the mowing; three peasants,--

one an old man, the second his nephew, a young married man, and a

shoemaker, a thin, sinewy man. This hay-harvest will decide the fate

of all of them for the winter. They have been laboring incessantly

for two weeks, without rest. The rain has delayed their work. After

the rain, when the hay has dried, they have decided to stack it, and,

in order to accomplish this as speedily as possible, that two women

for each of them shall follow their scythes. On the part of the old

man go his wife, a woman of fifty, who has become unfit for work,

having borne eleven children, who is deaf, but still a tolerably

stout worker; and a thirteen-year-old daughter, who is short of

stature, but a strong and clever girl. On the part of his nephew go

his wife, a woman as strong and well-grown as a sturdy peasant, and

his daughter-in-law, a soldier's wife, who is about to become a

mother. On the part of the shoemaker go his wife, a stout laborer,

and her aged mother, who has reached her eightieth year, and who

generally goes begging. They all stand in line, and labor from

morning till night, in the full fervor of the June sun. It is

steaming hot, and rain threatens. Every hour of work is precious.

It is a pity to tear one's self from work to fetch water or kvas. A

tiny boy, the old woman's grandson, brings them water. The old

woman, evidently only anxious lest she shall be driven away from her

work, will not let the rake out of her hand, though it is evident

that she can barely move, and only with difficulty. The little boy,

all bent over, and stepping gently, with his tiny bare feet, drags

along a jug of water, shifting it from hand to hand, for it is

heavier than he. The young girl flings over her shoulder a load of

hay which is also heavier than herself, advances a few steps, halts,

and drops it, without the strength to carry it. The old woman of

fifty rakes away without stopping, and with her kerchief awry she

drags the hay, breathing heavily and tottering. The old woman of

eighty only rakes the hay, but even this is beyond her strength; she

slowly drags along her feet, shod with bast shoes, and, frowning, she

gazes gloomily before her, like a seriously ill or dying person. The

old man has intentionally sent her farther away than the rest, to

rake near the cocks of hay, so that she may not keep in line with the

others; but she does not fall in with this arrangement, and she toils

on as long as the others do, with the same death-like, gloomy

countenance. The sun is already setting behind the forest; but the

cocks are not yet all heaped together, and much still remains to do.

All feel that it is time to stop, but no one speaks, waiting until

the others shall say it. Finally the shoemaker, conscious that his

strength is exhausted, proposes to the old man, to leave the cocks

until the morrow; and the old man consents, and the women instantly

run for the garments, jugs, pitchforks; and the old woman immediately

sits down just where she has been standings and then lies back with

the same death-like look, staring straight in front of her. But the

women are going; and she rises with a groan, and drags herself after

them. And this will go on in July also, when the peasants, without

obtaining sufficient sleep, reap the oats by night, lest it should

fall, and the women rise gloomily to thresh out the straw for the

bands to tie the sheaves; when this old woman, already utterly

cramped by the labor of mowing, and the woman with child, and the

young children, injure themselves overworking and over-drinking; and

when neither hands, nor horses, nor carts will suffice to bring to

the ricks that grain with which all men are nourished, and millions

of poods {33} of which are daily required in Russia to keep people

from perishing.

And we live as though there were no connection between the dying

laundress, the prostitute of fourteen years, the toilsome manufacture

of cigarettes by women, the strained, intolerable, insufficiently fed

toil of old women and children around us; we live as though there

were no connection between this and our own lives.

It seems to us, that suffering stands apart by itself, and our life

apart by itself. We read the description of the life of the Romans,

and we marvel at the inhumanity of those soulless Luculli, who

satiated themselves on viands and wines while the populace were dying

with hunger. We shake our heads, and we marvel at the savagery of

our grandfathers, who were serf-owners, supporters of household

orchestras and theatres, and of whole villages devoted to the care of

their gardens; and we wonder, from the heights of our grandeur, at

their inhumanity. We read the words of Isa. v. 8: "Woe unto them

that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no

place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

(11.) Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may

follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame

them! (12.) And the harp and the viol, and tabret and pipe, and wine

are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord,

neither consider the operation of his hands. (18.) Woe unto them

that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a

cart-rope. (20.) Woe unto then that call evil good, and good evil;

that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter

for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (21.) Woe unto them that are wise in

their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight--(22.) Woe unto them

that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong

drink."

We read these words, and it seems to us that this has no reference to

us. We read in the Gospels (Matt. iii. 10): "And now also the axe

is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which

bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

And we are fully convinced that the good tree which bringeth forth

good fruit is ourselves; and that these words are not spoken to us,

but to some other and wicked people.

We read the words of Isa. vi. 10: "Make the heart of this people

fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see

with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their

heart, and convert and be healed. (11.) Then said I: Lord, how

long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without

inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly

desolate."

We read, and are fully convinced that this marvellous deed is not

performed on us, but on some other people. And because we see

nothing it is, that this marvellous deed is performed, and has been

performed, on us. We hear not, we see not, and we understand not

with our heart. How has this happened?

