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THE MORAL ASPECTS

OF

VIVISECTION.

BY

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WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,

14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON;
AND 20, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.

1875.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE

MORAL ASPECTS OF VIVISECTION.

THE notion of the extreme tenderness and sensibility of early youth, especially in the male human creature, is almost as purely conventional and remote from experience as the poetic fiction of an English spring, all sunshine and flowers. That type of cruelty which comes of ignorance and recklessness, both of their own suffering and that of others, and wherein Curiosity, not Malice, is the prevailing motive, is at its worst in adolescence; and only as years go by, and observations multiply, and the experience of pain ploughs up the heart, does sympathy grow by slow degrees, till at last, as Sir Arthur Helps has pointed out, it may be predicted with certainty that a jury of old men will take the most merciful view of every case brought for their verdict.

On the larger scale of nations and of humanity, the same process of slow initiation into the mysteries of suffering and of sympathy goes forward, and we may now behold society so far emerged from the age of barbarism that an English gentleman would no more insert now-a-days in his account-book (like the pious and charitable Alleyne) an item for "Whipping of ye Blind Beare," than the stream of traffic would proceed peacefully in 1875 under Temple Bar were John Mitchell's head to be exhibited on the cornice. The influences of civilization, of religion, of culture—in short, of all kinds, mental

and moral—have softened, like the rain of heaven, the crust of our dry, hard world, and there is every reason to hope that, unless arrested or perverted, they will trickle downwards and permeate the whole soil of human society, till the "desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." When we think of what earth might become were the tiger passions within our race to be bred out at last, and the divine faculty of love and sympathy to attain its obviously intended development, it would seem as if efforts for the improvement of our physical or sanitary conditions, or for the advance of arts, science or laws, were scarcely worth making, in comparison of any step which should bring us nearer to such an age of joy.

But it is by no means an even and unbroken line of progress which we can flatter ourselves our race is pursuing towards a millennium of mercy. While the general stream of tendency is undoubtedly in that direction, and may indeed be dimly traced so to have been since the beginning of history, yet there are certain counter currents observable which are setting altogether in an opposite direction. The great wars which the gigantic armies of modern European statecraft have called into being, and the dire legacy of national hatred which such events bequeath to unborn generations, present undoubtedly alarming obstacles in our road. It may excite surprise, perhaps ridicule, if I point to another and apparently comparatively insignificant feature of modern life, as no less threatening in another way. If, while a patient seems to be recovering from a long malady, a new and strange symptom should suddenly exhibit itself, small perhaps in superficial extension, but obviously of a virulent kind, the physician would unquestionably hold that there existed considerable latent danger. Much such a rapid development of peculiarly acrimonious moral disease appears to be taking place in that part of our social body which is just now the seat of highest vitality. Science is undoubtedly at this hour the ruling passion of the age. What the Chase, War,

Art and Learning, have been in various past epochs, so is the pursuit of Physical Knowledge in our generation. The triumphs thereby achieved have dazzled us, as the people of France were dazzled by the victories of the first Napoleon; and even such of us as understand but very imperfectly wherein these boasted conquests consist, are ready, like our betters, to cast our palms in the way of the new Messiah and shout "Hosanna!" albeit we have too seldom reason to believe that he "cometh in the name of the Lord."

If any men may claim to be more than others the representatives of the period, in the "foremost files of time," it is our men of science. Whether the rest of mankind will hereafter meekly follow in their mental track yet remains to be seen; but it is certain that no statesmen, no divines, no metaphysicians, offer themselves at the present day with so high pretensions to become our Moses and Aarons, and to lead us—it may be into a Canaan, it may be into a wilderness. What is done, thought, felt, by the men of science is of almost incalculable weight in determining the proximate tendencies of thousands of lesser spirits—the direction to be taken by all those innumerable minds which have no motor force of their own, but follow the *Zeit Geist* whithersoever he goeth. A peculiar and abnormal manifestation of sentiment among the scientific class, or even of a certain small section of it,* is, therefore, quite otherwise significant than the rise of a silly or cruel fashion among the *jeunesse dorée* of the clubs and the

