

ON THE RELATION BETWEEN THE SEXES

by Leo Tolstoy

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Among the letters which I received from various places in reference to the " Kreutzer Sonata " and the " Epilogue," which show that the necessity of changing our view on the relation of the sexes has been recognized by others as well, – by a large majority of thinking people, whose voices are not heard and not noticed only because they are drowned by the cry of the people of the crowd, who stubbornly and rancorously defend the usual order of things, which abets their passions, – among these letters I received, on October 7, 1890, the following letter, with the enclosure of a pamphlet entitled Diana, of which it makes mention. Here is the letter:

" New York, October 7, 1890.

" We have the pleasure of sending you a small pamphlet entitled: Diana, a psycho-physiological essay on sexual relations for married men and women, which, we hope, you will receive.

" Ever since your production, 'The Kreutzer Sonata,' made its appearance in America, many have been saying: Diana fulfils, explains, and makes possible Tolstoy's theories. And so we have decided to send you this pamphlet, so that you may be able to judge for yourself.

« Praying that the wish of your heart be fulfilled, we remain, Yours sincerely, Burns Co.

" We shall be happy if you inform us of the receipt of the pamphlet."

Before that I had received from France a letter from AngMo Franchise and her pamphlet.

In this letter Mrs. AngMe informed me of the existence of two societies which have for their aim the encouragement of the purity of the sexual relations, – one in England, and another in France, – Society d'amour pur. In the article by Mrs. AngMe the same thoughts were expressed as in the Diana, but less clearly and less definitely, and with a shade of mysticism.

The thoughts expressed in the pamphlet Diana, though having at their base not the Christian, but rather a pagan, Platonic world conception, are so new and so interesting, and so obviously show the irrationality of the established dissipation, both in the celibate

and in the married life of our society, that I want to share these thoughts with my readers.

The fundamental idea of the pamphlet, the motto of which is, " And they twain shall be one flesh," is the following:

The difference in the organization of man and woman exists not only in a physiological relation, but also in other moral qualities, which in man are called masculinity, in woman femininity. The attraction between the sexes is not based on the striving after physical intercourse alone, but also on mutual attraction, which these opposite properties of the sexes exert upon one another, femininity upon man and masculinity upon woman. One sex strives to be complemented by the other, and so the attraction between the sexes produces an equal tendency toward the spiritual as toward the physical union. The strivings after physical and after spiritual intercourse are manifestations of one and the same source of attraction, which are in such interdependence that the gratification of one striving invariably weakens the other. In proportion as the striving after spiritual intercourse is satisfied, the striving after the physical union is weakened or entirely destroyed, and vice versa: the gratification of the physical attraction weakens and destroys the spiritual. And so the attraction between the sexes is not merely physical, productive of the propagation of children, but also the striving of the two sexes toward one another, capable of assuming the form of the most spiritual intercourse of ideas alone, of mere animal intercourse, productive of the propagation of children, and of all the various steps between the two. The question as to the degree at which the approximation of the sexes stops is decided by this, what intercourse the uniting pair consider good, necessary, and so desirable for a given time or for ever. (A remarkable illustration of the fact that the relation between the sexes is subject to the conception of what is considered good, necessary, and desirable is found in the striking custom of Little-Russian " bridegrooming," which consists in this, that the betrothed lads for years pass the nights with their brides without violating their virginity.)

A full gratification for the individual uniting pair is found in the degree which these persons consider good, necessary, and desirable, and depends on their personal view. But independently of it, naturally, objectively, one degree of intercourse must give more satisfaction to all than any other form of it. Now what intercourse gives this highest satisfaction naturally, to all, independently of the personal view of the uniting pair, – the one which approaches the spiritual, or the one which approaches the physical ? The answer to this question, clear and indubitable, though contradicting everything which people in our society are in the habit of thinking about it, consists in this, that the nearer the form of intercourse is to the physical limit, the more is the desire fanned, and the less satisfaction is received; the nearer it is to the opposite extreme, to the spiritual limit, the less are new desires evoked, the fuller is the satisfaction. The nearer to the first, the more destructive of vital force, and the nearer to the second, the

spiritual, the more calm, joyous, and strong is the mutual condition.

The union of man and woman into one flesh, in the form of inseparable monogamy, the author considers an indispensable condition of the highest human development. Marriage, therefore, forming a natural and desirable condition for all men who have reached maturity, is, according to the author, not necessarily a physical union, but may also be spiritual. According to conditions and temperaments, but chiefly, according to what the uniting pair consider necessary, good, and desirable, marriage will for some time approach spiritual intercourse, and for others physical intercourse ; but the more the intercourse will approach the spiritual, the fuller will its satisfaction be.

Since the author recognizes that the same sexual tendencies may lead to spiritual intercourse, – to love, – and to physical intercourse, – to productiveness and childbirth, – and since one activity passes into the other in dependence on consciousness, he naturally not only does not recognize the impossibility of continence, but even considers it natural and a necessary condition of a rational sexual hygiene, both in marriage and outside it.

The whole article is enhanced by a rich selection of examples and illustrations of what it tells about, and by physiological data as to the processes of the sexual relations, their effects upon the organism, and the possibility of consciously directing them upon this path or that, – to love or to productiveness. In confirmation of his idea the author quotes the words of Herbert Spencer: " If a certain law," says Spencer, " contributes to the good of the human race, human nature will of necessity submit to it, so that the submission to it will become a pleasure to man." And so we must not, says the author, depend too much on established habits and conditions which now surround us, but must rather look upon what a man must and can be in the brilliant future before him.

The author expounds the essence of everything said as follows. The fundamental theory of Diana is this, that the relations between the sexes have two functions: the productive and the love function, and that the sexual force, so long as there is no conscious desire to have children, ought always to be directed upon the path of love. The manifestation which this force will assume depends on reason and on habits, in consequence of which the gradual agreement of reason with the principle here expounded and the gradual formation of habits in agreement with them will free men from many sufferings and will give them the gratification of their sexual strivings.

At the end of the book there is added a remarkable " Letter to parents and instructors," by Eliza Burns. This letter, though treating subjects which are considered indecent (calling things by their names, and indeed it could not be otherwise), can have such a beneficent influence upon unfortunate youth, which is suffering from excesses and irregularities, that the dissemination of this letter among grown men who in vain ruin their best forces and their good,

and chiefly among poor boys perishing only through ignorance, in families, schools, gymnasia, and especially military schools and closed institutions, would be a true benefaction.

October 1890.

EXTRACTS FROM DIARIES AND PRIVATE LETTERS

On sexual intercourse I have expressed my view, as much as I could, in the epilogue to "The Kreutzer Sonata." The whole question is decided briefly: a man must always, under all circumstances, — whether he is married or single, — be as chaste as possible, as Christ said, and Paul after him. If he can be so continent as not to know a woman at all, that is the best he can do. But if he cannot contain himself, he must as rarely as possible submit to this weakness, and by no means look upon the sexual intercourse as upon a "joivissance" I think that any sincere and serious man cannot help but look upon the matter in this way, and that all men of this kind agree upon this.

And there is a letter from the editor of The Adult on free love. If I had time, I should like to write on this subject. No doubt I will write about it. The main thing is to show that the whole question is in securing the greatest amount of pleasure for oneself, without any thought of the consequences. Besides, they preach what already exists and is very bad. Why will the absence of external restraint mend the whole matter? I am, of course, against all regulation and for full liberty, but the ideal is chastity, and not enjoyment.

All the calamities which are begot by the sexual relations, by amorousness, are due to nothing but this, that we mix up the carnal lust with the spiritual life, with, — it is terrible to say so, — with love; we employ our reason, not to condemn and determine this passion, but to deck it out with the peacock feathers of spirituality.

This is where les extremes se touchent. To ascribe all the attraction between the sexes to sexual lust seems very material, whereas, on the contrary, it is a most spiritual relation — to segregate from the spiritual sphere everything which does not belong to it, in order to be able to esteem it highly.

Passion, the source of the greatest calamities, we do not lower or moderate, but, on the contrary, fan with all our means, and then we complain that we suffer.

A woman who dresses herself up fans the passion in herself. Even while dressing others up, she lives in imagination in lust. For this reason dresses exert such an influence on women.

Fornicator is not a curse word, but a condition (I think harlot is, too), a condition of unrest, curiosity, and demand for novelty (like a drunkard), which comes from intercourse for pleasure's sake, not with one, but with many. One can contain oneself, but a drunkard is

a drunkard, and a fornicator is a fornicator, and they fall with the first weakening.

What weakens us in our struggle with temptation is this, that we busy ourselves in advance with the idea of victory, that we take up a task which is above our strength, a task which it is not in our power to do, or not to do. We say to ourselves in advance, like a monk: " I promise to be chaste," meaning by it external chastity. This is, in the first place, impossible, because we cannot imagine those conditions in which we may be placed, and in which we shall not withstand the temptation. And, besides, it is bad; it is bad, because it does not aid us in reaching the goal, in approaching the highest chastity, but on the contrary.

Having decided that their task consists in observing

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external chastity, they either leave the world, avoid women, like the monks on Mount Athos, or make themselves eunuchs and disdain that which is most important, the internal struggle with besetting thoughts in the world, amidst temptations. This is the same as though a soldier should say to himself that he would go to war, but only under the condition that he should be certain to be victorious. Such a soldier will have to avoid real enemies and to fight with imaginary foes. Such a soldier will not learn how to fight and will always be bad.

Besides, this placing before oneself the task of external chastity and the hope, sometimes the certainty, of realizing it, have also this disadvantage, that, striving after it, every temptation to which man is subject, and so much the more the fall, at once destroys everything and makes one doubt the possibility, even the legality, of the struggle. " Consequently it is impossible to be chaste, and I have put a false task before myself." And it is all over, and the man abandons himself completely to lust and sinks in it. It is the same as in the case of a soldier with an amulet, which in his imagination makes him immune against death and wounds. Such a soldier loses his last bit of valour, and runs away at the slightest wound or scratch which he receives.

Only this can be the task: the attainment of the greatest chastity, in conformity with my character, my temperament, and the conditions of my past and present,

– not before other men, who do not know what I have to struggle against, but before myself and before God. Then nothing impairs or arrests the motion; then the temptation, even the fall, – everything leads to one aim,

– to the departure from the animal and the approach to God.

The Christian teaching does not determine the forms of life, but only in all relations of man indicates the ideal, the direction; the same is true in the sexual question. But the people who are not of a Christian spirit want the determination of forms. For them was invented the church marriage, which has nothing Christian about it. But in the sexual relations, as in those others of violence, of anger, we must not and should not leave out of sight the ideal, or distort it. But it is this that the churchmen have done with marriage.

Through the misunderstanding of the Christian spirit people are generally divided into Christians and nonChristians. The coarsest division consists in regarding only him who has been baptized as a Christian; equally incorrect is the division of men, though it is less coarse, who on the basis of Christ's teaching live a pure domestic life, who are not murderers, etc., and to call them Christians in contradistinction to those who live differently. In Christianity there is no line of demarcation between a Christian and a non-Christian. There is the light, the ideal Christ; and there is darkness, the animal, and – a motion, in the name of Christ, toward Christ along this path.

