THE FIRST STEP

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I.

When a man does a thing, not for the sake of appearances, but with a desire to accomplish something, he inevitably acts in a certain consecutive manner, which is determined by the essence of the matter. If a man does later what by the essence of the case ought to have been done before, or entirely omits what ought necessarily to be done, in order that he may be able to continue the work, he certainly does not do it seriously, but is only pretending. This rule remains unchangeably true in material as well as in immaterial affairs. As it is impossible seriously to wish to bake bread without having first mixed the flour, and then made a fire, and then swept the oven, and so forth, so it is impossible seriously to wish to lead a good life without observing a certain consecutiveness in the acquirement of the qualities which are necessary for it.

This rule in matters of a good life is especially important, because in a material matter, as, for example, in the baking of bread, it is possible to find out whether a man is seriously busying himself with the matter, or whether he is only pretending, by judging from the results of his activity; but in the leading of a good life this verification is impossible. When people, without mixing the flour and making a fire in the oven, pretend

that they are baking bread, as in the theatre, it is evident to every one from the consequences, the absence of bread, that they only pretended; but when a man only makes it appear that he is leading a good life, we have no such direct indications, from which it would be possible to find out whether he is seriously striving after living a good life, or whether he is only pretending, because the consequences of a good life are not only not always apparent and palpable for the people surrounding him, but frequently even appear harmful to them; and the respect and the acknowledgment of usefulness and pleasure for his contemporaries do not prove anything in favour of the actuality of his good life.

And so, to distinguish the actuality of a good life from its appearances, we have a very precious symptom, which consists in the regular consecutiveness of the acquisition of properties necessary for a good life. This symptom is particularly precious, not in order to find out the veracity of the striving after a good life in others, but in order to find it out in ourselves, because in this

respect we are inclined to deceive ourselves more than others.

The correct consecutiveness of the acquisition of good qualities is an indispensable condition of the motion toward a good life, and all the teachers of humanity have always prescribed to men a certain invariable consecutiveness in the acquisition of good qualities.

In all the moral teachings there is established that ladder which, as Chinese wisdom says, extends from earth to heaven, and which cannot be ascended except by beginning with the lowest rung. As in the teachings of the Brahmins, Buddhists, Confucianists, so also in the teaching of the sages of Greece, there are established degrees of virtues, and the higher cannot be attained before the lower has been acquired. All the moral teachers of humanity, both the religious and the non-religious, have recognized the necessity of a definite consecutiveness in the attainment of the virtues necessary for a good life; this necessity arises from the very essence of the thing, and so, one would think, ought to be acknowledged by all men.

But, strange to say, the consciousness of the necessary consecutiveness of the qualities and actions essential for a good life is, it seems, more and more lost sight of and remains only in the ascetic, monastic societies. In the society of worldly men it is assumed and recognized that it is possible to attain the highest qualities of a good life not only with an absence of the lower good qualities, which condition the higher, but also with the broadest development of vices; in consequence of which the conception as to what the good life consists in has in our time become exceedingly mixed in the society of the majority of worldly men. We have lost the concept of what constitutes a good life.

II.

This happened, I think, in the following manner:

Christianity, in taking the place of paganism, put forth more elevated moral demands than were those of the pagans, and, as could not have been otherwise, in putting forth its demands, established, as in the pagan morality, one necessary consecutiveness in the attainment of the virtues, or in the degrees for the attainment of a good life.

Plato’s virtues, beginning with continence, through manliness and wisdom attained to justice; the Christian virtues, beginning with self-renunciation, through devotion to God’s will attain to love.

The men who seriously accepted Christianity, and strove to make the good Christian life their own, understood Christianity in this sense, and always began the good life with the renunciation of their

lusts, which included the pagan continence.

The Christian teaching took the place of the pagan for the very reason that it is different from and higher than the pagan. But the Christian teaching, like the pagan, leads men to truth and to the good; and since truth and the good are always one, the path leading to them must be one, and the first steps on this path must inevitably be one and the same for a Christian as for a pagan.

The difference between the Christian and the pagan teaching of the good consists in this, that the pagan teaching is the teaching of a finite perfection, while the Christian is that of an infinite perfection. Plato, for example, makes justice a model of perfection; but Christ makes a model of the infinite perfection of love. " Be ye as perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." From this follow the different relations of the pagan and the Christian teachings to the various degrees of the virtues. The attainment of the highest virtue according to the pagan teaching is possible, and every step of attainment has its relative significance: the higher the step, the greater the desert, so that men, from the pagan point of view, are divided into virtuous and unvirtuous, into more or less virtuous. But according to the Christian teaching, which pointed out the infinitude of perfection, all steps are equal among themselves in relation to the infinite ideal. The difference of the deserts in paganism consists in the step which has been attained by a man; in Christianity the deserts consist only in the process of attainment, in the greater or lesser celerity of motion. From the pagan point of view, a man who is in possession of the virtue of reflection stands in the moral sense higher than a man who does not possess this virtue; a man who in addition to reflection is also in possession of bravery stands higher still; a man who is in possession of reflection and of bravery, and, besides, of justice, stands higher still; but a Christian can be regarded neither as the one, nor as higher, nor as lower in the moral sense; a Christian is the more a Christian the faster he moves toward the infinite perfection, independently of the step on which he is standing at a given minute. Thus the immovable righteousness of the Pharisee is lower than the motion of the repentant thief on the cross.

But there can be no difference in this, that the motion toward virtue, toward perfection, cannot take place by avoiding the lower steps of virtue, either in paganism or in Christianity.

A Christian, like a pagan, cannot do otherwise than begin the work of perfection from the very beginning, that is, where the pagan begins it, with abstinence, just as he who ascends a staircase must begin with the first step. The only difference is this, that for the pagan abstinence in itself presents itself as a virtue, while for a Christian abstinence is only a part of self-renunciation, which forms a necessary condition of a striving after perfection. And so true Christianity in its manifestation could not reject the virtues which even paganism pointed out.

But not all men understood Christianity as a striving after the

perfection of the Father in heaven ; Christianity, falsely understood, destroyed the sincerity and seriousness of the relation of men to its teaching.

If a man believes that he may be saved, even though he does not fulfil the moral teaching of Christianity, it is natural for him to think that his efforts to be good are superfluous. And so a man who believes that there are means for salvation other than the personal efforts for attaining perfection (as, for example, the indulgences of the Catholics) cannot strive after it with the same energy and seriousness with which a man strives who does not know any other means than those of personal efforts. But, not striving after this with complete seriousness, and knowing other means than those of personal efforts, a man will inevitably neglect the one invariable order, in which may be acquired the good qualities which are necessary for a good life. This same thing has happened with the majority of men who in an external manner profess Christianity.

III.