* Probably the great astronomers and geologists would be the very last to countenance such practices as those to which reference is made. Mrs. Somerville's expressions of abhorrence of them are repeated many times in her "Recollections;" and the late venerable Sir Charles Lyell, a short time before his death, answered the writer's inquiries as to his opinion with a shudder of disgust, and added: "I do not even like to think of all the *insects* I killed when I was a young man and made my entomological collection. Of course I did it with every precaution to save them pain, but I do not like to remember it now."

race-course, or the prevalence of an idle delusion in certain urban coteries.

Such manifestation is, I apprehend, actually observable in the very rapid extension of the practice of painful Experiments on Animals, to which some prominence has lately been given in public discussion. In the present paper, I purpose studiously to avoid detailing, or even alluding specifically to, any of the multiform horrors which are classified under the name of Vivisections. But without harrowing the reader by similar descriptions, I shall merely point to such experiments as those narrated by Dr. Hoggan, and the singularly ingenious varieties of torture which fill the large volumes of French and English physiological Handbooks, and suggest to my readers the inquiry; Whether this sort of thing be not strangely at variance with the tone of thought and practice which at present prevail in other departments of human activity; and whether such books, for example, as these Catechisms of the Art of Torture, do not even stand unique in the literature of the world? While our legislation tends to an almost excessive lenity towards criminals; while our Art and our Letters become yearly more refined and fastidious; while our manners grow more uniformly courteous towards all classes; and while, in a very special manner, we are beginning to take a new interest in the intelligence and affections of the lower animals, and to visit their cruel treatment with condign punishment,—in the midst of all this humanizing process we suddenly find a break, a pause, nay, a very decided retrograde movement. It is at least fitting that we should inquire into the meaning of this strange and startling phenomenon. Let us suppose, to aid our imagination, that something analogous to vivisection were going on in some other department of activity, say of Art. There are legends (probably mythical) that *dilettante* sovereigns in the Cinque Cento age, when Art was supreme as Science is now, were so anxious to aid the great painters at their work,

that they beheaded men to serve for models for John the Baptist, and crucified boys to help a Calvary. Were a similar expedient suggested in 1875 in the schools of the Royal Academy, can we conceive the tempest of public indignation which would gather round the head of the enthusiastic Art-Director who had deemed the end of producing a noble and religious picture so sacred that all means were lawful to attain it? Or suppose that, for the sanitary interests of the community, it were proposed to stamp out small-pox by administering poison to every person seized with the disease. Is it imaginable that such a scheme would obtain a hearing? Or (to come to closer analogies) let us fancy that, in the progress of gastronomy, an experiment, to which we had not become hardened by custom, and no less cruel than the production of *foie gras*, or the old abandoned process for making white veal, were suddenly to be introduced from France; or that sportsmen adopted a fashion of merely mangling their game, or using red-hot or poisoned shot. How horrible and startling should we pronounce the novel indulgence of tastes so morbid and pastimes so atrocious! "Some forty years ago," as a very eminent gentleman reminds me, "the then Duke of St. Alban's, being Hereditary Grand Falconer, bethought him that he would try a little hawking, and he flew a hawk at a heron. Society and all the newspapers rose up in arms and denounced him for his cruelty. That sort of field sport was not customary;" and so it was regarded with horror.