Even so the ideal in relation to the sexes is full, complete chastity. A man who serves God can wish as little to get married as to get drunk ; but there are various stages on the path to chastity. There is one thing that can be said for those who want an answer to the question, " Shall I get married, or not ? " It is this : If you do not see the ideal of chastity and do not feel the necessity of abandoning yourself to it, then walk toward chastity, without knowing it yourself, by the unchaste path of marriage. Just as I, being tall of stature and seeing before me a bell-tower, cannot point it out to an undersized man who is walking by my side and does not see it, as the direction of his path, but am obliged to point out to him some other landmark on the same path: such a landmark is honest marriage for those who do not see the ideal of chastity. But this can be pointed out by me or you ; Christ never pointed out anything else, nor could he have pointed out anything but chastity.

To struggle, – even that is life, and that alone is life. There is no rest whatever. The ideal is always ahead, and I am never calm so long as I do not move toward it, even if I do not reach it.

Take the ideal of celibacy. The gratification of the physical sensation, which for a time calms passion, does not satisfy me, just as the feeding of all the hungry around me does not satisfy me in an economic sense. What will satisfy you is nothing but the clear contemplation of the ideal in all its height, a similarly clear contemplation of your weakness in all its remoteness from the ideal, and the striving after an approach to the ideal. This only will satisfy you, and not your placing yourself in such a position that

you, by half-closing your eyes, are able to avoid seeing the difference of your position from the demand of the ideal.

The struggle with the sexual passion is a most difficult struggle, and there is no position and no age, except first childhood and the most advanced old age, when a man is free from this struggle, and so we must not be vexed by this struggle, but must hope that it is possible to come to a state in which it will not exist, and not for a moment weaken, but remember and use all those means which weaken the foe: avoid what excites the body and the soul, and try to be busy. That is one thing. Another thing is: if you see that you will be vanquished by the struggle, – Mt married, that is, choose a woman who agrees to enter into wedlock, and say to yourself that if you cannot help falling, you will fall with none other than this woman, and with her bring up your children, if there shall be any, and with her, supporting her, arrive at chastity, the sooner, the better. I know no other means. But above all, to be able successfully to make use of either means, strengthen your connection with God, think as frequently as you can that you came from Him and return to Him, and that the meaning and aim of this whole life consists in nothing but doing His will.

The more you will remember Him, the more will He aid you.

Another thing: Do not get discouraged if you fall; do not imagine that you are lost, and that you have no reason for watching yourself after that, but must dissipate. On the contrary, if you have fallen, struggle on with greater energy.

Accesses of sexual passion beget a tangle of ideas, or rather, an absence of ideas. The whole world will grow dark ; the relation to the world is lost. Accidentalness, darkness, impotence.

Poor man, you have suffered very much from thitz terrible passion, especially when it is unbridled, that is, when it has already come into play. I know how it veils everything and for a time destroys everything heart and reason lived by. But there is one salvation from it, – and that is, to know that it is a dream, a suggestion, which will pass, and I shall return to real life, to the spot at which it seized me. It is possible to know this even in moments of its power. May God help you.

Do not forget that you have never been and never will be completely chaste, but that you are at a certain stage of an approach to chastity, and so you must never get discouraged in this approach: in moments of temptation, in moments of fall even, do not stop recognizing what you are striving after, and say to yourself: “ I am falling, but I hate the fall, and I know that if not now, at least later, the victory will be, not on its side, but on mine.”

A man must set himself the problem, not of chastity, but of the approach to chastity. Strictly speaking, a living man cannot be chaste. A living man can only strive after chastity, for the very reason that he is not chaste, but subject to passion. If a man were

not subject to passion, there would not exist for him any chastity, nor the concept of it. The mistake consists in setting to ourselves the problem of chastity (of the external condition of chastity), and not that of striving after chastity, of the internal acknowledgment at all times and in all conditions of life of the superiority of chastity to debauchery, of the superiority of greater purity to lesser.

This mistake is very important. For a man who has set to himself as the problem the external condition of chastity, the departure from this external condition, the fall, destroys everything and interrupts activity and life; for a man who has set to himself as the problem the striving after chastity, there is no fall, no interruption of activity; and temptations, and the fall, may fail to interrupt the striving after chastity, and frequently even intensify it.

When people do not know any other good than personal enjoyment for themselves alone, love, amorousness, presents itself as an elevation; but having experienced the sentiment of love for God and for our neighbour, having become Christians even in the weakest degree, so long as this sentiment is sincere, it is impossible to do otherwise than look on amorousness from above as on a sentiment from which it is desirable to be freed. Why should you not have been satisfied with this Christian, brotherly love ? And so, pardon me, what you say about your love for her supporting you in your purity, is offensive for woman. Every man, especially a Christian, wants to be an instrument of spiritual, and not physical, action. Keep your purity by your own powers, and oiler a love which is pure and free from all advantages. Do not exchange God for man ; God will give you incomparably more of everything, even the most unexpected, and will give you the love of that man besides. You write that you must save her. I absolutely fail to see from what. And why and for what do you pity her ? Among us people frequently repeat the mistake of wishing to get married in some special, new fashion. As Christ has said and Paul has confirmed, and our reason confirms, he who can contain himself and remain chaste, let him contain himself; and who cannot, let him be married. But it is impossible to get married in a new fashion : one cannot marry differently from the way all gftt married, that is, by choosing a mate, deciding to remain true to her, not abandoning her until the grave, and trying with her to reestablish the lost chastity. Even though we cannot ascribe any meaning to the performance of the ceremony and of various customs, we cannot look upon marriage in any other way than the rest understand it. It is not proper and it is impossible to mix up any higher religious consideration with marriage. As marriage took place in a natural way, in consequence of mutual attraction, so it will always take place. And if this mutual attraction be wanting, marriage as such is a bad thing.

I understand, I think, both of you, and should like very much to help you in order to extract from your relations what is painful and agitating in them, leaving that which is good and joyful. She is quite right when she says that exclusive love is not only no love

for God, but even interferes with that love. But this exclusive love, the one which you experience toward her, is a fact and just as indubitable, and one cannot help but count with it as with the presence of the body and the properties of character, which it is impossible to destroy. Having recognized the existence of the fact, we must act in such a way as to take what is best from it and reject what is bad. What is good is the consciousness of the loveliness of what is loved, and what is loved is loved not egotistically, but for the purpose of aiding one another to serve God's work. That is joy. But in order that this may be joy, you must sterilize it well from the exaggeration of amorousness (and you are guilty of this), from the consequent and exclusive exaction, jealousy, and every kind of abomination, which is covered up with good names. My practical advice is, – do not rummage in your sentiments, do not communicate everything to one another (this is not concealment, but reserve), and write about yourself, about common matters. That you love her exclusively, and she you, she knows, and you know, and so you know all the motives of your acts and words. There is a limit to the interchange of sentiments, which must not be crossed, but you have crossed it. This limit is such that beyond it every transmission of sentiments becomes not a joy, but a burden.

Make use of that joy of love which God has sent you, without forgetting that this is love, that is, a desire for the good for another, and not for oneself. And as soon as this will he love indeed, that is a desire for the good for her, there will he destroyed in it everything which in this sentiment is painful for you and for her.

Love cannot be harmful, so long as it is love, and not the wolf of egotism in the sheepskin of love. One needs but ask oneself: "Am I prepared for his, or her, good never to see him, or her, and to break my relations with him, or her?" If not, it is the wolf, and he has to be beaten and killed. I know your religious and loving soul, and so am convinced that you will conquer the wolf, if it is he.

Yes, it is impossible to love all alike. And it is a great happiness to love even one more especially, but it must be to love him, or her, and not oneself, one's own enjoyment which is experienced in a communion with him, or her.

I have often thought of falling in love, and have never been able to find a place and meaning for it. But this place and meaning is very clear and definite: it consists in making easier the struggle of passion with chastity. Falling in love must in young people, who are unable to abstain in complete chastity, precede marriage and free young people in their most critical years, from sixteen years until twenty and more, from an agonizing struggle. That is the place of falling in love. But when it invades the lives of men after marriage it is out of place and detestable.

There is a dispute as to whether falling in love is good. For me the solution is clear.

If a man already lives a human, spiritual life, falling in love, love, marriage, will be a fall for him; he will have to give part of his powers to his wife, his family, or even the object of his enamourment. But if he is on the animal stage, eating, working, serving, writing, playing, this falling in love will be for him an uplifting, as it is for animals, for insects.

I do not think that you need any friendship with women, especially any spiritual communion with them. Communion with them is only then good and joyful when in your consciousness you in no way distinguish them from other men.

What you need most of all, it seems to me, is work, work which would absorb all your energies.

I took a liking to a pamphlet sent me lately by Mrs. Stockham on "The Creative Life," as she calls it. She says that when in man there appears, in addition to his usual functions, the sexual need, he ought to know that it is a creative need, which only in its lowest manifestation is expressed in sexual passion; it is a creative ability, and it depends on the will and endeavour, stubborn endeavour to transfer it to another, a physical, or, best of all, a spiritual activity.

I believe that it is indeed the power which takes part in the work of God and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth ; with the sexual act it is only the transmission to others, to the children, of the possibility of taking part in the work of God; with continency and the direct activity of the service of God, it is the highest manifestation of life. The transition is difficult, but it is possible and is accomplished by hundreds and by thousands of men in our very sight.

If you overcome it, it is well; if you do not overcome it, get married, – it will not be so good, but it will not be bad.

It is bad, as Paul says, to burn, bad to carry around this poison, imbibing it with the whole blood. But do not believe yourself in this, that there is something good and softening in cultivating the acquaintance of women. All this is a deception of lust. In the friendship with women, as in that with men, there is much which is joyful, but there is nothing of any particular joy in the friendship with women; but what there is, is a deception of sensuality, of very concealed sensuality, but none the less of sensuality.–

You ask what means there is for struggling with passion. Among the minor means, such as work, fasting, the most effective is poverty, the lack of money, the external aspect of want, a position in which it is evident that you cannot be attractive to any woman. But the chief and only means which I know is the uninterruptedness of the struggle, the consciousness of the fact that the struggle is not an accidental, temporary condition, but a constant, unchangeable condition of life.

You ask me about the Eunuchs, whether the opinion about them is just that they are bad people, and whether the Eunuchs understand correctly the Gospel, Chapter XIX. of Matthew, making themselves and others eunuchs on the basis of the twelfth verse of this chapter.