The teaching that personal efforts are not needed for a man to attain spiritual perfection, but that there are other means, appears as the cause of weakening of the striving after a good life and of the departure from the consecutiveness indispensable for a good life.

An immense mass of people, who accepted Christianity only in an external manner, took advantage of the substitution of Christianity for paganism, in order, by freeing themselves from the demands of the pagan virtues, as no longer of any use to a Christian, to free themselves from every necessity of a struggle with their animal nature.

The same was done by the men who stopped believing in the external Christianity alone. Like those other believers, they in place of the external Christianity put forth some imaginary good work, accepted by the majority, such as serving science, art, humanity, — and in the name of this imaginary good work freed themselves from the consecutiveness of attaining the qualities which are necessary for a good life, and were satisfied with pretending, as in the theatre, that they were living a good life.

Such men, who have fallen away from paganism and have not joined Christianity in its true meaning, began to preach love of God and of men without self-renunciation, and justice without abstinence, that is, the higher virtues without the attainment of the lower, that is, not the virtues themselves, but only their semblance.

Some preach the love of God and men without self-renunciation, others — humanitarianism, serving men and humanity without abstinence.

And since this advocacy encourages man’s animal nature under the guise of introducing him into the higher moral spheres, by freeing

him from the most elementary demands of morality, which have long ago been expressed by the pagans, and which have not only not been rejected, but have been accentuated by true Christianity, it was readily accepted, both by the believers and by the non-believers.

Only the other day there was published the Pope's encyclical in regard to socialism. After rejecting the opinion of the socialists as to the illegality of ownership, it says there that " no one is certainly obliged to help his neighbour by taking from what he needs for himself or for his family (nul assurement n'cst tcnu de soulagcr le prochain en prcnant sur son necessairc on sur celui de sa faniille), nor even to diminish anything of what the proprieties demand of him. No one must, indeed, live contrary to custom." (This place is taken out of St. Thomas: Nullus enini inconvenienter debet vivere.) " But after the due has been given to what one needs and to external proprieties," the encyclical continues, " it is the duty of every man to give the surplus to the poor."

Thus preaches the chief of one of the most wide-spread churches of the present time. And side by side with this sermon on egoism, which prescribes giving to our neighbour what we do not need, love is preached, and they constantly adduce with pathos the famous words of Paul, from the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, about love.

In spite of the fact that the whole teaching of the Gospel is filled with demands for self-renunciation and indications that self-renunciation is the first condition of Christian perfection ; in spite of such clear utterances, as, " He that shall not take up his cross, he that shall not forsake father and mother, he that shall not lose his life," people assure themselves and others that it is possible to love men, without renouncing not only what they have become used to, but even that which they themselves consider to be proper.

Thus speak the false Christians, and precisely in the same way think and speak and write and act the people who reject not only the external, but also the true Christian teaching, — the freethinkers. These people assure themselves and others that, without diminishing their necessities, without vanquishing their passions, they can serve men and humanity, that is, lead a good life.

Men have rejected the pagan consecutiveness of the virtues and, without adopting the Christian teaching in its true significance, have not accepted even the Christian consecutiveness and have remained without any guide whatsoever.

IV.

Anciently, when there was no Christian teaching, all the teachers of life, beginning with Socrates, had abstinence — eyKpareca and aw^poavvr) — for their first virtue of life, and it was understood that every virtue must begin with it and pass through it. It was clear that a man who did not control himself, who developed in himself an immense number of passions, and who submitted to them all, could not lead a good life. It was clear that before a man could think, not only of magnanimity, of love, but also of unselfishness, of justice, he must learn to control himself. But according to our views nothing of the kind is needed. We are fully convinced that a man who has developed his passions to the highest degree to which they are developed in our society, a man who cannot live without gratifying hundreds of habits which have taken possession of him, may be able to live an absolutely moral, good life.

In our time and in our society the tendency toward limiting one's passions is considered not only not the first, but not even the last act for leading a good life; it is considered to be absolutely unnecessary.

According to the now ruling, universal, contemporary teaching about life, the increase of necessities is, on the contrary, regarded as a desirable quality, a sign of development, civilization, culture, and perfection. The so-called cultured people consider the habits of comfort, that is, of effeminacy, not only not harmful, but even good, in that they show a certain moral elevation of man, almost a virtue.

The more needs there are, the more refined these needs are, the better this is considered to be.

Nothing shows this so clearly as the descriptive poetry and especially the novels of the past and the present centuries.

How are the heroes and heroines depicted, who represent the ideals of virtues ?

In the majority of cases, the men who are supposed to represent something elevated and noble, beginning with Childe Harold and ending with the latest heroes of Feuillet, Trollope, Maupassant, are nothing but corrupt drones, who are of no use to any one; and the heroines are mistresses, just as idle and given to luxury, who in one way or another afford more or less enjoyment to the men.

I am not speaking of the few rare cases in literature, where abstinent, labouring persons are actually described, — I am speaking of the usual type, which forms the ideal of the masses, of that person whom the majority of men and women try to resemble most. I remember, when I wrote novels, the inexplicable difficulty in which I found myself and with which I struggled, and with which, I know, struggle all the novelists who have even the dimmest consciousness of what constitutes moral beauty, consisted in representing the type of a worldly man that would be ideally good and at the same time

true to reality.

V.

An indubitable proof that the men of our time really fail to recognize that the pagan abstinence and the Christian self-renunciation are desirable and good qualities, but consider the increase of the needs as something good and exalted, may be found in the way the children of our class of society are brought up in the vast majority of cases. They are not only not taught abstinence, as was the case with the pagans, or self-renunciation, as it ought to be with Christians, but they are consciously inoculated with habits of effeminacy, physical idleness, and luxury.

I have for a long time had in mind writing a fairy-tale of the following kind: a woman, wishing to avenge herself on another woman by whom she has been insulted, seizes her enemy's child, and goes to a wizard, whom she asks to teach her how she may take the bitterest revenge on her enemy through her enemy's only child, which she has kidnapped. The wizard instructs the kidnapper to take the child to a place indicated by him, assuring her that the revenge will be most terrible. The evil woman does so, but she watches the child, and to her amazement sees that the child is taken up and adopted by a childless rich man. She goes to the wizard and rebukes him, but the wizard begs her to wait. The child grows up in luxury and effeminacy. The evil woman is perplexed, but the wizard asks her to wait longer. And, indeed, the time arrives when the evil woman is satisfied and even takes pity on the victim. The child grows up in effeminacy and looseness of manners, and, thanks to his good character, is ruined. Here begins a series of physical sufferings, wretchedness, and humiliations, toward which he is particularly sensitive and with which he does not know how to struggle. The striving after a moral life, and the impotence of the effeminate flesh which is accustomed to luxury and to idleness. A vain struggle, a fall lower and lower, drunkenness, to forget himself, and crime, or insanity, or suicide.

