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ARTICLE VIII.

THE MINISTRY OF PAIN.

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I.

DESPITE the recent great increase of comforts and luxuries in civilized lands, the amelioration of poverty, the wonderful alleviation of physical pain and suffering by the resources of modern medicine and surgery, the steady reduction of sickness in the aggregate, and the declining death-rate, the problem of pain and sorrow still presses heavily on the minds of men, causing many to drift from their religious moorings. Of the late Sir Leslie Stephen, at one time a clergyman, it is said that he was a rebel against pain, not on his own account, for he stood his own trials well, but in a Promethean man-loving spirit. It was the sight of the world's tragedy which made him an agnostic. Unquestionably, there is a vast amount of suffering in the world, the contemplation of which at times strains the faith of even the sturdiest believer in the good Providence of God. There are the calamities of nature, — the storms, shipwrecks, fires, earthquakes, droughts, famines, inundations, pestilences, the numerous diseases and accidents, — which collectively destroy millions of human beings every year, and make life a burden to countless others. There are also man's deliberate cruelty to man, his cruelty to the lower animals, and the deadly and incessant struggle between all forms of life for bare existence, which has been going on for ages to such a degree that some evolutionists describe the world as one great battle-field heaped with the slain, an in-

ferno of infinite suffering and slaughter, resounding with the cries of ceaseless agony.

Further, there are the miseries of man's social life.

"What mischiefs still haunt the world to which our eyes are yet hardly open; what tragedies lie hid beneath the most brilliant society; what miserable and hopeless masses of life are covered by the roofs of a great city; how in dumb and silent anguish hearts are looking out every morning for good that never comes, and arms are stretched in vain for help that no one knows how to give; how, in the highest public prosperity, doubt and suffering, barbarism untamable and unconquered, never cease to cross its path and affront its pride; how the brightest life, the keenest intellectual power, is at the mercy of the irreparable stroke, — the catastrophe, the bereavement, the life-long madness or palsy, the pang that cannot be charmed."

There are also the spiritual woes of mankind, of which Newman gives a daring summary:—

"the just overcome, the aged failing; the sophistry of misbelief, the wilfulness of passion, the obduracy of pride, the tyranny of habit, the canker of remorse, the wasting fever of care, the anguish of shame, the pining of disappointment, the sickness of despair; such cruel, such pitiable spectacles, such heart-rending, revolting, detestable, maddening scenes; the haggard faces, the convulsed lips, the flushed cheek, the dark brow of the willing victims of rebellion. It is the long history of a world, and God alone can bear the load of it."

For various reasons the problem of suffering seems much more distressing to us than it was to our forefathers. They believed that man, created happy and innocent, of his own free will and choice fell into ways of evil, and so brought sorrow to himself and all his descendants. The wide and far-reaching consequences were not deemed unjust. But the evolutionist recognizes no federal head of the race upon whom he can lay the blame for all its misery. He knows that pain and death have been in the animal world for æons before man appeared, and that mankind itself has been struggling and suffering for a vast period of time, compared with which the

period covered by our records seems very short indeed. He cannot but compassionate and feel indebted to those remote ancestors who laid the deep foundations of our civilization, applying to them the apostrophe of Carlyle to the toiler in the field:—

"Venerable to me is the hard hand; crooked, coarse; wherein lies notwithstanding a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the scepter of this planet. Venerable, too, is the rugged face, all weather tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a man living manlike. O! but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee! Hardly intreated brother! For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed: thou wert our conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For in thee too lay a god-created form, but it was not to be unfolded; encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions of labor; and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom."

Again, our forefathers were ignorant of much of the suffering of the world which existed beyond their own borders, and, if the truth must be told, if they had known, would not have been so distressed by it as those are to whom the solidarity of the race is no mere figure of speech. In our day we cannot be ignorant or indifferent; for the crimes, misfortunes, and miseries of all mankind are incessantly forced upon the attention by current literature and socialistic movements.