Whether that God, or that natural law by virtue of which men exist in

the world, has acted well or ill, yet the position of men in the

world, ever since we have known it, has been such, that naked people,

without any hair on their bodies, without lairs in which they could

shelter themselves, without food which they could find in the

fields,--like Robinson {34} on his island,--have all been reduced to

the necessity of constantly and unweariedly contending with nature in

order to cover their bodies, to make themselves clothing, to

construct a roof over their heads, and to earn their bread, that two

or three times a day they may satisfy their hunger and the hunger of

their helpless children and of their old people who cannot work.

Wherever, at whatever time, in whatever numbers we may have observed

people, whether in Europe, in America, in China, or in Russia,

whether we regard all humanity, or any small portion of it, in

ancient times, in a nomad state, or in our own times, with steam-

engines and sewing-machines, perfected agriculture, and electric

lighting, we behold always one and the same thing,--that man, toiling

intensely and incessantly, is not able to earn for himself and his

little ones and his old people clothing, shelter, and food; and that

a considerable portion of mankind, as in former times, so at the

present day, perish through insufficiency of the necessaries of life,

and intolerable toil in the effort to obtain them.

Wherever we have, if we draw a circle round us of a hundred thousand,

a thousand, or ten versts, or of one verst, and examine into the

lives of the people comprehended within the limits of our circle, we

shall see within that circle prematurely-born children, old men, old

women, women in labor, sick and weak persons, who toil beyond their

strength, and who have not sufficient food and rest for life, and who

therefore die before their time. We shall see people in the flower

of their age actually slain by dangerous and injurious work.

We see that people have been struggling, ever since the world has

endured, with fearful effort, privation, and suffering, against this

universal want, and that they cannot overcome it . . . {35}

Footnotes:

{1} The fine, tall members of a regiment, selected and placed

together to form a showy squad.

{2} [] Omitted by the Censor in the authorized edition printed in

Russia, in the set of Count Tolstoi's works.

{3} Reaumur.

{4} A drink made of water, honey, and laurel or salvia leaves, which

is drunk as tea, especially by the poorer classes.

{5} [] Omitted by the censor from the authorized edition published

in Russia in the set of count Tolstoi's works. The omission is

indicated thus . . .

{6} Kalatch, a kind of roll: baranki, cracknels of fine flour.

{7} An arshin is twenty-eight inches.

{8} A myeshchanin, or citizen, who pays only poll-tax and not a

guild tax.

{9} Omitted in authorized edition.

{10} Omitted by the censor in the authorized edition.

{11} Omitted by the Censor in the authorized edition.

{12} Omitted by the Censor in the authorized edition.

{13} Omitted by the Censor in the authorized edition.

{14} Omitted by the Censor from the authorized edition.

{15} Omitted by the Censor in the authorized edition.

{16} Omitted by the Censor in the authorized edition

{17} Omitted by the Censor in the authorized edition.

{18} Omitted by the Censor in the authorized edition.

{19} A very complicated sort of whist.

{20} The whole of this chapter is omitted by the Censor in the

authorized edition, and is there represented by the following

sentence: "And I felt that in money, in money itself, in the

possession of it, there was something immoral; and I asked myself,

What is money?"

{21} Omitted by the Censor in the authorized edition.

{22} Omitted by the Censor in the authorized edition.

{23} The above passage is omitted in the authorized edition, and the

following is added: "I came to the simple and natural conclusion,

that, if I pity the tortured horse upon which I am riding, the first

thing for me to do is to alight, and to walk on my own feet."

{24} Omitted in the authorized edition.

{25} Omitted in the authorized edition.

{26} "Into a worse state," in the authorized edition.

{27} Omitted in the authorized edition.

{28} Omitted in the authorized edition.

{29} Reaumur.

{30} In the Moscow edition (authorized by the Censor), the

concluding paragraph is replaced by the following: --"They say: The

action of a single man is but a drop in the sea. A drop in the sea!

"There is an Indian legend relating how a man dropped a pearl into

the sea, and in order to recover it he took a bucket, and began to

bail out, and to pour the water on the shore. Thus he toiled without

intermission, and on the seventh day the spirit of the sea grew

alarmed lest the man should dip the sea dry, and so he brought him

his pearl. If our social evil of persecuting man were the sea, then

that pearl which we have lost is equivalent to devoting our lives to

bailing out the sea of that evil. The prince of this world will take

fright, he will succumb more promptly than did the spirit of the sea;

but this social evil is not the sea, but a foul cesspool, which we

assiduously fill with our own uncleanness. All that is required is

for us to come to our senses, and to comprehend what we are doing; to

fall out of love with our own uncleanness,--in order that that

imaginary sea should dry away, and that we should come into

possession of that priceless pearl,--fraternal, humane life."

{31} An arshin is twenty-eight inches.

{32} The fast extends from the 5th to the 30th of June, O.S. (June

27 to July 12, N.S.)

{33} A pood is thirty-six pounds.

{34} Robinson Crusoe.

{35} Here something has been omitted by the Censor, which I am

unable to supply.--TRANS.

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