Indeed, it is not possible without horror to view the education of certain children in our time. Only the meanest foe could so carefully inoculate the child with those weaknesses and vices, with which he is inoculated by his parents, especially by his mother. One is horrified as one sees all this, and still more, the consequences of this, if it is possible to see what is going on in the souls of the best of these children who are with such care ruined by their parents. They are inoculated with the habits of effeminacy; they are inoculated with them, when the young being does not yet understand their moral significance. Not only is the habit of abstinence and self-possession destroyed, but, contrary to what was done in education in Sparta and in the ancient world in general, tins

ability is absolutely atrophied. A man is not only not taught to labour, to undergo all the conditions of every fruitful labour, concentrated attention, tension, endurance, preoccupation with the work, the knowledge of mending what is spoiled, the habit of fatigue, the joy of accomplishment, but he is taught idleness and contempt for every product of labour; he is taught to spoil, throw away, and again for money to acquire what he pleases, without giving any thought to how things are made. A man x is deprived of the ability to attain the virtue first in order, which is indispensable for the attainment of all the rest, — reflection, — and is let out into the world, in which are preached and, it is assumed, valued the high virtues of justice, service of men, love. It is all very well if the young man has a morally weak nature, which is not sensitive, which does not feel the difference between a good life for show and a real good life, and which can be satisfied with the evil existing in life. If so, everything seems to arrange itself properly, and with an unawakened moral sentiment such a man at times calmly lives to his grave.

But this is not always the case, especially of late, when the consciousness of the immorality of such a life is in the air and involuntarily falls deep into the heart. Frequently, and ever more frequently, it happens that the demands of the true, not the seeming morality are awakened, and then begin an internal agonizing struggle and suffering, which rarely end with the victory of the moral feeling. A man feels that his life is bad and that he must change it all from the very beginning, and he endeavours to do so; but here other people, who have passed through the same struggle and who have not come out victoriously, from all sides attack him who is trying to change his life, and try with every means at their command to impress upon him that this is not at all necessary, that abstinence and self-renunciation are not at all necessary in order to be good, that it is possible, though abandoning oneself to gluttony, love of attire, physical idleness, and even fornication, to be an absolutely good and useful man. And the struggle for the most part ends in a lamentable manner. Either the man, worn out by his weakness, submits to this universal voice and suppresses in himself the voice of conscience, compromises with his reason, in order to justify himself, and continues to lead the same life of dissipation, assuring himself that he redeems it with his belief in the external Christianity or with his service in the name of science, or of art; or he struggles, suffers, and loses his mind, or shoots himself. It happens but rarely that, amidst these temptations which surround him, a man of our society understands what is, and thousands of years ago was, a rudimentary truth for all reasoning men, namely, that to attain a good life it is necessary first of all to stop living a bad life, and that to attain any higher virtues it is necessary first of all to attain the virtue of abstinence or self-possession, as the pagans defined it, or the virtue of self-renunciation, as Christianity defines it, and by degrees, making efforts over himself, attains it.

VL

I have just read the letters of our highly cultured representative man of the forties, the exile Ogardv, to another, even more highly cultured and gifted man, Herzen. In these letters Ogardv expresses his intimate thoughts, and puts forth his highest strivings, and one cannot help but see that he, as is characteristic of a young man, is posing before his friend. He speaks of self-perfection, of sacred friendship, of love, of serving science, humanity, and so forth. And at the same time he writes in a calm tone that he frequently irritates his friend, with whom be is living, because, as he writes," I return in an intoxicated state, or disappear for long hours with a fallen, but dear creature.” Apparently the remarkably sincere, gifted, cultured man could not even imagine that there was anything prejudicial in this, that he, a married man, awaiting the birth of a child (in the next letter he writes that his wife was delivered of a child), returned home drunk, disappearing among lewd women. It did not occur to him that, so long as he did not begin to struggle and did not curb his proneness to intoxication and to fornication, he had no business even to think of friendship, love, and, above all else, doing something in the service of anything. He not only failed to struggle against these vices, but apparently regarded them as something very charming, which did not in the least interfere with his striving after perfection, and so not only did not conceal them from his friend, before whom he wished to appear in the best light, but outright made a display of them.

Thus it was half a century ago. I found these men still alive. I knew Ogardv himself, and Herzen, and the men of this calibre, and men educated in the same traditions. In all these men there was a striking absence of consecutiveness in matters of life. They all had a sincere, warm desire for the good, and an absolute laxity in their personal passions, which, it seemed to them, could not interfere with a good life and their production of good and even great works. They put unkneaded loaves into ah unheated oven, and they believed that the loaves would be baked. When in their old age they began to notice that the loaves would not bake, that is, that no good had been accomplished by their lives, they saw in this something very tragical.

The tragedy of such a life is indeed very terrible. And this tragicalness, such as it was in the days of Herzen, Ogardv, and others, it exists even now for many, very many so-called cultured people of our time, who have retained the same views. A man strives to live a good life, but the indispensable consecutiveness, which is necessary for this, is lost in that society in which he lives. As was the case with Ogarev and Herzen fifty years ago, so the majority of modern men are convinced that living an effeminate life, eating sweet and fat food, enjoying oneself, in every way gratifying one’s lust, does not interfere with a good life. But, apparently, the good life does not result in their case, and they surrender themselves to

pessimism, saying, " Such is man’s tragical position.”

VII.

The error that the men, in surrendering themselves to their lusts, in considering this lustful life to be good, are able with all that to lead a good, useful, just, loving life, is so startling that the men of future generations, 1 think, will absolutely fail to understand what these men of our time meant by the words " a good life,” since they said that gluttons, effeminate, lustful men, lead a good life. Indeed, we need but to renounce the habitual view of our life for a time and look upon it, I do not say from the standpoint of a Christian, but from the pagan standpoint, from the standpoint of the lowest demands of justice, in order to become convinced that there can be here no question of a good life.

Every man of our society must, I shall not say, to begin a new life, but only to start moving in it, above all else to stop leading a bad life, — he must begin to destroy those conditions of a bad life in which he finds himself.

How often we hear, in justification of our not changing our bad life, the reflection that an act which goes counter to the habitual life would be unnatural and ridiculous, or a desire to make a display, and so would be a bad act. This reflection seems to be made in order to prevent men from changing their bad life. If all our life were good and just, every act which is in accordance with the common life would be good. But if our life is half-good, half-bad, there is as much probability that every act which is not in accordance with the common life is good as that it is bad. But if the whole life is bad and irregular, a man who lives this life cannot perform a single good act, without impairing the usual current of life. It is possible to perform a bad act without impairing the habitual current of life, but it is not possible to perform a good act.