Further, the knowledge acquired in our day of the long history of the race and its distressingly slow moral ascent, has undermined the hope of a speedy deliverance from the woes which afflict mankind, due to selfishness and sin, unless there shall be a spiritual movement far stronger than the world has ever yet seen. The results of the thousands of years of disciplinary suffering through which the race has passed seem so insignificant when the life of the average man is considered, with its poor performances and short duration, that many are becoming doubtful of the whole purpose of

life, and are asking, Is the end, whatever it may be, worth all the pain which must be borne in order to reach it?

Thus the past, the present, and the future, all seem fraught with sorrow, and men are losing faith and hope. On the ground that so much misery cannot be consistent with the existence of a God of infinite love and power, either the reality of pain is denied, as among the Christian Scientists; or it is not admitted that the Being who manifests himself in this misery-stricken world and in the sin-stained life of man, if he does so manifest himself, can be both all-powerful and utterly good. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth?" Perhaps the outlook is really not so somber. May be we are all in the period of depression, which lies between great spiritual advances, "between the years," as the prophet Habakkuk expresses it.

Before proceeding to deal directly with our subject, to provide an historical background, it may be worth while to glance briefly at the various ways in which different philosophies and religions have dealt with this central problem of the existence of evil and pain.

Among savage races, religion may be said to begin definitely with Naturism, the worship of its vague, unknown powers or influences working for evil rather than for good; and Animism, the worship of spirits accredited to plants, animals, and even inanimate things. All pain, sorrow, and misfortune are ascribed to the hostile influences or spirits, and it is sought to appease or propitiate them by witchcraft and magic. As it is the mind which invests pain with most of its intensity, and barbaric people can hardly have the mental power to ponder deeply on the problems of life, and as they do not feel any inalienable right to happiness, evil to them is not the

standing problem which it becomes to those of more advanced civilization.

The ancient Egyptians believed that pain and grief were sent by their gods, and the charms and incantations for banishing it were based on the notion of frightening the god who caused the trouble by the terrors of a more powerful divinity under whose protection the sufferer was placed, or with whom he was identified. The goddess Isis was the great enchantress who delivered men from their woes by her power over the other gods. But she herself was sorely afflicted by the murder of her husband, whose scattered remains she gathered and buried with lamentation. In fact, all the gods, even Ra the sun-god, were supposed to suffer, as does mankind, from hunger, thirst, disease, old age, fear, and sorrow; they could be stung by reptiles, and burned by fires; they shrieked and howled in their affliction. Suffering was universal. Egyptian religion reached its highest point in the adoration of Aten, the personification of the light, warmth, and fructifying energy of the sun, but scientific theism, of which this is the beginning, can give no heart-satisfying solution of the problem of pain.

The Assyrians and Babylonians feared the powers of Nature, and the demons that produced sickness and pain. The baneful influence of each demon required the services of an exorcist to counteract it. They believed also there were good and mighty spirits, able to control the powers of evil in answer to the prayers of men. But the justice of the gods now begins to be questioned. Five centuries before the time of Moses, in a prayer to the goddess Istar, an Assyrian king complains:—

> "In what have I sinned against thee?
> Why hast thou allotted me diseases, boils, and pestilence?
> Is this thy just decree?

If I have not committed sin and evil why am I thus smitten?
In my foundations I am unloosened,
I am broken in pieces, and rest I find not
On the throne of my kingdom."

Brought up in Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham's faith in a righteous God who is the shield and reward of those who put their trust in him, seems so immeasurably higher than the religion of his countrymen that it can be regarded only as a positive revelation. It was no childish or slavish faith, for he dared to doubt the justice of God, when it seemed as if the innocent and the guilty were to be indiscriminately overwhelmed in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In Zoroastrianism all pain and evil is ascribed to the evil deity Ahriman and his agents the wicked devas. Sickness was treated by magic spells and religious ritual. The hope of the deliverance of the world from evil now finds utterance. In an old hymn of the Parsee liturgy, the soul of nature is represented as appearing before God and complaining that the world was devastated by the evil one. It begs for the creation of a being powerful enough to release it forever from its affliction. The Gnostics, Manichæans, and others also believed in the existence of an evil deity, the author of all the evil in the world.

To the Greeks and Romans, with their love of physical beauty and vigor, all pain was repulsive, a physical degradation; hence the gospel of a crucified Redemer was to them foolishness. In a spirit of proud self-reliance, they sought to form in the inner life a spiritual citadel, where they could dwell impregnable to the assaults of pain and misfortune.