To the first question, my answer is that there are no bad men, and that all men are the children of one Father, and all are brothers and equal, – nobody is better or worse than anybody else. And judging from what I have heard about the Eunuchs, they live morally and by hard work. To the second question, as to whether they understand correctly the Gospel, making themselves and others eunuchs on its basis, I answer with full confidence that they understand the Gospel incorrectly and, in making themselves, and especially others, eunuchs, they commit acts which are in direct opposition to true Christianity. Christ preaches chastity, but chastity, like any virtue, is of value only when it is attained through an effort of the will and is supported by faith, and not when it is attained by the impossibility of sinning. It is the same as though a man, for fear of glutting himself, produced in himself a disease of the stomach, or, for fear of fighting, tied his hands, or, for fear of swearing, cut out his tongue. God has created man such as he is; he breathed the divine soul into the carnal body in order that this soul should vanquish the lusts of the body (in this does all the life of man consist), and not in order to maim his body, correcting God's work.

If people are drawn to sexual intercourse, this is done for the purpose that the perfection which one generation has not reached may be attained by the next. Wonderful in this respect is God's wisdom : man is ordained to perfect himself, – "Be ye as perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." A true sign of perfection is found in chastity, true chastity, – not only in deeds, but also in the soul, that is, in a full liberation from sexual passion. If men reached perfection and became chaste, the human race would come to an end, and there would be no reason why it should exist upon earth, for men would be like angels, who do not marry and are not given in marriage, as the Gospel says. But so long as men have not reached perfection they procreate a posterity, and this posterity is being perfected and approaches what God has commanded it to attain, and comes nearer and nearer to perfection. But if men acted as do the Eunuchs, the human race would come to an end, and would never attain perfection, – it would not be doing God's will.

This is one reason why I consider the action of the Eunuchs wrong; another is this, that the Gospel teaching gives the good to men, and Christ says, " My yoke is good, and my burden is light," and forbids any violence against people; and so the infliction of wounds and sufferings, even though not upon others (which is an 'obvious sin'), but upon oneself, is a violation of the Christian law.

The third reason is this, that the Eunuchs obviously give a wrong interpretation to verse 12 of the nineteenth chapter of Matthew. The whole discourse from the beginning of the nineteenth chapter is

about marriage, and Christ not only does not prohibit marriage, but even prohibits divorce, that is, the change of a wife. When his disciples (verse 10) told him that in this way it was very hard to contain oneself, that is, to get along with one wife only, he told them that, although not all persons were able to contain themselves, as those contain themselves who are born as eunuchs, or those who, like the eunuchs, are mutilated by men, there were some who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, that is, who in spirit vanquished the passion in themselves, and that it was necessary to be like them. That under the words, "Such as made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven," it is necessary to understand the spiritual victory over the flesh, and not the physical mutilation, can be seen from the fact that where it speaks of the physical mutilation it says, "Were made eunuchs of men," and where it speaks of the victory of the spirit over the flesh, it says, "Made themselves eunuchs."

Thus I think, and thus I understand verse 12, but I must add that if the interpretation of the letter should seem inconclusive to you, you must remember that it is only the spirit that gives life. A compulsory or even voluntary mutilation is contrary to the whole spirit of the Christian teaching.

I should like to write to him in that sense, even as I understand it, that the bearing of children in marriage is not fornication; but I should like to consider it better, so as to write with greater thoroughness, because there is also truth in the opinion that carnal intercourse, even with one's own wife, for the sake of lust alone, is sinful. I think that self-mutilation is the same kind of a sin as carnal intercourse for the sake of lust, just as I think that it is as much a sin to gorge oneself as to starve or poison oneself. Only such food is legitimate for the body as makes it possible for a man to serve others, and only such carnal intercourse is legitimate as perpetuates the human race.

The Eunuchs are right when they say that cohabitation with one's wife, if it takes place without spiritual love, only for the sake of lust, and so not in proper time, is fornication; but they are not right when they say that intercourse with one's wife for the purpose of bringing forth children and in spiritual love is a sin. It is not a sin, but God's will.

Mutilation is, in my opinion, like this. Let us say a man was living in temperately and was in the habit of distilling liquor and brewing beer out of his grain, and of getting intoxicated, and that he suddenly felt that this was bad and sinful, and, instead of giving up his bad habit and learning to do what was proper, – to use the grain for feeding man and beast, – he decided that there was one way of getting rid of the sin, and that was, to burn his grain, and went and did so. What would happen would be this: the sin would still remain the same in him, and his neighbours would still proceed brewing beer and distilling liquor, while he would be unable to feed himself, or his family, or other good people.

With good reason Christ praised the children and said that the kingdom of God was theirs and that what was hidden from the wise was revealed to them. We know that ourselves: if there were no children, if children were not born anew, there would be no hope for the kingdom of God upon earth. Only in them is all the hope. We are all soiled, and it is difficult for us to be cleansed, but with every new generation, with every family, there come new innocent souls that may remain such. The river is turbid and dirty, but many clean springs fall into it, and there is hope that the water will become purified.

It is a great question, and I am glad to think about it. I know this much : lustful fornication and mutilation are equally bad and sinful. But the second, mutilation, is worse. In fornication there is no pride, but there is shame, while in mutilation people have no shame, and pride themselves on this, that they have once for all violated the law of God in order not to succumb to temptation and not to have to struggle. It is necessary to mutilate the heart and then the external mutilation will not be necessary, for external mutilation does not save one from temptation. People fall into this deception because it is altogether impossible to destroy in the heart the lust of fornication and nothing more, it is necessary to destroy all lust, it is necessary to love God in such a way as to despise all the temptation of the world, and that is a long path ; but here it is as though one could by a short way free oneself from the most obvious and disgraceful sin, and the trouble is that by this short cut one frequently arrives nowhere except at a swamp.

The sexual instinct is a striving, if not after fulfilling the whole law, at least after securing the possibility of its fulfilment to one's posterity. The truth of this is confirmed in separate individuals: the more a man approaches the fulfilment of the law, the more he turns away from sexual lust, and vice versa.

Just as man, together with other animals, submits to the law of the struggle for existence, so he submits, like the animals, to the law of sexual propagation; but man, as a man, finds in himself another law, which is contrary to the struggle, the law of love, and the law of chastity, which is contrary to sexual intercourse for the sake of propagation.

According to the church belief there is to be an end of the world; according to science man's life on earth, and earth itself, are to come to the same end; what, then, is it which so provokes people that the good and moral life will also lead to the end of the human race ? Maybe these things coincide. In the statutes of the Shakers it says: "Why should men through continence not free themselves from violent death ? " Beautiful.

There is a calculation by Herschel from which it follows that if humanity doubled every fifty years, as it now does, then, if we count seven thousand years from the first pair, there would have been by this time so many people that, if they were placed upon each other over the whole earth, this pyramid would not only reach up to

the sun, but would pass the distance twenty-seven times. What deduction do we make from this ?

There are only two deductions: either to admit and wish for plagues and wars, or to strive after sexual purity. Only the striving after purity can establish the balance.

The statistics of plagues and wars and celibacy would be interesting. No doubt they are in inverse proportion, that is, the less destructive conditions there are, the more there are celibates : one balances the other.

Another deduction, which involuntarily presents itself and which I am still unable to formulate in a clear manner, is this, that mental cares and calculations about shortening human life are irregular. What is regular is only love; and love is never alone, but is connected with purity. Imagine a man who begets other men and at the same time considers cutting their lives short; both acts taken together are senseless. What would be the right thing to do under such conditions would be to beget one and at least to kill one. One thing is rational: Be ye as perfect as your Father is perfect. But this perfection is in purity and then in love.

All young men of your age, who live under the conditions under which you are living, are in a very dangerous state. The danger consists in this, that at an age when habits are formed which will remain for all time, like creases in the paper, you live without any, without any moral and religious restraint, seeing nothing but those unpleasantnesses of the teaching, which are imposed upon you and from which you try to free yourself in one way or another, and those most varied gratifications of lust, which attract you on all sides and which you are able to satisfy. Such a state seems to you quite natural and cannot seem otherwise, and you are not at all to blame because it appears so to you, for you grew up in it, and your companions are in the same condition, – but this state is quite exclusive and terribly dangerous. It is terribly dangerous because, if you are to place the whole aim of your life in such a gratification, as it is with you young men, when these lusts are new and especially strong, then it is bound to happen, according to a very well known and indubitable law, that, in order to receive the satisfaction which one is accustomed to receive from the gratification of the appetites, or from savoury food, driving, play, attire, music, one would have to keep adding objects of lust, because lust, once satisfied, does not furnish that enjoyment a second and a third time, and one has to gratify new and stronger lusts. (There even exists a law from which we know that enjoyment increases in an arithmetical progression, while the means for the production of this enjoyment have to be increased by squares.)

And since of all the lusts the strongest is the sexual, which is expressed in enamourment, fondling, onanism, and cohabitation, it always and very soon arrives at this, which is always one and the same. When for these enjoyments can no longer be substituted something new, something stronger, there begins the artificial

increase of this very enjoyment by means of intoxicating oneself with wine, tobacco, and sensuous music. This is such a usual path that upon it walk, with rare exceptions, all young men, both rich and poor, and if they stop in time, they return to real life more or less crippled, or perish altogether, as hundreds of young men have perished in my sight.

There is but one salvation in your state: to stop, to come to your senses, to look about, and to find ideals for yourself, that is, of what you wish to be, and to live in such a way as to attain that which you wish to be.

The whole matter is in continence. As soon as people will find their good in continence, marriages will be moderated.

A man will never succeed in getting married in order to live more happily. To set marriage, the union with whom one loves, as the chief, all-absorbing aim of one's life, is a great error, and a palpable error, if you reflect on it. The aim is marriage. Well, you are married, what then? If there was no other aim before marriage, it will be very difficult, almost impossible, for the two to find it later. It is even sure, if there was no common aim before marriage, that you will under no condition come together, but will be sure to separate. Marriage gives happiness only when there is one common aim. People meet on the road, and say: "Let us go together." "Let us go," and they take each other's hands; but not when, attracted by one another, they get off the road.

All this is so because equally false is the conception, shared by many, that life is a valley of tears, and the other, which is shared by a vast majority, and to which you are inclined by youth and health and riches, that life is a place of enjoyment. Life is a place of service, where one has frequently to endure many hardships, but often or still to experience very many joys. But there can be true joys only when men themselves understand their life as service, – when they have a definite aim of life which is outside them, outside their personal happiness. People who get married generally forget this completely. There are to be so many happy incidents in marriage, the birth of children, that, it seems, these incidents will form life itself, but that is a dangerous deception. If the parents live on and bring forth children, without having any aim in life, they will only defer the question of the aim of life and that punishment to which men are subjected who live without knowing for what, – they will only defer it, but not avoid it, because they will have to educate and guide their children, and there is" nothing to guide by. Then the parents lose their human properties and the happiness which is connected with them, and become racial beasts. And so I say : people who are preparing themselves to get married, for the very reason that life seems full to them, must more than ever think and make clear to themselves in the name of what each of them is living. But, in order to make this clear to yourself, you must think and consider the conditions under which you live, and your past, and estimate the value of everything in life, – what you consider important, what not important, what you believe in; that

is, what you consider as an eternal, indubitable truth, and what you will be guided by in life. And you must not only find that out and make it clear to yourself, but also experience it in fact and introduce it into your life, because, so long as you do not do what you believe in, you do not know yourself whether you believe or not. I know your faith, and it is this faith, or its sides, which find their expression in deeds, that you must more than ever, even now, make clear to yourself, by putting them into execution. The faith consists in believing that the good is in loving men and being loved by them. To obtain it I know three activities which I practise all the time, which one cannot practise enough, and which you need now more especially. The first thing is, in order to be able to love men and be loved by them, a man must accustom himself to demand as little as possible of them, because if I demand much, I have many privations; and if I have many privations, I am inclined to reproach, and not to love, – there is much labour.