A man who lives our life cannot lead a good life, before leaving those conditions of evil in which he finds himself; he cannot begin to do good, unless he has stopped doing evil. It is impossible for a man who lives luxuriously to lead a good life. All his attempts at doing good will be in vain, until he changes his life and does that work, first in order, which he has to do. A good life, according to the pagan world conception, and still more so according to the Christian, is measured by one thing, and cannot be measured by anything else but the relation, in the mathematical sense, of love of self to the love of others. The less there is of love of self and the resulting care for oneself and labours and demands from others for oneself, and the more there is of love for others and the resulting cares for others, of labours for others, the better the life is.

Thus all the sages of the world and all the true Christians have always understood the good life, and just so all the simplest people understand it. The more a man gives to others and the less he asks for himself, the better he is; the less he gives to others and the more he demands for himself, the worse he is.

If the point of support in a lever be moved from the long to the short end, then not only will the long end be lengthened, but the short end will also be shortened. Thus, if a man, having the one given ability of loving, increases the love and care for himself, he by this very fact diminishes the ability to love others and care for them, not only to the amount of love which he has transferred to himself, but many times more. Instead of feeding others, a man eats up more than is necessary, and thus he has not only diminished the possibility of giving this abundance, but has also, in consequence of his gluttony, deprived himself of the possibility of caring for others.

To be able, not in words, but in fact, to love others, we must stop loving ourselves, not in words, but in fact. As a rule it happens like tins : we think that we love others and assure ourselves and others of this fact; but we love in words only, while ourselves we love in fact. We shall forget to feed others and put them to bed, but ourselves never. And so, to love others, indeed, in fact, we must learn to forget to feed ourselves and put ourselves to bed, just as we forget to do so in reference to others.

We say, " a good man," and " leads a good life," about an effeminate man, who is used to a luxurious life. But such a person — be it man or woman — may have the loveliest traits of character, of meekness, kindness of heart, but he cannot lead a good life, as a knife of the very best workmanship and steel cannot cut, if it is not sharpened. To be good and to lead a good life means to give more to others than is received from them. But an effeminate man, who is used to a luxurious life, cannot do so, in the first place, because he himself always needs much (and he needs much, not on account of his egoism, but because he is used to it, and it causes him suffering to be deprived of what he is used to), and, in the second, because, using up everything which he receives from others, he by this very use weakens himself, deprives himself of the possibility of working, and so of serving others. An effeminate man, who sleeps softly and long, who eats fat, sweet food, and drinks in large quantities, who is dressed warmly or coolly, as the case may demand, who has not accustomed himself to the tension of work, can do but very little.

We have become so accustomed to lying to ourselves and to the lie of others, it is so convenient for us not to see the lie of others, so that they may not see ours, that we are not in the least surprised or in doubt as to the assertion of the virtue, and at times even of the sanctity, of men who live an absolutely dissolute fife. A man — man or woman — sleeps on a bed with springs, two mattresses, and two cleanly pressed sheets and slips, on down pillows. Near his bed is a mat, so that he may not be cold when stepping on the iloor, although

near by stand his slippers. Here also are the necessary articles, so that he does not need to go out. The windows are shielded by shades, so that the light cannot wake him, and he sleeps as long as he feels like sleeping. Besides, measures are taken to have the room warm in winter and cool in summer, and that he may not be disturbed by sounds and by flies and other insects. He sleeps, and the hot and cold water for washing, and at times for a bath and his shaving, are waiting for him. So also are the tea, or coffee, or bracing drinks, which are taken immediately after rising. His boots, shoes, overshoes, several pairs of them, which he soiled yesterday, are being cleaned in such a way that they shine like glass, and there is not a dust speck upon them. Similarly they are cleaning his various suits which he soiled on the previous day, and which correspond not only to winter and summer, but also to spring, autumn, rainy, damp, warm weather. There is prepared for him cleanly washed, starched, ironed linen, with shirt buttons, cuff buttons, loops, which are all looked after by men specially engaged for this.

If a man is active, he rises early, that is, at seven o'clock, still two or three hours later than the people who get all this ready for him. Besides the clothes got ready for the day and the bedding for the night, there are also the clothes and foot-gear for the time of the dressing, the gowns and slippers, and the man goes to wash, clean, and comb himself, for which several kinds of brushes and soaps and a great quantity of water and soap are used. (Many English people are for some reason particularly proud of the fact that they can lather a lot of soap and pour upon themselves a great amount of water.) Then the man dresses himself, combs his hair before a special mirror, which is different from those which hang in every room, takes up his necessary articles, for the most part a pair of spectacles, or eye-glasses, or a lorgnette, then he puts things away in his pockets: a clean handkerchief to clear his nose with, a watch on a chain, although wherever he may be, almost in every room, there is a clock ; he takes money of various denominations, coins (frequently in a special contrivance, which saves him the trouble of finding what he wants) and paper bills; visiting-cards, on which his name is printed and which save him the trouble of telling or writing it out; a white memorandum-book, and a pencil. A woman's dress is much more complicated: a corset, the coiffure, the long hair, the adornments, the ribbons, elastic, pins, hairpins, brooches.

But now everything is ended ; the day generally begins with eating: coffee or tea, specially prepared, is taken with a large quantity of sugar, and rolls are eaten; the bread is made of the very best of wheat flour, with a large quantity of butter, sometimes with hog lard. The men generally smoke cigarettes or cigars during this meal, and then read a fresh newspaper, which has just been brought in. Then the going from home to the oflice or on business, or driving in carriages which exist especially to take people from place to place. Then a breakfast from killed animals, birds, fishes; then a similar dinner, which with great moderation consists of three courses, a sweet dish, coffee; then playing of cards, and playing, — music, or the theatre, reading, or conversation in soft, springy chairs under the intensified or softened light of candles, gas, electricity,—

again tea, again eating, supper, and again to bed, prepared and puffed up, with clear linen, and rinsed vessels.

Such is the day of a man of moderate life, of whom, if he is of a soft character and has no habits which are exceedingly disagreeable to others, they say that he is a man who is leading a good life.

But a good life is that of a man who does good to others; how can a man who lives thus and who is accustomed to live thus do good to men ? Before doing good, he must stop doing evil to men. But consider all the evil which he, frequently without knowing it himself, does to people, and you will see that he is far from doing good to people, and that he has to perform many, very many acts, in order to redeem the evil done by him, and yet he, who is weakened by his lustful life, is absolutely unable to perform any such acts. He could, indeed, sleep more healthily, both physically and morally, by lying on the floor on a cloak, as Marcus Aurelius slept, and so all the labour and work of the mattresses and springs, and of the down pillows, and the daily work of the laundress, a woman, a weak being with her female troubles and childbirths and nursing of children, a woman who is washing the linen belonging to him, a strong man, — all this work could be avoided. He could go to bed earlier and rise earlier, and the work of the shades and of the illumination in the evening could be avoided. He could sleep in the same shirt which he wore in the daytime, could step with his bare feet on the floor, and go out into the yard, could wash himself in the cold water at the well, — in short, could live as live all those who do all this for him, and so he could avoid all the labour which is put out on him. So also could be avoided all the work put on his clothes, his refined food, his amusements.