Yet such indifference to suffering as we have imagined in our hypothetical cases of artists, or sanitary reformers, or cooks, or sportsmen, would, on the whole, be less monstrous and anomalous than the passion for Vivisection among the men of science; and this for two noticeable reasons: In the first place, artists, sportsmen, and *bon-vivants*, know comparatively little of the nature and extent of the suffering caused by lacerations of the living tissues, or the production of morbid

conditions, while the physiologists understand the matter to a nicety, and have the most perfect acquaintance with every pain which they cause — nay, whose causation is often the immediate object of their ingenious exertions. As the writer of a most admirable letter, bearing the well-known signature of "Lewis Carrol," published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Feb. 12th, expressed it: "What can teach the noble quality of mercy, of sensitiveness to every form of suffering, so powerfully as the knowledge of what suffering really is? Can the man who has once realized by minute study what the nerves are, what the brain is, and what waves of agony the one can convey to the other, go forth and wantonly inflict pain on any sentient being? A little while ago we should have confidently replied, 'He cannot do it.' In the light of modern revelations we must sorrowfully confess he can." Again, in a still more marked way the acts of the vivisectors are anomalous and out of character. It is the boast of the school of science to which they belong that it has exploded the old theory that man was unique in creation, with a higher origin than the brutes, and a different destiny. They give us to understand that God has "made of one blood" at least all the *Mammalia* "upon earth."* Not merely our purely corporeal frames, but Thought, Memory, Love, Hate, Hope, Fear, and even some shadowy analogues of Conscience and Religion, have been traced by the great thinker and truly tender-hearted man at the head of this school, throughout the lower realms of life upon this planet; and, in the eyes of most cultivated and thoughtful persons in these days, the claims of a dog, an elephant, a seal or a chimpanzee,

* Or rather, perhaps, their views may be more accurately rendered according to the newest Genesis, which tells us that after "the Unknowable moved upon the Cosmos and evolved protoplasm; by accretion and absorption came the radiata and mollusca; and mollusca begat articulata, and articulata begat vertebrata. . . . And there followed the generation of the higher vertebrata in the cosmic period when the Unknowable evoluted the bipedal mammalia."

to consideration and compassion, are at least as high as were those of a Negro a century ago in the eyes of a Jamaica planter. To find a number of men of science—disciples, it is believed, almost without exception, of the doctrine of Evolution—themselves pursuing, and teaching their pupils to pursue, trains of physiological investigations involving unutterable suffering to these same "Poor Relations" of our human family, is an appalling phenomenon. That the Pope should have refused Lord Odo Russell's request for permission to form in Rome a Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, might, perhaps, be understood on the strange ground his response assumed—viz., that it was "a theological error to suppose that man owes any duty to the animals." But that the disciples of Darwin should themselves be the teachers and leaders in a new development of most exquisite cruelty to the brutes whom they believe to share our blood, our intelligence, and our affections, is indeed a portent of strange and threatening augury. It involves (as several writers in the daily press have not failed to remark) no less than the adoption of a moral theory of boundless application—namely, that the weak have absolutely no claims at all against the strong, but may be tortured *ad infinitum* even on the chance of discovering something interesting to the lordlier race; or for the purpose of better fixing an impression by the sight of their agonies than could be effected by the verbal description of a lecturer.* "We ask, bewildered," says a writer in the *Daily News*, "how far then will these apologists of vivisection go in approving of the sacrifice of the weak for the sake of the strong? If it be proper to torture a hundred affectionate dogs or intelligent chimpanzees to settle some curious problems about their brains, will they advocate doing the same to a score of Bosjesmen, to the idiots in our asylums, to criminals, to infants, to women?"

* Prof. Rutherford, at the recent meeting of the British Medical Association at Edinburgh, expressly defended vivisection on this ground.

Truly this mournful spectacle of the perpetration of cruelty by those who best understand what is cruel, and of the contemptuous disregard of the claims of the brutes by those who have taught us that the brutes are only undeveloped men, is one to fill us with sorrowful forebodings for that future of our race which, from other quarters, seems to promise so fairly. "The simultaneous loss," writes one of the deepest and most observant thinkers of the day, "from the morals of our 'advanced' scientific men of all reverent sentiment towards beings *above* them, as towards beings *below*, is a curious and instructive phenomenon, highly significant of the process which their natures are undergoing *at both ends*."