The second, – in order to love men not in words, but in deeds, a man must teach himself to do what is useful to men. There is still more labour here, especially for you in your years, when it is proper for a man to study.

The third, – in order to love men and be loved by them, a man must learn meekness, humility, and the art of enduring disagreeable people and unpleasantnesses, – the art of always treating them in such a way as not to grieve any one, and in case of being unable to keep from causing them grief, of being able to choose the lesser grief. And here there is even more work, and constant work, from wakening until falling asleep. And it is most joyous work, because day after day you rejoice at your success in it, and, besides, receive a very joyous, though at first invisible, reward in the love of men.

And so I advise you to think and live as seriously as possible, because only by this means will you find out whether you are indeed walking on the same road, and whether it is good for you to give one another your hands, or not, and at the same time, if you are sincere, to prepare the future for yourself. Your aim in life ought not to be the joy of marriage, but the joy of bringing by your life more love and truth into the world. Marriage consists even in this, that people may aid one another to attain this aim. Les extremes se touchent. The most egotistical and abominable of lives is that of two people who have united for the purpose of enjoying life, and the highest calling is that of men who live for the purpose of serving God, bringing the good into the world and who have united for it. So do not get entangled : that's it, but not exactly it. Why should a man not choose that which is higher? But having chosen the highest, a man has to put his whole soul into it, – with a little there will be no results.

One should by no means marry for love, but by all means from calculation, except that these two words are to be understood in the opposite sense from what they are generally understood, that is, one should marry, not from sensual love, but from calculation, not as to

where and by what to live (all men live), but as to how probable it is that the future wife would aid, and not hinder me in my living a human life.

Above all, think twenty, a hundred times about marriage. To unite one's life with that of another person in a sexual union is for a moral, sensitive man the most significant act, most pregnant with consequences, which a man can perform. One must always marry just as one dies, that is, only when it is not possible to do otherwise.

Next to death in importance, and next to death in time, there is nothing more important and irretrievable than marriage. And just as death is good only when it is inevitable, and every intentional death is bad, so is also marriage. Marriage is no evil only when it is invincible.

The matter of marriage is in itself not so simple as it seems. Enamourment is a deviation to one side, but cold calculation is a still worse deviation on the other side. If, as you say, one should turn to the first girl, that is, one should not choose for his happiness, then it is necessary to abandon oneself to accident, to fate, which guides the external phenomena, subordinating one's choice to the choice of oneself. Sentiment will confuse a man, but reason will confuse one even more, while this is the greatest thing in life. In my opinion, it is necessary, as in everything in life, and more than in anything else, not to set to on self the problem of getting married, but to propound the one, eternal problem of how to live well and suffer and wait, and then the time will come and circumstances will make it impossible not to get married. In this way you will be more certain not to err and not to sin.

Princess Marya Aleksyeevna's judgment about marriage is the well-known one: "If young men marry without sufficient means, - there will come children, want, - they will get tired of one another in a year or two, or ten, there will be quarrels, misery, hell." In all this Princess Marya Aleksyeevna is quite right, and predicts correctly, so long as these marrying people have not another sole aim, which is unknown to Princess Marya Aleksyeevna, - not a mental aim, which is cognized by reason, but one which forms the light of life, the attainment of which agitates more than anything else. If this exists, it is well, and Princess Marya Aleksyeevna will be fooled. If this does not exist, there are ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that nothing will come of the marriage but unhappiness.

People who marry like that present themselves to me like people who fall without stumbling. If you have fallen, what is to be done? And if you have not stumbled, what sense is there in falling intentionally?

There are two things that bind you, - your convictions, - faith and love. In my opinion one is enough. The real, true union is human, Christian love; if this shall exist, and upon it shall grow up love, enamourment, it is well and firm. If there is but love, enamourment, it is not exactly bad, but also not good, - still it is possible.

Honest natures can with great struggles live through it. But if neither exists, but only a prctcxte of one or the other, it is certainly bad. A man has to be as severe as possible with himself, and must know in the name of what he is acting.

Novels end by the marriage of the hero and the heroine. They ought to begin with this and end with their unmarrying, that is, becoming free. For to describe the lives of men in such a way as to break off the description at marriage, is the same as, in describing a man's travels, to break off in the place where the traveller has fallen among robbers.

Yes, in the Gospel there are no indications of marriage; there is a negation of it, there is a counteraction to debauchery, lust, and divorce for those who are already in marriage; but of the institution of marriage, in' the way the church speaks of it, there is not even any mention. Nothing but the insipid miracle at Cana, which confirms marriage to the same extent that Zaccheus's visit confirms the collection of tribute.

Yes, I think that marriage is a non-Christian institution. Christ never married, nor did His disciples, and He never established marriage, but, when He turned to people, of whom some were married, and some not, He told the married people not to change their wives through divorce, as could be done according to the law of Moses (Matt, v. 32), and those who were not married, He told to refrain from getting married, if they could do so (Matt. xix. 10-12). He told both that they must understand that the chief sin consists in looking upon woman as a subject of enjoyment (Matt. v. 28). (Naturally, the same must be understood on the part of woman in relation to man.)

From this proposition naturally result the following moral deductions:

1. We must not consider, as people now do, that every person, man or woman, must by all means enter into wedlock; but, on the contrary, we must consider that every person, man or woman, ought best of all to preserve his or her purity, so that nothing may interfere with giving all the strength to the service of God.

2. We must not look, as people now do, on the fall of man, - man or woman, - that is, on the entrance into sexual intercourse as on an error which may be mended by a new sexual intercourse (in the shape of marriage) with another person, or even as on a permissible gratification of a need, or even a pleasure ; but we must look upon the entrance into the first sexual intercourse of any one with any one whatsoever as upon an entrance into inseverable marriage (Matt. xix. 4-6), which binds the conjugal pair to a definite activity as a redemption of a sin committed.

3. We must not look upon marriage, as they do now, as upon a dispensation to gratify carnal lust, but as upon a sin demanding its redemption.

The redemption of the sin consists, – in the first place, in the liberation of self from lust, the conjugal pair helping one another in this, and in the attainment, as far as this is possible, of the establishment among themselves of the relations, not of lovers, but of a brother and sister; and, in the second place, in the education of the children, the future servants of God, who spring from marriage.

The difference of such a view on marriage from the existing one is very great: people will marry just as much as ever, and just as much will parents think of getting their children married, but the great difference consists in this, as to when the gratification of the lust is considered permissible and legitimate and the greatest happiness in the world, or when it is considered a sin. Following the Christian teaching a man will marry only when he feels that he cannot act otherwise, and having married he will not abandon himself to his lust, but will strive to subdue it (both man and woman); the parents, caring for the spiritual good of their children, will not consider it necessary to get all married, but will get them married, that is, will counsel the fall, or make it easy for them, only when the children are not strong enough to preserve their purity, and only when it shall become clear that they cannot live otherwise. The conjugal pair will not desire, as they do now, a large number of children, but, on the contrary, striving after purity of life, will be glad that they have but few children, and are able to devote all their strength to the education of those of their children whom they have already, and to those children of others whom they can serve, if they wish to serve God with the education of future servants of God.

The difference will be the same that exists between men who partake of food because they cannot get along without it, and so try to lose as little time and attention as possible on the preparation and consumption of the food, and those who place the chief interest of life in the invention, adaptation, and increase of savouriness and in the consumption of the food, which the Romans carried to the highest degree, when they took emetics¹ in order to be able to eat again.

The first thing I have to say about this is this, that I, in speaking of the manner in which the married pair ought to live, not only do not hint at having lived or living myself as I ought to, but, on the contrary, know from my own hard knocks how I ought to have lived only because I have not lived properly.

I do not take back anything I have said; on the contrary, I should try to say more strongly all I have said, but in reality I have to give an explanation. I must do so, because we are in our lives so far from what we ought to be in conformity with our consciences and with Christ's teaching, that the truth in this respect startles us as much (I know this from experience), as a provincial merchant who is growing rich would be startled by the hint that he ought not to lay by for his family and for church bells, but ought to give away everything he has, if he wishes to be freed from evil.

You say : " Do not sleep together." Of course not. I have thought of it myself. I will write about it everything that I think of it, just as it occurs to me.

1 Precisely the same is done in our country in order to prevent the birth of children. – Author's Note.

There is the sentiment of enamourment, most powerful in man, which has its inception between two persons of the opposite sex who did not know one another, and which leads to marriage; marriage has immediately a child for its consequence. There begins pregnancy and in consequence of it a sexual indifference of the conjugal pair toward one another, an indifference which would be very perceptible, and would interrupt the carnal intercourse, as it is interrupted in the case of the animals, if men did not consider the carnal intercourse a legitimate enjoyment. Such an indifference, which gives way to the care respecting the growth and the nursing of the child, continues to the child's weaning, and in a good marriage (in this does the difference of man from the animal exist) there begins again, with the weaning of the child, the feeling of enamourment between the same conjugal pair.

No matter how far we may be from it, there can be no doubt that it ought to be so, and for these reasons:

In the first place, sexual intercourse at a time when woman is not prepared for bearing children, that is, when she has no menses, has no rational meaning and is nothing but carnal enjoyment and a very bad and disgraceful enjoyment, as every conscientious man knows, which resembles the most heinous and unnatural sexual excesses. A man who abandons himself to it becomes more irrational than an animal, that is, he uses his reason for the purpose of departing from the law of reason.

In the second place, all know and agree to it, that sexual intercourse weakens and exhausts a man, and weakens him in the most essentially human activity, – in his spiritual activity. " Moderation," the defenders of the present order will say, but there can be no moderation, the moment there is a transgression of the laws established by reason. But the harm of the excess (and intercourse outside the free period is an excess) may for a man not be great with moderation (it is disgusting even to pronounce this word in relation to such a subject), if he knows one woman; but what will be moderation for the man will be a terrible immoderation for

the woman who is in the period of pregnancy or nursing.

I think that the backwardness of women and their hysterical condition are for the most part due to this. It is from this that woman ought to be freed, in order that she may become one body with her husband, and the servant, not of the devil, which she now is, but of God. The ideal is remote, but great. Why should we not strive after it ?