How, then, can such a man do good to people and lead a good life, without changing his pampered, luxurious life ? A moral man, 1 do not say a Christian, — but just one who professes humanitarian principles, or only justice, cannot help but wish to change his life and stop making use of the objects of luxury, which are often produced with harm to other people.

If a man really pities people who work with tobacco, the first thing he will involuntarily do is to stop smoking, because, by continuing to smoke and buy tobacco, he only encourages the production of tobacco, which ruins the health of people.

But the men of our time do not reason like that. They invent the strangest and cleverest reflections, except the one which naturally presents itself to every simple man. According to their reasoning it is not at all necessary to abstain from articles of luxury. We may have sympathy for the condition of the labourers, make speeches and write books in their favour, and at the same time continue to make use of those labours which we consider to be ruinous for them.

According to one kind of reasoning it turns out that it is right to make use of the ruinous labours of others, because, if I do not make use of them, somebody else will. It is like the reasoning that I

must drink the wine which is injurious for me, because it is bought, and if I do not drink it, others will.

According to another kind of reasoning it appears that the use made of the labours of others for the sake of luxury is indeed very useful for them, because we thus give them money, that is, the possibility of existence, as though it were not possible to make it possible for them to exist in any other way than by compelling them to produce articles which are injurious to them and superfluous for us.

All this is due to the fact that men have come to imagine that it is possible to lead a good life without having attained the first quality in order, which is necessary for a good life.

Now the first quality is abstinence.

VIII.

There has been and there can be no good life without abstinence. No good life is thinkable without abstinence. Every attainment of a good life must begin through it.

There is a ladder of virtues, and we must begin with the first rung, in order to ascend to the next; and the first virtue which must be attained by a man, if he wants to attain the next, is what the ancients called ey/cpd/reca or autypoevvi), that is, reflection or self-possession.

If in the Christian teaching abstinence is included in the concept of self-renunciation, the consecutiveness none the less remains the same, and the attainment of no Christian virtues is possible without abstinence, not because somebody has thought it out so, but because such is the essence of the matter.

Abstinence is the first step of every good life.

But even abstinence is not attained at once, but by degrees.

Abstinence is a man’s liberation from the lusts, their subjection to reason, aw^poavvri. But there are many various lusts in man, and for the struggle with them to be successful he must begin with the basal ones, those on which other, more complex ones grow up, and not with the complex, which have grown up on the basal ones. There are complex passions, as the passion for adorning the body, games, amusements, gossiping, curiosity, and many others; and there are basal passions, such as gluttony, idleness, carnal love. In the struggle with the passions it is impossible to begin at the end, with the struggle with the complex passions ; we must begin with the basal ones, and that, too, in a definite order. This order is

determined both by the essence of the thing and by the tradition of human wisdom.

A glutton is not able to struggle against idleness, and a gluttonous and idle man is unable to struggle with the sexual lust. And so, according to all teachings, the striving after abstinence began with the struggle against the lust of gluttony, began with fasting. But in our society, where every serious relation to the attainment of the good life is lost to such a degree and has been lost for so long a time that the very first virtue, abstinence, without which no others are possible, is considered superfluous, there is also lost the consecutiveness which is indispensable for the attainment of this first virtue, and many have forgotten all about fasting, and it has been decided that fasting is a foolish superstition, and that fasting is not at all necessary.

And yet, just as the first condition of a good life is abstinence, so the first condition of an abstemious life is fasting.

A man may wish to be good, dream of goodness, without fasting; but in reality it is just as impossible to be good without fasting, as it is to walk without getting up on one’s feet.

Fasting is an indispensable condition of a good life. But gluttony has always been the first symptom of the reverse, of a bad life, and unfortunately this symptom has particular force in the life of the majority of the men of our time.

(Hance at the faces and at the figures of the men of our circle and time, — on many of these faces with pendent chins and cheeks, obese limbs and large bellies, lies the ineffaceable imprint of a life of dissipation. Nor can it be otherwise. Look closely at our life, at that by which the majority of the men of our society are moved; ask yourself what is the chief interest of this majority. No matter how strange this may appear to us, who are accustomed to conceal our true interests and to put forth false, artificial ones, the chief interest of the life of the majority of men of our time is the gratification of the sense of taste, the pleasure of eating, gluttony. Beginning with the poorest and ending with the wealthiest classes of society, gluttony, 1 think, is the chief aim, the chief pleasure of our life. The poor working people form an exception only to the extent to which want keeps them from surrendering themselves to this passion. The moment they have time and means for it, they, emulating the higher classes, provide themselves with what tastes best and is sweetest, and eat and drink as much as they can. The more they eat, the more they consider themselves, not only happy, but even strong and healthy. And in this conviction they are maintained by the cultured people, who look upon food in precisely this manner. The cultured classes imagine happiness and health to lie in savoury, nutritive, easily digested food (in which opinion they are confirmed by the doctors, who assert that the most expensive food, meat, is the most wholesome), though they try to conceal this.

Look at the life of these people, listen to their talk. What kind of exalted subjects interests them ? Philosophy, and science, and art, and poetry, and the distribution of wealth, and the welfare of the people, and the education of youth ; but all this is for the vast majority a lie. All this interests them only between business, between the real business, between breakfast and dinner, while the stomach is full, and it is not possible to eat any more. The one living, real interest, the interest of the majority of men and women, is eating, especially after their first youth. How to eat, what to eat, when, where ?

Not one solemnity, not one joy, not one christening, not one opening of anything takes place without eating.

Look at people in their travels. In them you can see it best. " The museums, the libraries, the parliament, — how interesting ! And where shall we dine ? Who sets the best table ?" Yes, just look at the people, as they come down to dinner, dressed up, besprinkled with perfume, to a table adorned with flowers, how joyously they rub their hands and smile!