Of course events, like the sudden development of physiological cruelties, do not take place without sufficient cause, and are not without some ostensible excuse on the part of those responsible for them. The common passion for science in general and for physiology in particular, and the prevalent materialistic belief that the secrets of Mind can best be explored in Matter, undoubtedly account in no small measure for the vehemence of the new pursuit of original physiological investigations. Then, for the instruction of students in agonizing experiments, other causes may readily be found. Young men at the age of ordinary medical students are, as I began by remarking, filled with curiosity and exceedingly empty of sympathy and pity. An eminent physiologist recently bore testimony to his surprise when a whole class of his pupils trooped out of his lecture-room, on purpose to see the assistant kill a creature which he had considerately intended should be despatched out of sight before dissection. "I remained alone in my chair," he observed, "a sadder and a wiser man." The same keenness of observation, or a memory of their own youthful insensibility, ought to teach all professors of physiology that they are indulging a maleficent tendency which already exists in their pupils' disposition, when they

invite mere lads of the Bob Sawyer type to watch their frightful experiments—the more frightful, so much, alas! the more attractive. And, further still, the proclivity of the time to youthful independence and raw incredulity of the experience of others, adds strength to the desire of students to see with their own eyes the phenomena which their instructors might almost, or quite, as thoroughly convey to them by means of descriptions and the extraordinarily perfect models and diagrams now available.* There is nothing intrinsically blameworthy in this wish, which is perhaps an integral part of the scientific temperament. But its claims to be indulged, when indulgence means for a sensitive creature exquisite torture, and for the student such satisfaction as he may find in watching it, is another question.

Of the argumentative defences of Vivisection more must be said. The chief, I think, is a double-barrelled instrument, aimed at our selfishness (under the grandiloquent name of the Benefit of the Human Race) on the one side, and our bad conscience as regards various kinds of cruelty on the other. The latter, or *tu quoque* argument, which was set forth at large in a semi-jocose pamphlet by the assistant of M. Schiff, and published in Florence under the name of "Gli Animali Martiri," refers us with a sneer to the cruelties of the Chase and the Shambles, and asks us whether, in a world where such things are done from the very lowest motives, it is worth while to dispute a few victims for those sacred Altars of Science which form the furniture of physiological laboratories. The answer to this appeal is not far to seek. One offence does not exculpate another, even if both be morally on the same level. But (as we have just seen) all other cruelties have some excuse in the ignorance or stupidity of those who

* And which *are* so conveyed in other branches of study when their exhibition would cause any serious inconvenience. What chemist thinks it needful to blow up a room to shew his pupils the qualities of a detonating powder?

inflict them, while those of the Physiologist alone bear the treble stigma of being done in the full light of knowledge, by singularly able men, and with the calmest forethought and deliberation. And while every other kind of cruelty is falling into disrepute, if not into disuse, this alone is rising almost into the rank of a profession, like a superior sort of butchery. As to the argument that it does not become people who eat animal flesh to demur to the torture of animals, it would have seemed as if no one with common sense could have employed it, had we not found it repeatedly brought forward by the pro-vivisectors as if it possessed withering force. The cattle we use for food exist on the condition that we shall take their lives when we need them; and in doing so in the ordinary, not unmerciful manner, we save them the far worse miseries of old age and starvation. To *kill* a creature quickly, is one thing. To cause it to suffer torture which shall make its existence a curse, is quite another matter.

Finally, for the tediously reiterated but more reasonable reproach, that the opponents of Vivisection make no efforts to put down Field Sports, and count among their number many fox-hunters, deer-stalkers, fowlers, and anglers—what shall be answered? My reply is that the parallel between Vivisection and Field Sports is about as just and accurate as if a tyrant, accused of racking his prisoners in his secret dungeons, were to turn round and open a discussion on the Lawfulness of War. That creatures who chase, and are chased all their days in fields and waters, should have an arch-enemy and pursuer in man, may be differently estimated as ill or well. But it is almost ludicrous to compare a fox-hunt (for example) with its free chances of escape, and its almost instantaneous termination in the annihilation of the poor fox when captured, with the slow, long-drawn agonies of an affectionate, trustful dog, fastened down limb by limb, and

mangled on its torture trough.* An old-world passion, which had its place and use in another form of society, is running to seed in the modern fashion of field sports, such as *battues* and pigeon matches. A new passion which scarcely had existence twenty years ago, is sprouting above ground and showing its bud in Vivisection.