The Epicureans regarded happiness as the end of life, and happiness was held to be a body free from pain, and a mind released from all perturbation. They did not think the gods troubled themselves about human affairs, for if they did, it

would make them unhappy; but it was plain they did not, as there was so much misery in the world. Everything happens according to nature. When this is realized, the mind is liberated from all superstitious fears, and from the fear of pain and death. If pain is severe, it does not last long; if it lasts long, it is rarely intolerable. Death is nothing, since when we are, death is not; and when death is, we are not. The best among the Epicureans sought to attain this spiritual freedom by moderation in the indulgence of the passions, clearness of intellectual vision, nobility of sentiment, and the avoidance of all care. Among the baser sort, the philosophy degenerated into the low conception that the enjoyment of animal pleasures is the chief end of life.

The Stoics believed that law, inherent and indestructible, governed the world, and tried to submit to its necessities with a free spirit. The evils of the world were the secondary consequences of its development, and only had power over those who ascribed reality to them. "It is not things that disquiet us, but our opinions about things." The aim of life is to preserve the divinity within from injury and disgrace, and to rise superior to pain and pleasure. Pain cannot be avoided, but it can be borne without wincing, and in an equable spirit. Men are to be like skilful ball-players who care not for the ball whether it is good or bad, but only about the manner of throwing and catching it. It was thus, said Epictetus, that Socrates played with the ball when about to die. "What was the ball that was there thrown about among them? Life, chains, exile, a draught of poison, to be torn from a wife, to leave children orphans. These were the things among them that they played withal; yet none the less did he play, and fling the ball with proper grace and measure. And so should we do also, having the carefulness of the most zealous players, and

yet indifference as it were merely about a ball." If pain or sorrow became unendurable, one could escape by "the open door," that is, by suicide.

According to the Chinese sages, man is born good, but goes astray from want of instruction and practical help from his superiors, and because of his own restless desires. Hence his misery, which is increased by the punishments which Heaven sends to call him to repentance.

> "How great is God who ruleth man below!
> In awful terrors now arrayed,
> His dealings seem a recklessness to show
> From which we shuddering shrink dismayed.
> But men at first from Heaven their being drew,
> With nature liable to change.
> All hearts in infancy are good and true,
> But times and things these hearts derange."

As the Confucianists expect no divine help in the work of human redemption, they seem to have little hope of bringing in the golden age of the past, to which they look back so wistfully. On the top of a high mountain with an extensive view, Confucius was moved to exclaim:—

> "Standing on an elevation like this, one looks over, as it were, the whole world; and, alas! alas! as I do so, I can not help being struck with the sad fact that of the myriads who live in it, there is scarcely one man to be found who is not devising some means by which he may injure or destroy his neighbor. That in itself is sad enough. But there is something still sadder. It is to be so helpless and incapable, that even when we wish to do so, we can neither find remedies for existing evils, nor some way of warding off these which are about to come."

The problem of pain from the Chinese point of view is insoluble.

The Buddhist regards pain as an adversity, to be evaded by giving it no possible hold. It was the sight of sickness, old age, and death, which made the founder of this religion leave his palace on a pilgrimage to find the means by which man

could cross the ocean of life and make an end of sorrow. As the result of his labors and thought, he promulgated the four noble truths: (1) existence is only pain and sorrow; (2) the cause of pain and sorrow is desire; (3) in Nirvana all pain and sorrow cease; (4) the way to Nirvana is by the eightfold path of virtuous self-discipline, ending in ecstatic oblivion of self-consciousness.

The Hindu reflecting on the mutability and evanescence of material things seeks for the one permanent Substance underlying them all, the Being that is and never changes, which can become to him an enduring object of trust,—

> "Some life continuous, Being unimpaired,
> That hath been and is, and where it was and is,
> There shall endure, — an Existence unexposed
> To the blind walk of mortal accident:
> From diminution safe, and weakening age,
> While man grows old, dwindles and decays,
> And countless generations of mankind depart,
> And leave no vestige where they trod."