If we could look into their souls, — what do the majority of men long for? For an appetite for breakfast, for dinner. In what does the severest punishment from childhood consist ? In being reduced to bread and water. What artisan receives the greatest wages ? The cook. In what does the chief interest of the lady of the house consist ? Toward what does in the majority of cases the conversation incline between the ladies of the middle class ? And if the conversation of the people of the higher classes does not incline toward it, the cause of it is not because they are more cultured and busy with higher interests, but only because they have a housekeeper or a steward who is busy with this and guarantees their dinners. But try to deprive them of this comfort, and you will see in what their cares lie. Everything reduces itself to the question of eating, the price of grouse, the best means for boiling coffee, baking sweet tarts, etc. People assemble, whatever the occasion may be, — christening, funeral, wedding, dedication of a church, farewell, reception, celebration of a memorable day, the death or birth of a great scholar, thinker, teacher of morality,— people assemble, claiming to be busy with some exalted subjects. So they say; but they dissemble: they all know that there will be something to eat, good, savoury food, and something to drink, and it is this mainly which has brought them together. For several days previous to this animals have been slaughtered and cut up for this very purpose, baskets with supplies have been brought from the gastronomic shops, and cooks, their assistants, scullions, peasants of the buffet, especially dressed up in clean starched aprons and caps, have been “ working.” So, too, chefs, who receive five hundred roubles per month and more, have been working and giving orders. The cooks have been chopping, mixing, washing, arranging, adorning. With the same solemnity and importance there has been working a similar superintendent of service, counting, reflecting, casting his glance, like an artist. The gardener has been working for the flowers. The dishwashers— A whole army of men work, the products of thousands of

work-days are devoured, and all this in order that the people assembled may have a chance to talk of the memorable great teacher of science or morality, or to recall a deceased friend, or to say farewell to a young couple who are entering upon a new life.

In the lower and middle class it is evident that a holiday, funeral, wedding, means gluttony. It is thus that they understand the matter in these classes. Gluttony to such an extent takes the place of the motive of assemblage that in Greek and French " wedding " and " feast ” have the same meaning. But in the higher circle, amidst refined people, great art is employed in order to conceal this and to make it appear that the eating is a secondary matter, that it exists only for decency’s sake. They can conveniently represent this in such a way, because for the most part they are in the real sense of the word satiated, — they are never hungry.

They pretend that they have no need of a dinner, of eating, and that it is even a burden to them. But try, instead of the refined dishes expected by them, to give them, I do not say bread and water, but porridge and noodles, and you will see what a storm this will provoke, and how the real facts will come to the surface, namely, that in the gathering of these men the chief interest is not the one which they put forth, but the interest of eating.

See what people deal in; walk through the city and see what is being sold: attire and articles of food.

In reality this ought to be so and cannot be otherwise. We cannot stop thinking of eating, keep this lust within its limits, only when we submit to the necessity of eating; but when a man, only submitting to this necessity, that is, to the fulness of the stomach, stops eating, then it cannot be otherwise. If a man has taken a liking to the pleasure of eating, has allowed himself to love this pleasure, and finds that this pleasure is good (as the vast majority of men of our society and the cultured find, although they pretend the opposite), then there is no limit to its increase, there are no limits beyond which it cannot grow. The gratification of a need has its limits ; but enjoyment has none. For the gratification of a need it is indispensable and sufficient to eat bread, porridge, or rice; for the increase of enjoyment there is no end to dishes and to seasonings.

Bread is an indispensable and sufficient food (the proof of this: millions of strong, lithe, healthy men, who work much, live on nothing but bread). But it is better to eat bread with some preparation. It is good to soak bread in water with meat boiled in it. It is still better to put vegetables into this water, and still better a lot of different vegetables. It is not bad to eat meat itself. But it is better to eat, not boiled, but roasted meat. And still better, meat slightly broiled with butter, and with the blood, and only certain parts of it. Add to this vegetables and mustard. And wash it down with wine, best of all red wine. You do not feel like eating anything else, but you can still devour some fish, if it is seasoned with sauce, and you can wash it down with white wine.

One would think that no other fat or savoury food would go down. But you may still eat something sweet, in the summer ice-cream, in the winter preserves, jams, etc. And this is a dinner, a modest dinner. The pleasure of this dinner may be greatly, very greatly increased. And people do increase it, and there is no limit to this increase: there are appetizers, and entremets, and desserts, and all kinds of combinations of savoury food, and adornments, and music during the dinner.

And, strange to say, the people who every day eat such dinners, in comparison with which Belshazzar's feast, which called forth the remarkable threat, is nothing, are naively convinced that they can with it all lead a moral life.

IX.

Fasting is an indispensable condition of a good life; but in fasting, as in abstinence, there appears the question, with what to begin the fasting, how to fast, how often to eat, what not to eat. And as it is impossible seriously to busy oneself with anything, without having acquired the consecutiveness necessary for it, so it is impossible to fast, without knowing with what to begin the fast, with what to begin the abstinence from food.

Fasting ! But there is the choice to be made as to what to begin with. This idea seems ridiculous and extravagant to the majority of men.

I remember with what pride, on account of bis originality, an Evangelical Protestant, who was attacking the asceticism of monasticism, said to me, " My Christianity is not with fasts and privations, but with beefsteaks." Christianity and virtue in general with beefsteaks !

So many savage and immoral things have eaten their way into our life, especially into that lower sphere of the first step toward a good life, the relation to food, to which very few people have paid any attention, that it is difficult for us even to comprehend the boldness and madness of the assertion in our time of a Christianity or virtue with beefsteaks.

The only reason why we are not horrified at this assertion is that with us has happened the unusual thing that we look and do not see, that we listen and do not hear. There is no stench, no sound, no monstrosity, to which a man cannot get used, so that he no longer notices what is startling to a man who is not used to it. The same is true in the moral sphere. Christianity and morality with beefsteaks!

The other day I visited the slaughter-house in our city of Tula. The slaughter-house is built according to a new, perfected method, as it is built in large cities, so that the animals killed shall suffer as little as possible. This was on a Friday, two days before Pentecost. There were there a large number of cattle.

Before that, a long time before, when reading the beautiful book, Ethics of Diet, I had made up my mind to visit the slaughter-house, in order with my own eyes to see the facts of the case, which are mentioned whenever vegetarianism is mentioned. But I felt uneasy, as one always feels uneasy when going to see sufferings which are sure to be there, but which one cannot prevent, and so I kept putting it off.

But lately I met on the road a butcher, who had been home and now was going back to Tula. He is not yet an experienced butcher, and his duty consists in stabbing with a dagger. I asked him whether he did not feel sorry that he had to kill the animals. And as the answer always is, so he answered, " Why be sorry ? This has to be done." But when I told him that eating meat was not necessary, he agreed with me, and then he also agreed with me that it was a pity to kill. " What is to be done ? I have to make a living," he said. " At first I was afraid to kill. My father never killed a chicken in all his life."

The majority of Prussians cannot kill; they feel pity, which they express by the word " afraid." He, too, had been afraid, but had stopped. He explained to me that the busiest day is Friday, when the work lasts until evening.

Lately, too, I had a talk with a soldier, a butcher, and he, too, was surprised in the same way at my assertion that it is a pity to kill; and, as always, he said that this was the law; but later he agreed with me, " Especially when it is a tame, kind animal. The dear animal comes up to you, believing you. It is truly a pity !"