Of course the motive of the sportsman, being usually merely sport, contrasts much to his disadvantage with that which the vivisector requires us to believe is his actuating principle. The latter tells us that it is for the exalted purpose of alleviating the sufferings of mankind, which touch his tender heart to the quick, that he puts himself and his brute victims to the pain of his experiments; whereas the sportsman can only sometimes plead that he kills game for food or to clear the land of noxious creatures; and must usually confess that he hunts, or shoots, or angles for his own pleasure, health, and amusement.

So far as the present writer's opinion is concerned, these latter motives do *not* justify such pursuits when they entail the death of animals neither hurtful to man nor wanted for his food; nor do any field sports seem to harmonize with the highest type of cultivated and humane feeling. But the men who follow them may plead at least the excuses of custom and of partial ignorance. Turn we, on the other hand, to those boasted motives of lofty and far-sighted philanthropy which are alleged to spur the Vivisector to his ugly work in his laboratory, where no fern-brakes or heathery hills, no fresh breezes or dancing streams, such as throw enchantment round the pursuits of the sportsman, are present to cast any glamour

* Left there sometimes *curarized* (and therefore doubly sensitive), when its wearied tormentors have gone to rest, having provided that their steam-engine should continue to supply it with artificial respiration, on the chance that it might linger till morning. (See an instance in the *Archives de Physiologie*, described by the operator, M. Bert. The dog's pneumogastric and sciatic nerves had been dissected and irritated for six hours.)

over the process of torture; and where no chance of escape on the part of the brute, or risk to his own person, may stir his pulse with the manly struggle for victory.

In the first place, I may remark that the mental constitution of a man must be somewhat exceptional who is enthusiastically anxious to relieve the sufferings of unseen, and perhaps unborn, men and women, but who cares in comparison nothing at all for those agonies which are endured immediately under his eye by creatures who, according to his philosophy, are only a step lower in the scale of being. It verges truly on the gigantic and Promethean to talk of such devotion to the interests of *Humanity in the abstract;* and when we behold a cultivated and gifted gentleman selecting freely for his life-work the daily mangling of dogs and cats, we are quite at a loss to qualify the grandeur of his voluntary martyrdom. Perhaps it is not very astonishing that homely people, who do not feel in their breasts the vocation for such sublime devotion, should treat the boast of these motives as just a little partaking of the character of moonshine; and suppose, in a matter-of-fact way, that either the vivisector is a perfectly callous man, whose horrid work never costs him a pang,* or that, if he have any lingering feelings of compassion, he puts them aside in favour of sentiments rather more common in the world than such Curtius-like self-sacrifice. As very few of us would purchase immunity from our own dis-

* I am compelled to testify that in wading through a mass of this Dead Sea literature, I have never been refreshed by a single passing expression of commiseration for the animals, whose signs of agony are recorded merely as interesting features of the experiments; or of regret that the higher scientific objects in view necessitated the prolongation of their tortures. If such feelings exist in the hearts of the operators, I must congratulate them on the signal success wherewith they eliminate the slightest trace of them from all their reports. Further, in perusing the books dedicated to the instruction of young students, I have looked equally in vain for any hint of caution, or recommendation to parsimony, in the use of the most excruciating experiments.

eases at the cost of the torture of a hundred dogs, we may be pardoned for doubting whether the vivisector who cuts them up (as he assures us) for our sakes, is really more interested on our behalf than we are for ourselves.