Emancipation from the illusions, entanglements, and evils of the world is to be accomplished by the rigorous and holy contemplation of this enduring Existence. The dangerous weakness of Pantheism is its tendency to regard the evil and distressing things of life as manifestations of the deity equally with the good, and therefore, logically, if the deity is unchangeable, there can be no hope of deliverance.

The Jews considered all suffering was sent by God as a punishment for disobedience, angels of various powers and degrees being his ministers. By strict obedience to the moral and ceremonial law it was thought man might win the favor of God, of which exemption from affliction would be the proof. When it was perceived that the good did not escape suffering it caused great perplexity. This forms the subject of the book of Job, which offers four answers to the question Why do

the good suffer? (1) Suffering is a test of saintship, made the more severe as the saintship is strong to endure; (2) All suffering is judgment upon sin, though the sin is not always manifest; (3) Suffering is judgment, warning the sinner by repentance to escape from heavier judgment; (4) The whole universe is an unfathomed mystery, and the evil in it is not more mysterious than the good and great. Thus no complete solution is given, but the attitude of one who has the bold faith to appeal to God against the seeming injustice of God's own visitations, is declared to be more acceptable to Him than the servile adoration of those who would distort the facts in order to magnify Him.[1]

The Christian religion, according to its Founder, teaches that the moral evil proceeding from the hearts of men brings woeful consequences; and that here is also a kingdom of evil in the dark background of human life presided over by the spirit of the world, which adds to the world's sorrow. Suffering is therefore mainly due to sin, but not necessarily to the sufferer's own sin. The chief good to be sought in this present life is not freedom from pain but freedom from sin, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God in this world. Those who follow Christ are to expect tribulation; but it will not, or need not, affect harmfully their spiritual life. All suffering of every kind is known to the Father, without whose knowledge not even a sparrow falls to the ground, and who will in his own good time vindicate the justice and wisdom of his Providence. The cup of sorrow is to be taken in a spirit of loving submission, and so taken, it brings with it heavenly rewards.

According to the Mohammedans, God is the Eternal who created all things and predestinated all things both good and

[1] Moulton.

bad. He has decreed, and no one can shun or escape his decree. Submission is therefore the whole of religion. While the premise may not be accepted, the conclusion, though it does not wholly satisfy, does state a great truth. Says Carlyle:—

"Islam means that we must submit to God, that our whole strength lies in resigned submission to him, whatsoever He do to us. It has ever been held the highest wisdom for a man, not merely to submit to necessity — necessity will make him submit, — but to know and believe well that the stern thing which necessity had ordered was the wisest, the best, the thing wanted there; to cease his frantic pretension of scanning this great God's world in his small fraction of a brain; to know that it had verily, though deep beyond his soundings, a just law; that the soul of it was good; that his part in it was to conform to the law of the whole, and in the devout silence follow that; not questioning it, obeying it as unquestionable. This is the soul of Islam; it is properly the soul of Christianity; for Islam is definable as a confused form of Christianity; had Christianity not been, neither had it been. Christianity also commands us, before all, to be resigned to God."

The object of the present paper is to try to show the importance of pain as a factor in the evolution of life, physical, mental, moral, and spiritual; that it has been a blessing, not a curse. Whether it was not possible to accomplish the same ends without pain is a question no one can answer. But suffering being accepted as a law of life, in the same way that we recognize gravitation to be a law of the physical world, its beneficent effects can be traced, though the problem cannot be solved completely. As this is a subject upon which the best and profoundest minds in all ages have written, — theologians, poets, scientists, philosophers, — not much that is original can be offered; and quotations, acknowledged and unacknowledged, are rather frequent. With the hope that it may be more helpful, the paper is written from the point of view of the evolutionist, yet with the full belief that Chris-

tianity, with its recognition of the solidarity of all living creatures, and its emphasis on the glory of vicarious suffering, is the best solution yet vouchsafed to us of the problem of pain.