I imagine that marriage ought to be like this: the pair cohabit carnally under the invincible pressure of amorousness, the child is conceived, and the conjugal pair, avoiding everything which for her may impair the growth or the nutrition of the child, avoiding every carnal temptation, and not evoking it, as is done nowadays, live together as brother and sister.

As it now is, the man, who was debauched before, transfers his methods of debauchery to his wife, infects her with the same sensuality, and imposes upon her the intolerable burden of being at the same time a sweetheart, an exhausted mother, and a sickly, hysterical person. And the husband loves her as a sweetheart, ignores her as a mother, and despises her for her irritability and hysteria, which he himself induces in her. It seems to me that in this is to be found the key to all the sufferings which in an enormous majority of the cases is hidden in all families.

And so I imagine that husband and wife live like brother and sister; she bears calmly, nurses without impairment, and with this grows morally, and only in free periods do they abandon themselves to amorousness, which lasts some weeks, and again there is calm.

I imagine that this amorousness is that steam pressure which would burst the boiler if the safety-valve did not rise. The valve opens only during this great pressure, but it is always closed, carefully closed, and it ought to be our aim consciously to close it as tightly as possible, and to put such heavy weights on it that it may not open. In this sense do I understand, " Who can contain, let him contain," that is, let everybody strive never to get married, and having married, to live with his wife as brother and sister. But the steam collects and opens the valves; but we must not open them ourselves, as we do when we look on sexual intercourse as on a legitimate enjoyment. It is lawful only when we cannot abstain from it, and when it bursts forth in spite of our wish.

How are we to determine when we are not able to abstain from it ?

How many such questions there are, and how insoluble they seem, whereas how simple they are when you decide them in your own case and for yourself and not in the case of others and for others. For others you know only a certain gradation : an old man abandons himself to sexual intercourse with a prostitute, – that is dreadfully disgusting; a young man does the same, – and it is less disgusting. An old man sensually caresses his wife, – it is quite disgusting, but less so than in the case of a young man with a

prostitute. A young man has sensual relations with his wife, – it is still less disgusting, but none the less disgusting. Such a gradation exists for others, and all of us, especially uncorrupted children and young people, know it very well; but in our own case there exists also something else: every man who has known no sexual indulgence, and every virgin, has the consciousness (frequently quite bedimmed by false conceptions) that he or she must guard his or her purity, and the desire to preserve it, and sorrow and shame at its loss, no matter under what conditions. There is a voice of conscience which always says clearly afterward and at all times that it is bad and shameful. The whole matter is in the consciousness, in the comprehension.

In the world it is considered that it is very good to enjoy love, precisely as though it should be considered good to open the safety-valves and let out the steam; but according to God's law it is good to live only a true life, to work with one's talent for God, that is, to love men and their souls, and among them first the nearest, – one's wife, – and to help her in the comprehension of the truth, and not to strangle her ability of conceiving, by making her the instrument of one's enjoyment, that is, to work with the steam and to use all efforts in order that it may not all escape through the safety-valves.

" But in this way the human race will come to an end." In the first place, no matter how strictly we may try not to have any sexual intercourse, there are the safety-valves so long as they are needed, and – there will be children. Yes, what is the use of lying ? Do we, while defending sexual intercourse, care about the perpetuation of the race ? We care about our enjoyment, and we ought to say so. The human race will come to an end ? What will come to an end will be the animal man. What a misfortune 1 Antediluvian animals have been extinguished, and so the animal man will certainly be extinguished (to judge from appearances in space and time). Let it come to an end. I am as little sorry for this two-legged animal as for the ichthyosauri, and so forth; all I care for is that the true life, the love of the beings capable of love, should not be extinguished. But this will not only not come to an end if the human race shall come to an end, because men will out of love renounce the pleasures of lust, but it will be multiplied an endless number of times; this love will increase so much and the beings that experience it will become such that the continuation of the human race will not be necessary for them. Carnal love is necessary for no other reason than that there should be no interruption of the possibility of working out such beings from men.

The animals abandon themselves to sexual intercourse only when the progeny can be born. Unenlightened men, such as we all are, are ready for it at all times and have even invented the statement that this is a necessity. Through this invented necessity the activity of the mistress ruins the woman, by compelling her to do unnatural work, which is above her strength, during the time while she is pregnant or nursing. With this demand we have ourselves ruined this rational nature in woman, and then we complain of her irrationality,

or develop it with books and university courses. Yes, in everything animal, man has still consciously to come up to the animal, and this takes place of itself when the comprehension begins to live, for otherwise the activity of the reason is directed only to the distortion of the animal life.

The question of the sexual relations between husband and wife, to what extent they are legitimate, is one of the most important practical Christian questions, something like the question of property, and never ceases to interest me. And, as always, this question is solved in the Gospel, and, as always, our life has been so remote from the solution which Christ has given that we have been unable not only to apply the Christian solution, but even to comprehend it. Matt. xix. 11, 12 : But he said unto them, All men cannot receive the saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men : and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

This passage, which has been commented upon so frequently and so falsely, means nothing but this, that, if a man asks what he is to do in relation to the sexual feeling, what to strive after, wherein, in our language, man's ideal is to consist, – he answers: to become a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. And he who will attain this will attain the highest; and he who will not attain it will fare well for having striven after it. He who can receive, let him receive.

I think that for man's good, man and woman ought to strive after complete virginity, and then man will be what he ought to be. We must aim beyond the goal, in order to reach the goal. But if man consciously strives, as is the case among us, after sexual intercourse, even though in marriage, he will inevitably fall into what is contrary to the law, into debauchery. If a man consciously strives to live, not for the belly, but for the spirit, his relation to food will be such as it ought to be. But if a man in advance prepares savoury dinners for himself, he will inevitably fall into lawlessness and debauchery.

I have thought a great deal about the marital life, – and, as has always been the case with me, whenever I begin to think seriously, I am urged on and helped from without. The other day I received from America a book by a woman doctor (she had written to me), Stockham, under the title of "Tokology." The book is in general excellent from a hygienic standpoint, but, above all, in one chapter it treats the very subject about which we have been corresponding, and which, of course, solves the question in the same way as you and I do. It is a pleasure to see that the question has long ago been raised, and that the scientific authorities are deciding it in the same sense. It is an immense pleasure to find yourself in the darkness and to see a light far ahead of you. With my egoism it makes me sad to think that I have passed all my life in a beastly way and that I no longer can mend my life, particularly sad, because people will say :

" It is all very well for you, a decaying old man, to say this, but you did not live accordingly. When we get old, we shall be speaking in the same manner." This is where the chief punishment for sins lies : you feel that you are an unworthy instrument for the transmission of God's will, an instrument that is spoiled and soiled. But there is the consolation that others will be such. May God help you and the others.

I have been thinking, among other things, for the epilogue : Marriage was formerly the acquisition of a wife for the purpose of possessing her. Again, the relation to woman was established by war, by captivity. Man arranged for himself the possibility of his lust, without thinking of woman, – the harem. Monogamy changed the number of wives, but not the relation to her. The true relation is quite the opposite. A man can always have a woman and can always contain himself; but a woman (especially one who has known a man) can with much greater difficulty contain herself when she may have intercourse, which happens with her once in two years. And so, if there is any one who can ask for gratification, it is by no means the man, but the woman. The woman may demand this, because for her it is not a Genuss, as for man, but, on the contrary, because she gives herself up with pain, and expects pain, – pain, and suffering, and cares. It seems that marriage ought to be formulated like this: Man and woman come together, loving one another spiritually, and both promise one another that if they shall have children, they will have them of one another. But the demand for sexual intercourse ought to come from her, and not from him.

I think, in the first place, that you judge quite incorrectly when you say that you must not turn to the father of your children (you write: " I will not, and I cannot "). The union between a man and a woman from whom children were born is insoluble, independently of whether it is sanctified in an external manner, by ecclesiastic marriage. And so I think that, no matter who the father of your children may be, whether he be married or single, rich or poor, bad or good, whether he has offended you or not, you must turn to him and point out to him, if he has neglected it, his duty to serve his children and their mother with his life. If he should answer to this not only with indifference, but also with contempt and insult, you are none the less obliged before God, before yourself, before your children, and, above all, before him, to turn to him, to remind him, to beg him for his own sake to do his duty, – to ask him meekly, lovingly, but persistently, as the widow of the Gospel begged the judge. This is my well-considered and sincere opinion ; you may leave it without attention or follow it. But I have felt it to be my duty to tell it to you.

The physical connection with the accidental husband is one of the means established by God for the dissemination of his truth : for the trial and confirmation of the stronger and the enlightenment of the weaker.

In the Bible and the Gospel it says that man and wife are not two beings, but one, and this is true, not because it was supposedly

said by God, but because it is a confirmation of the undoubted truth that the sexual intercourse of two beings, which has childbirth for its consequence, unites these two beings in some mysterious manner, which is distinct from any other union, so that these two in a certain way cease to be two and become one being.

And so I think that the striving after chastity, after the cessation of such relations, can and must be accomplished by this united being, that is, by both the husband and the wife together, and the one who is in advance in this relation must try and influence the other with all means at command, – with simplicity of life, with example, with conviction. So long as they have not met in one desire, they must bear together the burden of the sins of their united being.

In matters of our passions we certainly do things which are contrary and repulsive to our conscience; even so we have to do deeds which are contrary to our conscience, if only we do not regard ourselves as separate beings, but as parts of the united beings of the conjugal pair. The only point is, as in one's personal temptations, so also in the temptation of this united being, not for a moment to fail to recognize the sin as a sin, – to cease fighting.

You are right when you say that there are obligations to oneself, the image and likeness of God, and a man cannot and must not admit a defilement of his body ; but this does not refer to those marital relations from which there have been and can be children. The bringing forth of children and their education and nursing destroy the greater part of the weight and criminality of these relations and, besides, for the long period of pregnancy and nursing frees from them.

It is not our business to discuss whether the bringing forth of children is good or not. He who established this redemption for the sin of violating chastity knew what he was doing.

Forgive me if what I shall say shall offend you: In what you say that bearing children one becomes more and more nervous, there is expressed an evil, coarsely egotistical trait. You do not live in order to be merry and healthy, but in order to do the work for which you were appointed. Now this business consists, in addition to all the most important affairs of your inner life, – if you are ahead of your husband in the matter of chastity, – in helping him advance on this path, and, if you yourself have not fulfilled everything demanded of you, in giving to the world other beings who will be able to fulfil it.

Besides, if certain relations exist between husband and wife, both of them invariably take part in it. If one of them is more passionate, it seems to the other that he or she is absolutely chaste; but this is not true.

I think it is not true even in your case. You merely do not see your sin behind the more noticeable sin of some one else. If you were

absolutely pure in this respect, you would be indifferent to where your husband is going to find a gratification of his passion, — indifferent in the sense of jealousy, and would only pity him for his fall; but this is not the case.