I believe, then, that we may not unjustifiably fall back on the conclusion that the real motives of vivisectors are of one or other of two less exalted kinds. The better class we may credit with a sincere ardour for Science, and that passion which has been well named the Dilletantism of Discovery. And these belong precisely to that order of *hommes à grands desseins*, who are more than any others liable to overstep the bounds of justice and mercy, and who more than others need the intervention of the social conscience to check their recklessness. For a lower class we must, I fear, take the word of a man who worked for four months among them, in a laboratory where from one to three dogs were sacrificed daily: "The idea of the good of humanity was simply out of the question, and would have been laughed at; the great aim being to keep up with or go ahead of our contemporaries in science, even at the price of an incalculable amount of needless torture to animals."*

But the motives which actually influence living vivisectors do not, of course, determine the ethical lawfulness of the practice of vivisection. Our real problem is, whether the highest end to which it *may* conduce, and which they *may* possibly contemplate,—viz., either the direct benefit of mankind by special discovery, or the indirect benefit by the general advancement of science—morally justifies the means whereby it is to be obtained? Does the Good of Man justify the the torture of brutes?

At this point we are commonly called upon to recognize with profound admiration and gratitude the immense value of the discoveries said to be due to physiological experiment, and

* Dr. Hoggan's letter to the *Morning Post*.

we are challenged to say whether, for example, Harvey's Circulation of the Blood, Bell's Double Function of the Nerves, and Simpson's Chloroform, were not secrets worth buying at the price of a considerable amount of animal pain? The first answer to this "tall talk" is, that not one of these great discoveries appears to have been really made by the aid of vivisection (see Dr. Macaulay's excellent "Plea for Mercy to Animals"); and that of the other reputed results of such experiments, it may be generally affirmed that they resemble the marvels said to have been wrought by the magicians of Pharaoh, who could *bring* the plagues upon Egypt, but remained quite powerless to *cure* them. Into such controversies, however, concerning the utility of Vivisection, I, for one, refuse to enter. I am quite ready to admit that benefit has frequently resulted in all ages from a variety of evil deeds—from Rapine, Perjury, Infanticide, and especially from the sacrifice of "hecatombs" of women to spare "the smallest pain" (or self-restraint) of men. But not on account of such utility do I consider robbery and falsehood, the murder of infants or the prostitution of hapless women, right or lawful. Thus I refuse even to entertain the question, "Whether the torture of animals can be justified on the plea of benefit to humanity?" And for this simple reason: I do not hold the Jesuit principle that "the End justifies the Means,"* and I am satisfied that the "Means" of Torture are morally forbidden and unlawful. Bishop Butler's grand axiom that every sentient creature has an indefeasible claim to be spared pain merely because it is sentient, involves the corollary that the claims of the humblest of such creatures must begin *somewhere*, and cannot be wholly and finally abrogated,—as they would be on the hypothesis that we may push our right to take their lives to the ultimate and indefinitely more remote point of putting them to torture.

* See this principle traced home to the highest Jesuit authorities, *Quarterly Review*, January, 1875, p. 69.

To make of the existence of a creature such a misfortune and curse as that it should seem better it had never been born,—this is assuredly far beyond the exercise of any prerogative which man can claim for himself, either in virtue of any inherent superiority of his nature, or of any privilege he can conceive to have been granted to him by the Creator.

To affirm, then, as vivisectors are wont to do, that they would freely "sacrifice a hecatomb of dogs to save the smallest pain of a man," is merely an expression of contempt for the rights of beings feebler than themselves, and which are not yet advanced by evolution to the lordly class of "Bimana," or the genus "Homo." What are the moral grounds, we ask, for this astounding new principle of *Race Selfishness?* What is there in Man, either considered only as our fellow-bimanous animal, or as an immortal being whose body is but the garment of his soul, which should make his trifling pain so inexpressibly solemn a matter, and the agony of another animal, no less physically sensitive, insignificant by comparison? Of course we may naturally feel a little more spontaneous sympathy with a suffering man than with a suffering horse. But what is the ethical reason why we should prefer the pain of a thousand horses to that of a single man? Sir Henry Taylor has written noble lines on this matter, going deep into the heart of the question:

> "Pain, terror, mortal agonies that scare
> Thy heart in man, to brutes thou wilt not spare:
> Are theirs less sad and real? *Pain in man*
> *Bears the high mission of the flail and fan;*
> *In brutes 'tis purely piteous."**

There is no sight in all the world, to a thoughtful mind, more suggestive of harrowing reflection, no line of the long "riddle of the painful earth" more confounding to the religious soul, than the sufferings of creatures who have never sinned, and

* Poems; Vol. III. "The Amphitheatre at Pozzuoli."

for whom (according to common belief) there will be no compensation for injustice in another life. While human pain has its plausible explanations and its possible beneficent results, animal pain seems (at least to our dim eyes) sheer unmitigated evil. I am at a loss then to conceive on what principle, deserving the name of moral, we are to speak and act as if such evil counted absolutely for nothing, while the aches and pains of men are to be so highly esteemed, that the most wholesale sacrifices must not be spared, if a chance exist of alleviating them. When we remember who are the teachers who talk about the "hecatomb," and what is their view of the relationship of man to the lower animals, we discover (as above remarked) that the only intelligible principle on which they proceed is that very ancient one—*le droit du plus fort.* As the main work of civilization has been the vindication of the rights of the weak, it is not too much, I think, to insist that the practice of Vivisection, in which this tyranny of strength culminates, is a retrograde step in the progress of our race, a backwater in the onward flowing stream of justice and mercy, no less anomalous than it is deplorable and portentous.

But it is impossible to regard this subject as if it were a mere abstract ethical problem. The vivisection of dull reptiles, and wild rats and rabbits, wherewith the elder generation of students contented themselves, is not alone in question, nor even that of the heavy beasts in our pastures; but, by some strange and sinister fatality, the chosen victims at present are the most intelligent and friendly of our domestic favourites—the cats who purr in love and confidence as they sit beside us on the hearth, the dogs whose faithful hearts glow with an affection for us, truer and fonder than we may easily find in any human breast. To disregard all the beautiful and noble moral qualities which such animals exhibit, and coldly contemplate them as if their quivering

frames were mere machines of bone and tissue which it might be interesting and profitable to explore with forceps and scalpel, is to display heinous indifference to Love and Fidelity themselves, and surely to renounce the claim to be the object of such sentiments to brute or man. Our human race has for thousands of years trained these creatures to serve and trust us, till their natures are all bent towards us in love and confidence. So deeply rooted, indeed, is this faith in man in the case of the dog, that those who have witnessed the scenes in the laboratories of physiologists testify that the brutes can scarcely be made to understand that it is intended to hurt and kill them, but still try, after hours of agony, to lick the hands of their tormentor, and plead with him for mercy with their beseeching eyes when their limbs are all fastened down and immovable on the operating table. Will any one contend that it is not the vilest, the most odious treachery to betray and mock such faith of the dumb creature, and torture him to death for our purposes, while he—poor brute, whom we despise!—would die freely to save us from fire or the waves, or perchance expire of grief upon our graves?

Nay, more; are we not altogether on a wrong track in arguing this question on the level to which we have descended? Are not Generosity, Self-sacrifice, the readiness to suffer in our own persons rather than cause or permit others to suffer, the very rudiments of all virtue and all nobility of character? Are we to go back to the condition of savages—nay, rather of those

"Dragons of the prime
Which tare each other in their slime,"

when we had boasted we had ascended to the rank of men, of Christians, of English Gentlemen? Is it a question for a man who aspires to be a brave or worthy, not to speak of a chivalrous or noble person, whether he *may*, within the limits

of actual offence, spend his days in putting harmless animals on the rack for the benefit of himself and his kind? And is it our proper Teachers, those who are fit to guide and train young minds, and direct the tendencies of future generations, who are striving to move us to condone and approve such deeds by cant about the "Glory of Science," and by appeals to our miserable, cowardly fears of disease, and our selfish willingness to save "the smallest pain of a man at the cost of the torture of a hecatomb of brutes"?