1. *Pain is the price paid for the fullness and security of physical life.*

It is often asked, Why is it not possible to have life without pain? To answer the question completely would require a knowledge of all that is in the mind of God. But sufficient is known of the ways of Providence to justify our faith in its goodness and wisdom; our lack of complete knowledge need not put us to confusion. As a matter of fact, in the simplest form of life there can be little or no pain, for these organisms possess just enough sensation to enable them to avoid what is unattractive, and to move towards their food. They do not, as far as we know, suffer from disease; they reproduce their kind without pain or danger; they are immortal, unless killed by violence. But their correspondence with the outside world is very limited and feeble. Now life itself has been defined as consisting of the action and reaction between an organism and its environment. The wider and more varied this is, the fuller is the life. As the increase of relation depends upon a corresponding increased complexity of structure, this is necessarily accompanied by greater vulnerability to derangement, that is, to pain, disease, and death. In ascending the scale of being, complexity of structure, fullness of life, and susceptibility to pain increase together. Hence the epigrams that in the morning of life "immortality was pawned for love," and that "death was the price paid for a body."

The study of the evolution of the nervous system of the lower animals makes this point clear; for all the varied sensations of the body have been developed from the sense of touch, with its inseparable accompaniment of pain on over-

stimulation. In unicellular organisms, sensation is diffused uniformly through the whole cell, and, as already stated, it is very feeble. In organisms slightly more advanced, a primitive skin makes its appearance to protect the organism from the buffetings of the outside world. As the skin is the part most subject to external stimuli, it is the part in which further developmental changes mainly proceed. Some of the external cells become modified, and by the growth of long processes from them, a conducting network is provided running through all parts of the body, thus affording a channel for the rapid propagation of sensation from the surface to the deeper parts, as well as from one part of the exterior to another. From this same outer layer are produced the cells which, as muscle fibres, act as the motive mechanism of the organ, thus forming the sensori-motor system, to which the other systems of the body — the respiratory, digestive, secretive, and circulatory — are subsidiary. From the beginning, therefore, the chief means of attack or escape in the struggle for existence were laid down in close connection with the exterior sensory area. A further step consists in the withdrawal of certain of the sensory cells from the surface to the deeper parts, to secure their protection. Here they form ganglia, each ganglion presiding over the part of the body in which it is located. A specially sensitive or irritable organ is thus evolved, which serves as a distributing center for the messages or calls to action, initiated by changes occurring at the surface of the body. In order that in the presence of pain or danger all the activities of the body can be quickly concentrated on the one common purpose of attack or defense, the part of this nervous system located in the head, which is usually the first to perceive changes in the environment, comes to be predominant over all other parts, which surrender their

independent functions to a great extent, and learn to respond instantaneously to its commands. This head center, or brain, eventually gathers to itself all pain and other sensation, and directs all the activities of the body for the welfare of the whole.[1] There is now, as in man, the complete nervous system, consisting of brain, nerves, and end organs, working together harmoniously; and the sense of touch in the skin was the starting-point of all their functions.

"The brain trillion-celled seat of sensation, all the subtle mechanism with which it controls the body; the organs of sense with their mysterious selective power; the olfactory organs, probably the earliest developed, so acute in man as to detect the presence of one-three billionth of a grain of mercaptan, and yet coarse by comparison with the antennae of insects; the eye to receive and sift vibrations traveling twelve million miles in a minute; the ear with its three thousand strings of Corti, each vibrating in response to a particular sound wave; the organs of taste guarding the entrance to the digestive canal and refusing admittance to contraband food, — all begin as sacs formed by infolding of the primitive skin."[2]

Throughout the whole course of this marvelous evolution, it is pain which by its warnings guards the body from injury when danger assails it, by prompting it to acts necessary for the maintenance and security of life. Many of these protective acts in time become instinctive, and as they are performed far more swiftly than the time it takes to think and

[1] The relation of the head to the body, which St. Paul uses as an illustration of the relation of Christ to the church, is from this point of view most instructive. "Remember what to Paul the headship of Christ is; it is in the most literal sense the saving of the body. It is a reign no doubt over the members, but it is not a reign after the analogy of kinghood. It is in its deepest sense a priesthood of suffering. It is a mastership over the members which is reached by taking their pains, a pre-eminence which is achieved by accepting the lowest room" (Matheson, The Spiritual Development of St. Paul, p. 273).