If you were to ask practical advice of me, I should say: Choose the best minute of a pure mood of love in your husband, and tell him how hard and painful these relations are to you, and how passionately you wish to be freed from them. If, as you write, he does not agree with you that chastity is good, and will insist, — submit, and, if you shall be pregnant, which you ought to wish, demand your full freedom during the time of pregnancy and nursing. And again do the same, and do not trouble yourself as to what will come of it.

Nothing but good can come from it, for you, and for your husband, and for your children, because, by acting in this manner, you will be seeking, not your happiness and peace, but the fulfilment of what God wants of you.

Forgive me if I have not written well; I tried before God to give utterance to what I have experienced and thought concerning this question.

Oppressive relations with one's wife (or husband) can be untied only by a meek life, just as a knot can be untied

only by submissively following with the whole skein after the thread.

Believe me that there are no external conditions which are good in themselves, and a senseless man who is married to an angel, and another who is married to a devil, is equally dissatisfied, and that many, not only many, but nearly all who are dissatisfied with their marital state (they are all of them dissatisfied) think that there can be nothing worse than their situation. Consequently it is all the same with everybody.

If you look upon woman as an object of enjoyment, even if it were your own wife, — so much the worse if she is your wife, — you are committing adultery and are sinning. With the fulfilment of the law of bread labour, cohabitation has the aim of impersonal enjoyment, of an aid, a contemner; but with superabundance, — that of debauchery.

The gardener's wife has again had a child, and again there came an old woman and took the baby away somewhere.

All are terribly agitated. The use of means for preventing birth is nothing, but for this there are not suffi-0 07

cient condemnatory words.

It was learned to-day that the old midwife has returned and has brought the child back. On the road the midwife came across others

who were taking with them just such children. One of these children was given the nipple too far down into the mouth. It pulled it in, and strangled. In one day they brought twenty-five children to Moscow. Of these twenty-five, nine were not accepted, because they were legitimate or sick.

N----went in the morning to admonish the gardener's

wife. The gardener's wife warmly defended her husband, saying that with their poverty and indefiniteness of life she could not have any children. Her breast even does not fill up. In short, it is inconvenient for her. . . .

Just before that I was swinging three waifs, and I came across another boy, Vasya's nephews. Altogether there is a swarm of this brood of children. They are born and they grow up to become drunkards, syphilitics, savages.

And with all this they talk of the salvation of the lives of men and children and of their destruction. What is the sense of breeding savages? What good is there in this? They ought not to be killed, nor ought people to stop breeding them, but they ought to employ all their forces in order to make men out of the savages. This is the only good. But this deed is not done with words alone, but with the example of life.

If you have fallen, know that there is no other redemption of this sin than (1) freeing both yourselves from the offence of the lust and (2) bringing up the children as servants of God.

Be both of you (husband and wife) careful and, more than anything, attentive to your mutual relations, so that the habits of irritation and alienation may not steal in. It is not an easy matter to become one soul and one body. We must try. And the reward for the endeavour is great. I know one chief means for this: amidst your conjugal love do not for a moment forget or lose the love and respect of man to man. Let there be relations of man to wife, but at the base of all let the relations be as to a stranger, a near friend, - this is the chief relation. In them is the power.

Do not strengthen your attachment for one another, but with all your strength increase the caution in your relations, the alertness, so that there may be no conflicts. That is a terrible habit. With no one are there such close and many-sided relations as with a husband or wife, and for this reason we always forget to think of them, to be conscious of them, just as we cease being conscious of our body. And that is where the trouble is.

Tor a conjugal pair to be happy, as they write about happiness in novels, and as every human heart wishes for it, it is necessary that there should be concord. But in order that there should be concord, it is necessary for husband and wife to look in the same way upon the world and the meaning of life (this is particularly necessary in relation to children). But that husband and wife should understand

life alike, should stand on the same level of comprehension, will happen as rarely as that one leaf of a tree should precisely cover another. And since this does not exist, the only possibility of concord, and so of happiness, consists in this, that one of the two should submit his or her comprehension to the other.

Here lies the chief difficulty : the spouse with the superior comprehension cannot, in spite of his or her best desire, surrender it to the inferior comprehension. It is possible for the attainment of concord not to sleep, not to eat, to make beds for flowers, etc., but it is impossible to do that which you consider wrong, sinful, not only irrational, but directly opposed to reason, and bad. In spite of all the consciousness that the happiness of both depends on concord, that this concord is necessary for happiness and for the correct education of the children, a wife cannot contribute to her husband's intoxication or gambling, and the husband cannot contribute to his wife's balls and to teaching his children dancing and fencing and religion according to Filaret's Catechism.

For the observance of concord and not only of happiness, but also of the true good, which coincides with love and union, the one who stands on the lower level of comprehension and feels the higher comprehension of the other must submit, and not only submit in worldly, practical matters, in such things as what to eat, how to eat, how to dress, how to live, but must also submit in the direction of life, in the aims of the activity.

If it should turn out that I like billiards, or the races, or my ambition more than my children, there might be place for reproaches; or if it should turn out that I am a coward and am afraid to go against the existing order, lest my peace be disturbed, these reproaches might touch me. But if I love God, that is, the good and truth, I certainly love my children in the best way possible and for them do the very best I can do.

For happiness, still more, for the true good of the married pair and of the children who live with them, and for the good of all their near friends, the concord of the spouses is indispensable; discord, quarrels, are a misfortune for them, for the children, and an offence for people, a most terrible hell. That this may not be, but one thing is needed: one of the two must submit.

It seems to me that it is so easy and such a joy for that one of the marital pair to submit who understands that his other half stands higher, understands something not quite accessible to him or her, but something that is good and divine, - one always feels that, - that I wonder why they do not do it.

It is necessary to unite serving men and serving the family, not by distributing the time mechanically between this and that, but chemically, by adding to the care of the family, the education of the children, an ideal meaning in the service of men. Marriage, true marriage, which is manifested in the birth of children, is in its true significance only a mediate service of God, a service of God

through the children. For this reason marriage, conjugal love, is always experienced by us as a certain alleviation and pacification. It is the moment of the transmission of one's work to another. " If I have not done what I could and should have done, here are my children to take my place, – they will do it."

The real point is that they should do it and that they should be educated to be, not a hindrance to God's works, but His labourers, so that, if I was unable to serve the ideal which was standing before me, I may be able to do everything in my power so that my children may serve Him. This gives the whole programme and the whole character of the education, and supplies a religious significance to education ; and it is this which chemically unites into one the best, self-sacrificing tendencies of youth and the care of the family.

I welcome newly arrived Ivan. Whence does he come ? What is he for ? Whither is he going ? And who is he ? It is well for those to whom the protoplasm forms a sufficient answer to these questions; but those whom this answer does not satisfy must inevitably believe that there is a deep significance in Ivan's appearance and life, and that we shall understand this significance in proportion as we shall do everything we must in relation to him, – to Ivan.

Men of a family must either abandon their wives and children, – and this cannot be done, – or they must live in a settled state. This wandering must be painful for the wives who for the most part (I hope they will forgive me this), if at best they lead a Christian life, lead it not for God, but for their husbands. For them, the poor women, this is difficult. And so, it seems to me, they should be taken care of and pitied. Barely has some balance established itself between husband and wife, and they manage to get on their legs, when there comes the difficulty of the migration and of the new establishment. It is above their strength, and every building which is reared with labour caves in. I know, you will say that there is no need of living with the family: Leave your wife and children, as Christ has said; but I believe that this may be done only by mutual consent, and there is another saying of Christ, and one which is more obligatory : Man and wife are not twain, but one flesh, and that those whom God has united man cannot sever. People like you and other happy and strong men must not get married, but if they have married and have children, they must not violate what has been done, must not wipe out the sin, but bear its consequences. I think that it is a great sin to ask or advise husbands to abandon their wives. It is true, it seems that God's work will gain from it, that without a wife I shall do a great deal more than now, but frequently it only seems so. If I could be absolutely pure, absolutely without sin, it would be so. We must not ask and advise this for this other reason, that with such a view people who have sinned, that is, married people, would appear to themselves and to others as people who are done for, and that is not good. I think that sinners and weak people can also serve God.

Having once come to sin through marriage, we must bear the

consequences of our sin in the best, most Christian manner, and not free ourselves from it, by committing a new sin, and we must in this situation serve God with all our strength.

You understand the words of the Gospel, Leave father and mother, and wife, and children, and follow me, in too literal a sense. In respect to the meaning of these words, – especially as to how we ought to solve those conflicts and contradictions which take place between domestic ties and the demands of Christ, that is, of truth, – I think that the solution of these questions cannot be from without, by means of rules and prescriptions, and each person solves it according to his powers. The ideal, of course, always remains one and the same, and is expressed in the Gospel: Leave your wife, and follow me. But to what extent a man may do so, that only he and God know.

You ask what is meant by the words, Leave your wife. Does it mean to go away from her or to stop sleeping with her and begetting children? Of course, "to leave" means to do this, that your wife should not be as a wife, but as any other woman, as a sister. In this does the ideal lie. And this ought to be done in such a way as not to irritate the wife, not to offend her, not to subject her to anger and to temptation. And that is terribly hard to do. A married man who strives after the Christian life feels within his heart the whole difficulty of healing the wound which he himself has inflicted. This one thing I think and say . . . and that is, being married, one should strain all one's life and all one's forces to become unmarried without increasing the sin.

Yes, Christ's ideal of serving the Father is a service which first of all excludes the care both of life and of the continuation of the species. So far an attempt at renouncing these cares has not put a stop to the human race. What will happen in the future, I do not know.

I do not like to speak of the peculiarity of our time, but, in the relations of husbands and wives, of men and women, amidst the rich and the poor, there is in every country something peculiar. Thus the relations of husbands and wives, it seems to me, are spoiled by that spirit, not only of insubmission, but even of animosity of the women against the men, of rancour, of a desire to show that they are not worse than the men, that they can do the same as the men, and at the same time by the absence of that moral, religious feeling which, if it existed before in the women, is replaced by the maternal feeling. I believe that women are absolutely equal with men, but the moment they marry and become mothers, there naturally takes place a division of labour in the conjugal pair. The maternal feelings absorb so much energy that there is little of it left for moral guidance, and the moral guidance naturally passes over to the husband. So it has been ever since we have known the world. Now, since this natural order of things has been misused, – since the guidance of man has been asserted through rude force, and women were liberated by Christianity, – woman has ceased to obey man from fear, or to delegate to him the guidance of life from a consciousness that

it is better so; and there began a tangle and disorganization of life, which is noticeable in all layers of society and under all conditions.

The mental fashion of lauding the women, of asserting that they are spiritually not only equal, but even superior to men, is a very bad and harmful fashion.

There can be no doubt as to this, that women ought not to be limited in their rights, that we must treat a woman with the same deference and love as men, that she is legally man's equal; but to assert that the average woman is endowed with the same spiritual power as man, to expect to find in every woman what you expect to find in every man, means intentionally to deceive oneself, and – to deceive oneself to the injury of woman.