To me it appears, I avow, that all this reveals a backsliding in feeling and moral aim almost measureless in the depth of its descent. The whole notion of Vivisection, as a legitimate exercise and mode of satisfying human desire of knowledge, seems to rest on a radically false conception of the proper ends of human life, and a no less erroneous idea of our relationship to those humbler tribes of creatures who are our fellow-lodgers in this planet-house of the Almighty.* As life is more than meat, so are there better things to live for than Knowledge or escape from Pain; nor is any fact which Science can reveal worth acquiring at the price of base selfishness and cruelty. The brutes are not mere toys and puzzles, put here by their Creator and ours that we may freely divert ourselves by breaking them to pieces to see how His wisdom has made them, but *fellow-creatures* with ourselves—*sinless* fellow-creatures, be it remembered, who have broken no Divine law and deserved no punishment. If the day comes (as it is

* It may soon become a grave question whether even such vivisections as can be performed painlessly by the help of anæsthetics and the immediate destruction of the subject of experiment before the return of consciousness, can continue to be morally justified, if the line between them and painful experiments is shewn by physiologists to be beyond the power of the Legislature to define or guard; and observing also that even the painless practice assumes and strengthens the above false conception of the relationship between man and brute, and habituates students to regard creatures endowed with affection and intelligence as mere blocks of wood fitly submitted to the saw or the chisel.

our faith it will, hereafter) when all men shall look back upon the deeds done upon earth, and behold them in their true colours, must it not be that in the agonies of remorse and self-abhorrence in the Vivisector's soul will be meted out the measure of justice he has dealt to his victims?

Are we to sit down in despair and let this evil grow to full size, and allow first all the medical, and then all the ordinary, schools throughout the country to become Academies of Torture, with class-books abridged from the "Handbook of the Physiological Laboratory"? Shall we have the Royal Institution in Albemarle Street turned into an exhibition, for the first year or two, of decapitated frogs, and then no doubt, by and by, of vivisected rabbits and dogs? Shall our young ladies' boarding-schools be entertained (like one now existing near Paris) by the spectacle of dying cats, poisoned to inspire the pupils with a vivid idea of the properties of a drug? Shall we have our hospitals employed (like one in Cincinnati last year) in ingeniously proving Professor Ferrier's cerebral investigations and painful experiments on the brain of a dying patient who sought the shelter of that "Good Samaritan" institution?*

It is not to be endured that such a process of moral depravation should be permitted to go on amongst us unchecked. Something must be done to put a stop to the development of this novel form of cruelty, and to bring within limits of Law, and under the close cognizance of public attention, deeds which have been multiplied only because they have been done in the dark.

To restore the true moral perspective of acts of cruelty, it is needful that those who have looked on them so closely and

* See "British Medical Journal," May 23, 1874, p. 687; also "American Journal of the Medical Sciences," April, 1874, p. 308; also "Révue des Sciences Médicales," Paris, Juillet, 1874. The woman's name was Mary Rafferty. She was admitted into the Good Samaritan Hospital, January 26, 1874, and there treated as described by Dr. Bartholow.

so familiarly as to have become blind to their enormity, should learn how they appear to others whose eyes are yet fresh to the horrid spectacle, and who can take in from their remoter standpoint at once the vaunted bribe of relief to their own maladies, and the price which must be paid for it beforehand, in the pangs of innocent creatures. And as the lay conscience was needed to check the persecutions, inquisitions, and autos-da-fé which the priesthood of Religion justified on the high plea of the eternal interests of mankind, so now the same lay conscience is needed to stop the scarcely less barbarous cruelties which that other Priesthood—the Scientific—justifies on the somewhat lower plea of our physical interests.

Printed by C. Green & Son, 178, Strand.