One day we returned from Moscow on foot, and some drivers of drays, going from Serpukhov to a forest to get a merchant's timber, gave us a lift. It was Maundy Thursday. I was riding in the first telega with a strong, red-faced, coarse driver, who was apparently very drunk. As we entered a village, we saw that from the last yard they were pulling a fattened, shorn, pink-coloured pig, to get it killed. The pig squealed in a desperate voice, which resembled that of a man. Just as we passed by, they began to kill the pig. One of the men drew the knife down its throat. It squealed louder and more pene-tratingly than before, tore itself loose, and ran away, shedding its blood. I am near-sighted and so did not see all the details; all I saw was the pink-coloured flesh of the pig, which resembled that of a man, and I heard the desperate squeal; but the driver saw all the details, and he looked in that direction without taking his eyes off. The pig was caught and thrown down, and they began to finish the killing. When its squeal died down, the driver drew a deep sigh.

" Is it possible men will not have to answer for this ?" he muttered.

So strong is people’s disgust at any kind of a murder; but by example, by encouraging men’s greed, by the assertion that this is permitted by God, and chiefly by habit, people have been brought to a complete loss of this natural feeling.

On Friday I went to Tula, and, upon meeting an acquaintance of mine, a meek, kindly man, I invited him to go with me.

" Yes, I have heard that it is well arranged, and I should like to see it, but if they slaughter there, I sha’n’t go in.”

" Why not ? It is precisely what I want to see. If meat is to be eaten, cattle have to be killed.”

" No, no, I cannot.”

What is remarkable in this case is, that this man is a hunter and himself kills birds and animals.

We arrived. Even before entering we could smell the oppressive, detestable, rotten odour of joiner’s glue or of glue paint. The farther we went, the stronger was this odour. It is a very large, red brick building, with vaults and high chimneys. We entered through the gate. On the right was a large fenced yard, about a quarter of a desyatma in size, — tins is the cattle-yard, to which the cattle for sale are driven two days in the week, — and at the edge of this space is the janitor’s little house; on the left were what they call the chambers, that is, rooms with round gates, concave asphalt floors, and appliances for hanging up and handling the carcasses. By the wall of the little house, and to the right of it, sat six butchers in aprons, winch were covered with blood, with blood-bespattered sleeves rolled up over muscular arms. They had finished their work about half an hour ago, so that on that day we could see only the empty chambers. In spite of the gates being opened on two sides, there was in each chamber an oppressive odour of warm blood; the floor was cinnamon-coloured and shining, and in the depressions of the floor stood coagulated black gore.

One of the butchers told us how they slaughtered, and showed us the place where this is done. I did not quite understand him, and formed a false, but very terrible conception of how they slaughtered, and I thought, as is often the case, that the reality would produce a lesser effect upon me than what I had imagined. But I was mistaken in this.

The next time I came to the slaughter-house in time. It was on Friday before Pentecost. It was a hot June day. The odour of glue and of blood was even more oppressive and more noticeable in the morning, than during my first visit. The work was at white heat. The dusty square was all full of cattle, and the cattle were driven into all the stalls near the chambers.

In the street in front of the building stood carts with steers, heifers, and cows tied to the cart stakes and shafts. Butchers' carts, drawn by good horses, loaded with live calves with dangling heads, drove up and unloaded; and similar carts with upturned and shaking legs of the carcasses of steers, with their heads, bright red lungs and dark red livers drove away from the slaughter-house. Near the fence stood the mounts of the cattle-dealers. The cattle-dealers themselves, in their long coats, with whips and knouts in their hands, walked up and down in the yard, either marking one man's cattle with tar paint, or haggling, or attending to the transfer of bulls and steers from the square to the stalls, from which the cattle entered the chambers. These men were obviously all absorbed in money operations and calculations, and the thought that it is good or bad to kill these animals was as far from them as the thought as to what was the chemical composition of the blood with which the floor of the chambers was covered.

No butchers could be seen in the yards: they were all working in the chambers. During this day about one hundred steers were killed. I entered a chamber and stopped at the door. I stopped, both because the chamber was crowded with the carcasses which were being shifted, and because the blood ran underfoot and dripped from above, and all the butchers who were there were smeared in it, and, upon entering inside, I should certainly have been smeared with blood. They were taking down one carcass, which was suspended; another was being moved to the door; a third, a dead ox, was lying with his white legs turned up, and a butcher with his strong fist was ripping the st retched-out hide.

Through the door opposite to the one where I was standing they were at that time taking in a large, red, fattened ox. Two men were pulling him. And they had barely brought him in, when I saw a butcher raise a dagger over his head and strike him. The ox dropped down on his belly, as though he had been knocked off all his four legs at once, immediately rolled over on one side, and began to kick with his legs and with his whole back. One of the butchers immediately threw himself on the fore part of the ox, from the end opposite his kicking legs, took hold of his horns, bent his head to the ground, and from beneath the head there spirted the dark red blood, under the current of which a boy besmeared in blood placed a tin basin. All the time while they were doing this, the ox kept jerking his head, as though trying to get up, and kicked with all his four legs in the air. The basin filled rapidly, but the ox was still alive and, painfully contracting and expanding his belly, kicked with his fore legs and hind legs, so that the butchers had to get out of his way. When one basin was filled, the boy carried it on his head to the albumen plant, while another boy set down another basin, which also began to fill up. But the ox kept contracting and expanding his belly and jerked with his hind legs. When the blood stopped flowing, the butcher raised the head of the ox and began to flay him. The ox continued kicking. The head was bared and began to look red with white veins, and assumed the position given to it by the butchers; on both sides of it hung the hide. The ox continued to

kick. Then another butcher caught the ox by a leg, which he broke and cut off. Convulsions ran up and down the belly and the other legs. The other legs, too, were cut off, and they were thrown where all the legs belonging to one owner were thrown. Then the carcass was pulled up to a block and tackle and was stretched out, and there all motion stopped.

Thus I stood at the door and looked at a second, a third, a fourth ox. With all of them the same happened: the same flayed head with pinched tongue and the same kicking back. The only difference was that the butcher did not always strike in the right place to make the ox fall. It happened that the butcher made a mistake, and the ox jumped up, bellowed, and, shedding blood, tried to get away. But then he was pulled under a beam and struck a second time, after which he fell.

I later walked up from the side of the door, through which they brought in the oxen. Here I saw the same, only at closer range, and, therefore, more clearly. I saw here, above all else, what I had not seen through the other door, — how they compelled the oxen to walk through this door. Every time when they took an ox out of the stall and pulled him by a rope, which was attached to his horns, the ox, scenting the blood, became stubborn and bellowed, and sometimes jerked back. It was impossible for two men to pull him in by force, and so a butcher every time went behind and took the ox by the tail, which he twisted until the gristle cracked and the tail broke, and the ox moved on.