If we expect from woman the same as from man, we shall be demanding it; and if we do not find what we demand, we shall become irritated, shall ascribe to ill-will what is due to impossibility.

Thus it is not a cruelty to woman to recognize that she is what she is, – a spiritually weaker being; it is a cruelty to recognize her as equal.

What I call weakness or lesser spiritual power is the lesser submission of the flesh to the spirit, especially – woman's chief characteristic – a lesser faith in the commands of reason.

The greatest number of sufferings which result from the intercourse of men and women result from the absolute misunderstanding of one sex by the other.

Very few men understand what children mean to a woman, what place they occupy in her life; and still fewer women understand what the duty of honour, the social duty, the religious duty, mean to a man.

A man may understand, though he has never been pregnant or borne a child, that it is hard and painful to be pregnant and to bear a child, and that it is an important matter; but there are extremely few women who will understand that spiritually to carry and bring forth a new conception of life is a hard and an important matter. They will understand it for a minute, but immediately forget it. And the moment their cares, even if it be of their household, of their attire, appear on the scene, they can no longer remember the reality of men's convictions, and all that appears to them as an unreal invention in comparison with cakes and pieces of chintz.

I have been struck by the thought that one of the chief causes of an inimical feeling between husbands and wives is their rivalry in the matter of conducting their family.

The wife must not recognize her husband as sensible and practical, because, if she did so, she would have to do his will, and vice versa.

If I were now writing the Krcutzer Sonata, I would bring this out.

The insipidity of our life is due to the power of the women; but the power of the women is due to the incontinence of the men; thus the cause of the monstrosity of life is due to the incontinence of the men.

An attractive woman says to herself: " He is clever, he is learned, he is famous, he is rich, he is great, he is moral, holy; but he surrenders himself to me, a foolish, ignorant, poor, insignificant, immoral woman; consequently reason and learning and everything are nonsense." This undoes them and makes them bad.

After all, it is always those against whom violence is used that rule, that is, those who fulfil the law of non-resistance. Thus women try to obtain their rights, but they rule us for the very reason that they have been subjected by force. The institutions are in the hands of men, but public opinion is in the hands of women. And public opinion is a million times more powerful than all the laws and the army. As a proof that public opinion is in the hands of women, may serve this, that not only the arrangement of the house, the food, is determined by the women, but that the women spend the wealth, consequently guide the labours of men; the success of the productions of art and of books, and even the appointment of rulers, is determined by public opinion, but public opinion is determined by the women.

Somebody has well said that it is the men who need to seek their emancipation from the women, and not vice versa.

It is proper for women to sustain life by childbirth, the education of their children, the furnishing of new forces in place of those used up; it is proper for men to direct these forces, that is, life itself. Either can do both ; but this is proper.

What can there be more stupid and more harmful for the women than the modern talk about the equality of the sexes, or even about the superiority of the women over the men. For a man with a Christian world conception there can naturally be no question about giving any rights exclusively to men, or about not respecting and loving a woman like any other person ; but to assert that woman has the same spiritual forces as man, especially that woman can just as much be guided by reason and can believe in the same way as man, is to demand of woman what she cannot give (I do not speak of exceptions), and to provoke in her irritation, which is based on the supposition that she does not want to do what she cannot do, without having for it a categorical imperative in reason.

If the question is about being removed by man from those cares and labours which result from education, or rather from tending on little children, – from putting them to bed, washing their linen and, in general, all linen, from preparing food for them and, in general, for all, from making clothes for them, and so forth, – this

is in the highest degree not only un-Christian and not good, but also unjust.

Woman, as it is, bears the greater labour of carrying and nursing the children, and so, it would seem, it is natural that all the other cares ought to be taken over by man as much as it is possible without interfering with his work, which is also necessary for the family. And so it would be by all means, if the barbarous habit of throwing the whole burden of work on the weaker, and, therefore, on the oppressed, had not taken such firm root in our society. This has so permeated our habits that, in spite of the equality of woman as recognized by men, the most liberal man, as well as the most chivalrous, will warmly defend a woman's right to be a professor, a preacher, or will at the risk of his life rush to lift up a handkerchief which a woman has dropped, and so forth, but will never fall upon the idea of washing the diapers which their common child has soiled, or of making a pair of trousers for his son, when his wife is pregnant, or is nursing, or simply tired, or simply wants to read or think awhile to make up for the time lost in carrying and nursing.

Public opinion is so distorted in this respect that such acts would be found ridiculous, and it would take great courage to do them.

Here is the real emancipation of woman:

Not to consider any work woman's work such as it would be a disgrace to touch, and to aid them with all our strength, for the very reason that they are physically weaker, and to take away from them all the work which we can take upon ourselves.

The same in the education of the girls, having in view the fact that they will probably have to bring forth children, and so will have less leisure; in view of this fact the schools ought to be arranged, not worse, but even better than those for men, so that they may in advance gain strength and knowledge. They are capable of that.

It is quite true that in relation to women and their labour there exist many very harmful prejudices which have taken strong root since antiquity, and it is still more true that it is necessary to struggle against them. But I do not think that a society which will establish reading-rooms and apartments for women will be a means for the struggle. I am not provoked by the fact that women receive smaller wages than men, - wages are established according to the worth of the labour, - but by this, that the woman who bears, nurses, brings up little children is also burdened with the work of the kitchen, that she has to broil at the stove, wash the dishes and the linen, make the clothes, and wash the tables, floors, and windows.

Why is this dreadfully hard labour thrown on woman's shoulders? A peasant, factory hand, official, and any other man may have nothing to do, but he will be lying and smoking, leaving it to a woman (and the woman submits to it), who is frequently pregnant, or sick, or

with children, to broil at the stove or to bear the terrible labour of washing the linen, or of tending her sick babe at night. And all this is due to the superstition that there is such a thing as woman's work.

It is a terrible evil, and from this come numerous diseases of women, premature aging, death, dulling of the women themselves and of their children.

For the agreement of the conjugal pair it is necessary that in their views on the world and on life, if they do not coincide, the one who thinks less should submit to the one who thinks more.

Women have always recognized men's power over them. It could not have been otherwise in the non-Christian world. Man is strong, and so man exerted power. Thus it has been in the whole world (excluding the doubtful amazons and the law of maternity), and thus it is even now among nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of the human race. But in order that the freedom of the slaves and of woman may not be a misfortune, it is necessary that the emancipated should be Christians, that is, should use their lives in serving God and men, and not themselves. What, then, is to be done? This one thing is to be done: it is necessary to draw men to Christianity, to convert them to Christianity. But this can be done only by doing in life Christ's law.

I have, among other things, thought a great deal about women, about marriage, and I should like to tell about it, of course, not about the modern little idols, the university courses, but about woman's great eternal destination. Many perverse things in this respect are preached precisely in the circles of intelligent women, and namely this: for example, they preach that woman ought not to be exclusive, – that she must not love her children more than any one else. They preach many misty, obscure things about evolution, about her equality with man ; but this proposition, that woman must not love her children more than strangers, is preached everywhere, at all times, is considered an axiom, and as a practical rule includes in itself the essence of the doctrine; but this very proposition is quite false.

It is the destiny of every man, both man and woman, to serve men. With this general proposition, I believe agree all men who are not immoral. The difference between men and women in the fulfilment of this destiny is great, according to the means with which they serve men. A man serves men with physical, and mental, and moral labour. The means of his ministration are very varied. The whole activity of humanity, with the exception of childbirth and nursing, forms the arena of his ministration to men. But woman, in addition to her ability to serve men with all the same sides of her being as man, is by her constitution destined and inevitably drawn to that ministration which alone is excluded from the sphere of man's ministration. The ministration to humanity is naturally divided into two parts: one – the increase of the good in existing humanity, the other – the continuation of humanity itself. Men are preeminently

destined for the first, for they are deprived of the possibility of serving the second. Women are preeminently destined for the second, because they are exclusively adapted for it. It is impossible, wrong, and sinful (that is, a mistake) to forget and to wipe out the second, as people try to do. From this distinction result the duties of either, duties which are not invented by men, but lie in the nature of things. From this same difference results the valuation of man's and woman's virtue and vice, – a valuation which has existed through all the ages and which can never cease to exist, so long as men have reason.

It has always been so, and it will always be so, that a man who has passed his life in his manifold male labour, and a woman who has passed her life in bearing, nursing, and bringing up her children, will feel that they are doing what is right, and they will evoke men's respect and love, because both have fulfilled their indubitable destiny. Man's destiny is more varied and broader, woman's destiny is more uniform and narrower, but deeper, and so it has always been and it always will be so that a man, who has hundreds of duties and has been false to one or ten of them, will not be a bad or harmful man, so long as he has performed nine-tenths of his destiny. But a woman, who has three duties, will, by becoming untrue to one of them, perform only two-thirds of them, and, having become untrue to two, becomes negative, harmful. Public opinion has always been such and always will be such, because such is the essence of the matter. A man, to do God's will, must serve Him in the sphere of physical labour, and of thought, and of morality; with all these works is he able to accomplish his destiny; for woman the means for serving God are preeminently and almost exclusively (because no one but her can do it) the children.

Man is called to serve God only through his works; woman is called to serve only through her children.

And so the love of her children, which is inherent in woman, the exclusive love, with which it is quite vain to struggle by means of reason, will always be, and always must be, peculiar to the woman as mother. This love for the child in babyhood is not at all egoism, as we are falsely taught to believe, but the love of the labourer for the work which he is doing, when it is in his hands. Take this love for the object of his work away from him, and the work is impossible.

So long as I am making a boot I love it more than anything, just as a mother loves her child; if they spoil it for me, I shall be in despair; but I love it so long as I am working at it. When I am done with it, there is left o

an attachment, a feeble and illegitimate predilection ; even so it is with the mother.

Man is called to serve men by means of varied labours, and he loves these labours so long as he is at work over them; woman is called to serve men through her children while she is making them, that is,

rearing and bringing them up.

In this do I see a complete equality of man and woman, – in their common destiny to serve God and men, in spite of the difference of the form of this service. This equality is manifested in this also, that one is as important as the other, that one is as unthinkable as the other, that one conditions the other, and that in order to attain their destiny, the knowledge of the truth is indispensable to both, and that without this knowledge the activity both of the man and the woman becomes, not useful, but harmful, to humanity.

Man is called to fulfil his varied work, but his work is only then useful, and his work (to plough the field or make cannon), and his mental activity (to make men's life easier or to count out money), and his religious activity (to bring men closer together or sing a mass) are only then fruitful, when they are done in the name of the highest truth accessible to man.

The same is true of woman's destiny : her bringing forth, nursing, and rearing of children will be useful to humanity when she will bring up children, not simply for her pleasure, but as future servants of humanity, when the education of these children will be accomplished in the name of the highest truth accessible to her, that is, when she will educate her children in such a way that they may be able to take as little as possible from men and give them as much as possible. The ideal woman will, in my opinion, be she who, having acquired the highest world conception, – the faith which will be accessible to her, – will abandon herself to her feminine calling, which is invincibly inherent in her, of bringing forth, nursing, and educating the largest number of children capable of working for men according to the world conception which she has made her own. But this world conception is not drawn from university courses, but is acquired only by not closing eyes and ears, and by meekness of heart.

Well, and those who have no children, who have not married, widows ? They will do well, if they will take part in man's varied work.

And every woman who is through bearing children will, if she has strength, be able to busy herself with this aid to man in his work, and this aid is very precious. . . .

A good domestic life is possible only with the conscious conviction, educated in woman, of the necessity of permanent submission to man. I have said that this is proved by the fact that this has been so as far back as we know the life of man, and by this, that domestic life with children is a voyage in a frail boat, which is possible only if all submit to one man. Such they have always recognized man to be, because, since he does not bear children or nurse them, he is able to be a better guide to his wife than the wife can be to her husband.

But are women really always inferior to men ? Not at all. The moment both are chaste, they are equal. But what is meant by this, that

women now demand, not only equality, but also supremacy ? Only this, that the family is evolving, and so the older form is falling to pieces. The relations of the sexes are looking for new forms, and the old form is decomposing.

It is impossible to tell what the new form will be, though many things may be noticed. Maybe a greater number of men observing chastity; there may be temporary marriages, coming to an end after the birth of children, so that the conjugal pair separates after the birth of children and remains chaste; maybe the children will be brought up by society. It is impossible to foresee the new forms. But what is unquestionable is this, that the old form is decomposing, and that the existence of the old form is possible only with the submission of wife to husband, as it has always and everywhere been, and as happens there where the family is still preserved.

Yesterday I read Without Dogma. There is a very delicate description of love of woman, – tenderly, much more delicately done than with the French, where it is sensual, or with the English, where it is Pharisaical, or with the Germans, where it is inflated; and I thought I might write a novel of chaste love, ... for which the transition to sensuality is impossible, which forms the best defence against sensuality. Yes, is this not the only salvation from sensuality ? Yes, yes, it is. It is for this that man was created as man and woman. Only with woman can one lose his chastity, and only with her can one keep it. It is good to make a note of it. . . .

Man, like any animal, submits to the law of the struggle and to the sexual instinct for the strengthening of the species; as a rational, loving, divine being, he submits to the reverse law, not that of the struggle with his rivals and enemies, but that of meekness, endurance of insults, and of love for them, and not that of the sexual instinct, but that of chastity.

One of the most important works of humanity consists in the education of a chaste woman.

Woman, so a legend tells, is the instrument of the devil. She is in general stupid, but the devil gives her his intellect for her support, when she is working for him. You behold, she has done wonders of the mind, of farsightedness, or constancy, in order to do abominable things; but the moment it is not a question of an abomination, she is unable to understand the simplest thing, does not reflect beyond the present moment, and has no endurance, no patience (except in childbirth and the bringing up of children).

All this has reference to the non-Christian, the unchaste woman. . . . Oh, how I should like to show to woman the whole meaning of the chaste woman. The chaste woman (the legend about Mary is not given without good reason) will save the world.

Woman's destiny is above all else and preeminently man's destiny, of which I have spoken before. Marriage and children in comparison with

celibacy is the same as the conditions of village life as compared with the luxurious life of the city: the conditions of life, celibacy or the family, cannot in themselves influence man. There may be a holy and a sinful celibacy, and there may be a sinful and a holy family.

Every girl, and you in particular, the same as a man in whom an inner spiritual life is beginning, I advise as much as possible to keep away from everything which in our society supports in the girl the idea of the necessity, the desirability, of marriage, and predisposes to it,— novels, music, idle prattle, dances, games, cards, even attire. Truly, it is more pleasant to wash one's own shirt (and for the soul it is so much more useful) than to play secretary all evening, even with the most clever of men. Above all else, that conception, so universal in the world, that it is shameful not to marry and to remain an old maid, is just as contrary to truth as all worldly opinions in regard to questions of life. Celibate life, filled with good works, celibate, because the works which fill this life are all above marriage (and such works are all works of love for your neighbour, of giving a cup of water to drink), are an infinite number of times higher than all domestic life. (Matt. xix. 11.) All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. Thus all men of all nations and of all ages have always looked with the greatest respect and emotion upon the men and women who remained celibate, not from compulsion, but for the sake of God. But in our society they are the most ridiculous of people. Indeed, they are just like those who are poor for the sake of God, and those who did not know how to make money.

But to every girl, and to you, I give the advice to set before you as an ideal the service of God, that is, the keeping and increasing in yourself of the divine spark, and so — celibacy, if marriage hinders this ministrations; but if it should happen that, submitting to your selfish feeling for one man, you should get married, do not rejoice and become proud, as generally happens, of your position as wife and mother, but, without losing sight of the chief aim of life, the service of God, see to it with all your strength that your exclusive and egoistical attachment for the family does not interfere with your serving God.

I have always thought that one of the surest signs of the seriousness of relations to moral questions is strictness to oneself in the sexual question. . . .

The offence into which N-----has fallen is very intel

ligible and peculiar to precisely such honest and truthful natures as I imagine him to be. The relations were established, and he wanted not to conceal anything, but openly and frankly to confess them, by giving them a character of spirituality.

I fully understand his idea: to utilize that spiritual elation which enamourment gives, in order to use this elation for God's work. That is possible, and I think that the energy of men who are in this

state may be considerably raised, and may give what to us seems to be unexpectedly great results. I have more than once seen this, and I have known such cases; but what is terrible here is this, that with the destruction of enamourment (which is very possible and very probable) not only this access of energy may fall, but also every interest in God's work, of which, too, I have seen examples. And that this happens and can happen proves that God's work, the service of Him, cannot and must not lean on anything, and everything else must be based on the consciousness of the necessity and the joy of this service.

Thus it is possible (and this is often done) to increase the energy of serving God with human glory, and again there is the danger of growing indifferent to God's work the moment the approval of men is destroyed.

All this you know and have given utterance to, but I wanted to add just one thing to what I wrote to you in my last letter as to my agreeing with N----that the

union of a man and a woman is good when it has for its aim the conjoined service of God and men, - namely, that the conjugal, the bodily, tie does not exactly add strength in the service, but that for certain people, who are swayed by the restlessness of the necessity of enamourment, it removes this unrest, which interferes with the application of one's whole force to the service; and so, although chastity, if it is full, is a most advantageous condition for the service, - for some people marriage, by quieting them and removing the obstacle, strengthens the possibility of their service. But with it, - and this is the main thing I wanted to say, - it is necessary that

men should understand and recognize, outside of marriage, and in marriage, that the quality of amorousness and of that spiritual elation which takes place at this time are intended, not as an amusement, not as an enjoyment, not for artistic creations (many think so), not for the increase of energy in the service of God, as N-----

thinks, but only for a sexual, marital union with one husband and one wife for the production of children and the mutual emancipation from lust. But every direction of this ability to something else can only make the path of man's life harder, and not easier and pleasanter.

And so I fully agree with you that this is a most dangerous offence against which one cannot be sufficiently cautious. " Well," they say, " why not be friendly with persons of the opposite sex as with those of the same sex ? " There is no reason why we should not, and the more we love, the better it is. But a sincere man, who is serious in matters of morality, will immediately notice, as N---- has, that such relations with women will be dif

ferent. If a man is not going to deceive himself, he will always

observe that the approximation takes place faster than usual; that the bicycle rides easily and fast, and that there is no need of the same efforts as usual; and that, therefore, there must be a cause for it. And as soon as a man, who is serious in matters of morality, notices this and does not wish to ride down-hill, knowing that the motion will be increasing all the time and will lead to marriage or to an exclusive feeling, he will come to a stop.

Marriage, of course, is good and indispensable for the continuation of the race, but if so, it is necessary that the parents should feel in themselves the strength to educate their children, not as drones, but as servants of God and of men. And for this it is necessary to be able to live, not by the labours of others, but by one's own, giving more than receiving from men.

But we have a bourgeois rule that a man may marry only when he is pressing hard down on the backs of others, that is, when he has means. Exactly the opposite is needed : only he may marry who can live and bring up a child, without having any means. Only such parents will be able to educate their children well.

I have looked through the book.

It is impossible to write about it and reply to it, just as it is impossible to reply to a man's proof that it is agreeable and harmless to cohabit with corpses. A man who does not feel what the elephants feel, that cohabitation is, in general, an act which lowers oneself and one's mate, and so is abominable, an act in which a man involuntarily pays his tribute to his animality, and which is redeemed only by the fact that it fulfils that purpose (childbirth) for which the necessity of this disgusting, debasing act, invincible though it is at a certain time, is inherent in his nature, – to such a man, in spite of his ability to reason, since he is standing on the level of an animal, it is impossible to explain or prove this. I do not even speak of the fallacy of Malthusianism, which places objective considerations (and false ones at that) at the base of the business of morality, which is always subjective, – nor even of the fact that between murder, abortion, and this method there is no material difference.

Pardon me: it is a shame and an abomination to speak seriously of this. It is necessary to speak and to think rather of what distortion or dulness of the moral feeling could have brought men to this. It is not for us to quarrel with them, but to cure them. Really, an ignorant, drunken Russian peasant, who believes in "Friday," who would look with horror upon such an act, and who always looks upon the act of cohabitation as upon a sin, stands immeasurably above the people who write well and have the boldness to quote philosophy in confirmation of their savagery.

No kind of human crimes against the moral law do people conceal from one another with such caution as those which are called sexual lust; and there is no crime against the moral law which is so common to all men, embracing them in the most varied and most terrible forms;

there is no crime against the moral law upon which men look with such disagreement, – some regarding a certain act as a terrible sin, and others looking upon the same act as upon a customary convenience or pleasure; there is no crime in respect to which so many Pharisaical utterances have been made; there is no crime the relation to which so correctly indicates man's level; and there is no crime more pernicious for separate individuals and for the progress of all humanity.

These thoughts are very simple and very clear for him who thinks in order to know the truth. These thoughts appear strange, paradoxical, and even incorrect to him who reasons, not in order to find the truth, but in order to consider true his life with all its vices and aberrations.

There is never any end to this matter. I even now think of the same (of the sexual question), and it still appears to me that there is much left to be explained and added. And this is comprehensible because the matter is of such enormous importance and novelty, and the strength, to speak without any false modesty, is so weak and so little in keeping with the importance of the subject.

For this reason I think that all must work who are sincerely interested in the matter, – all must work out this subject according to their strength. If each man will sincerely say from his personal point of view what

he thinks and feels about this subject, many obscure points will be made clear, what is usually and falsely hidden will be revealed, what seems strange from unwontedness to see it will cease seeming such, and many things which seem natural from the habit of living badly will cease seeming such. Through a happy chance I have been able, more than others, to turn the attention of society to this subject. Others must continue the work from various sides.

THE END.