The oxen of one owner were all finished, and they brought up the cattle of another. The first from this lot of the other owner was a bull. He was a fine-looking, thoroughbred black bull, with white spots on his body and white legs, — a young, muscular, energetic animal. They began to pull him; he dropped his head and absolutely refused to move. But the butcher who was walking behind took hold of his tail, as a machinist puts his hand on the throttle, and twisted it; the cartilage cracked, and the bull rushed ahead, knocking the men who were pulling at the rope off their feet, and again stood stubbornly still, looking askance with his white, bloodshot eyes. But again the tail cracked, and the bull rushed forward and was where he was wanted. The butcher walked up, took his aim, and struck him. But the stroke did not fall in the right place. The bull jumped up, tossed his head, bellowed, and, all covered with blood, tore himself loose and rushed back. All the people at the doors started back; but the accustomed butchers, with a daring which was the result of the peril, briskly took hold of the rope and again of the tail, and again the bull found himself in the chamber, where his head was pulled under the beam, from which he no longer tore himself away. The butcher briskly looked for the spot where the hair scatters in the form of a star, and, having found it, in spite of the blood, struck him, and the beautiful animal, which was full of life, came down with a crash and kicked with its head and legs, while they let off the blood and flayed the head.

" Accursed devil, he did not even fall the right way," growled the

butcher as he cut the hide from his head.

Five minutes later the red, instead of black, head, without the hide, with glassy, fixed eyes, which but five minutes before had glistened with such a beautiful colour, was suspended on the beam.

Then I entered the division where they butcher the smaller animals. It is a very large and long chamber, with an asphalt floor and with tables with backs, on which they butcher sheep and calves. Here the work was all finished; in the long chamber, which was saturated with the odour of blood, there were only two butchers. One was blowing into the leg of a dead wether and patting the blown-up belly; the other, a young lad, with a blood-bespattered apron, was smoking a bent cigarette. There was no one else in the gloomy, long chamber, which was saturated with the oppressive odour. Immediately after me there came in one who looked like an ex-soldier, who brought a black yearling lamb, with spots on his neck, which he put down on one of the tables, as though on a bed. The soldier, apparently an acquaintance of theirs, greeted them and asked them when their master gave them days off. The young lad with the cigarette walked up with a knife, which he sharpened at the edge of the table, and answered that they had their holidays free. The live plump lamb was lying quietly as though dead, only briskly wagging his short tail and breathing more frequently than usual. The soldier lightly, without effort, held down his head, which was rising up; the young lad, continuing the conversation, took the lamb’s head with his left hand and quickly drew the knife down his throat. The lamb shivered, and the little tail became arched and stopped wagging. While waiting for the blood to run off, the young lad puffed at the cigarette, which had nearly gone out. The blood began to flow, and the lamb began to be convulsed. The conversation was continued without the least interruption.

And those hens and chickens, which every day in a thousand kitchens, with heads cut off, shedding blood, jump about comically and terribly, flapping their wings?

And behold, a tender, refined lady will devour the corpses of these animals with the full conviction of her righteousness, asserting two propositions, which mutually exclude one another:

The first, that she is so delicate – and of this she is assured by her doctor – that she is unable to live on vegetable food alone, but that her weak organism demands animal food; and the second, that she is so sensitive that she not only cannot cause any sufferings to any animal, but cannot even bear the sight of them.

And yet, this poor lady is weak for the very reason, and for no other, that she has been taught to subsist on food which is improper for man; and she cannot help but cause the animals suffering, because she devours them.

X.

We cannot pretend that we do not know this. We are not ostriches, and we cannot believe that, if we do not look, there will not be what we do not wish to see. This is the more impossible, when we do not wish to see what we wish to eat. And, above all else, if it were only indispensable ! But let us assume that it is not indispensable, but necessary for some purpose. It is not.1 It is good only for bringing out animal sensations, breeding lust, fornication, drunkenness. This is constantly confirmed by the fact that good, uncorrupted young men, especially women and girls, feel, without knowing how one thing follows from the other, that virtue is not compatible with beefsteak, and as soon as they wish to be good, they give up animal food.

What, then, do I wish to say ? Is it this, that men, to be moral, must stop eating meat ? Not at all.

What I wanted to say is, that for a good life a certain order of good acts is indispensable; that if the striving after the good life is serious in a man, it will inevitably assume one certain order, and that in this order the first virtue for a man to work on is abstinence, self-possession. And in striving after abstinence, a man will inevitably

1 Let those who doubt it read those numerous books, composed by scholars and physicians, in which it is proved that meat is not necessary for man’s alimentation. And let them not listen to those old-fashioned doctors, who defend the necessity of subsisting on meat, only because their predecessors and they themselves have recognized it as necessary for a long time, — they defend it with stubbornness, with malice, as everything old and obsolete is always defended.— Author's Note.

follow one certain order, and in this order the first subject will be abstinence in food, fasting. But in fasting, if he seriously and sincerely seeks a good life, the first from which a man will abstain will always be the use of animal food, because, to say nothing of the excitation of the passions, which this food produces, its use is directly immoral, since it demands an act which is contrary to our moral sense, — murder, — and is provoked only by the desire and craving for good eating.

Why abstinence from animal food will be the first work of fasting and a moral life has excellently been said, not by one man, but by the whole of humanity, in the persons of its best representatives in the course of the whole conscious life of humanity.

" But why, if the illegality, that is, the immorality, of animal food has for so long a time been known to humanity, have men not yet come to recognize this law ? ” is what those men will ask who are generally guided, not so much by their reason, as by public opinion.

The answer to this question is this, that the moral progress of humanity, which forms the basis of every progress, always takes place slowly; but that the symptom of the true, not the accidental, progress is its unceasingness and constant acceleration.

And such is the motion of vegetarianism. This motion is expressed in all the thoughts of the writers on this subject, and in the life of humanity itself, which more and more passes unconsciously from meat eating to vegetable food, and consciously in the motion of vegetarianism, which has been manifesting itself with especial force and is assuming ever greater dimensions. This motion has for the last ten years been growing faster and faster; there appear every year more and more books and periodicals which deal with this subject; we constantly meet more and more men who reject animal food; and the number of vegetarian restaurants and hotels is growing every year abroad, especially in Germany, England, and America.

This motion must be particularly pleasing to those who live striving after the realization of the kingdom of God upon earth, not because vegetarianism in itself is an important step toward this kingdom (all true steps are both important and not important), but because it serves as a sign of this, that the striving after man’s moral perfection is serious and sincere, since it has assumed the proper invariable order, which begins with the first step.

We cannot help but rejoice in this, just as people could not help but rejoice who, striving to get to the top of a house, had been vainly and in disorder trying to climb the walls from various sides, and now at last assemble near the first rung of the ladder, knowing that there is no way of getting to the top but by beginning at this first rung of the ladder.