[2] Clodd.

decide upon a course of action, they confer additional security. When all is considered, surely the susceptibility to pain is not too heavy a price to pay for the wonderful complexity and sensitiveness of the human body, and for its beauty, grace, and strength.

Sensation, with its liability to become pain on overstimulation, is not only necessary for the development and maintenance of life, by acting as a sentinel to guard the body from external injury, but it is also subtly connected with the harmonious interaction of the bodily functions which govern the nutrition of the tissues. Thus it is a striking fact that loss of sensation in a particular part of the body is often followed by the most marked trophic disorders there. Division or disease of the principal nerve of sensation of the face may lead to inflammation of the eye so severe as to end in its disintegration. Despite the greatest care, after injury to the spinal cord, in a few days large bedsores form, difficult or impossible to heal. Division of the pneumogastric nerves is followed by gangrene of the lungs. Disease of the nerves supplying a joint leads to disease of the joint itself. In short, loss of sensation predisposes to defective nutrition and consequent death of the tissues.

Conversely, when the life and multiplication of certain cells of the body become disorderly, as in cancer, there may be the greatest conceivable pain. The evil behavior of the cancer cells, which neither in structure nor in powers possess anything not found in healthy cells, is shown in their disproportionate multiplication; their imperfect, irregular, and useless differentiation; their insistent intrusion into surounding tissues; their imperfect coöperation with the other cells of the body; and their selfish greed, which enables them to live when other cells are fasting and perishing for lack of nourishment.

"Cancer is not a disease attacking the body from without, it is a breach or failure of fundamental cell law, a law of which we know only the results; a law so majestic that obedience to it results in perfect development, perfect health, the full measure of days; and disobedience to it may slowly spell out all the inscrutable woes of cancer." Which things are a parable.[1]

When the body has at last succumbed to disease or traumatism pain has still its beneficial uses. As an aid to diagnosis it is frequently of higher value than any other single symptom, for "every pain has its distinct and pregnant signification, if we will but search for it." In treatment it is of great value, as its presence is a sign that the healing process is not proceeding normally; and by preventing movement, it secures the necessary rest for an inflamed and injured part. This particular function has been graphically described in a classical work on surgery. Let us imagine, writes the author, the condition of our first parents when suddenly thrust out of the garden of Eden and doomed to toil for their daily bread; not knowing how to avoid local injury, and exposed to all the accidents of a precarious existence. With what awe-stricken dismay must man have regarded his first wound, his first experience of pain; — the breach of surface disclosing to his sight the flowing blood which he was unable to check, and then the sense of faintness induced by its loss, causing him to sink to the earth under the foretaste of death, with the recent denunciation, "thou shalt surely die," still ringing in his ears. Can words depict the hopeless anguish he must have endured? But what follows? Under the influence of the rest induced by pain, a clot forms, Nature stays the bleeding, and healing gradually takes place; and it is pain which compels him to keep the part at rest, so that the healing may proceed uninterruptedly.

[1] Gould.

"Every deviation from this necessary state of rest brought with it, through pain, the admonition that he was straying from the condition essential to its restoration. He must have observed with astonishment the breaking asunder of the newly formed tissue, or the steady development into normal tissue structure, which occurred in exact accordance with the disturbance or rest of the parts which the sense of pain enabled him to regulate so accurately, and to employ so beneficially for his own personal relief and comfort." [1]

Of course, the subject has a dark side, which cannot be ignored. Physical pain may cause so much distress and exhaustion as to banish sleep, disturb appetite and digestion, and otherwise so interfere with the functions of the body, as to induce morbid changes which shorten existence. It may even be so continuous and intolerable as to drive men to commit suicide, and may itself be so intense as to be the direct cause of death. Nevertheless, it may be safely affirmed that, in comparison with the freedom from pain generally enjoyed, instances of unendurable pain are rare, and there are considerations which justify the opinion that pain, generally, is not so universal and severe as is commonly imagined. Sensation increases through a series of just perceptible differences. It starts from the zero of consciousness, becomes more intense as the stimulus increases up to the point where it is so strong as to begin to injure the nerve apparatus, when it becomes positive pain. The grades of sensation will be less numerous as the organization is of a coarser or lower order, and sensation itself will not be so keen. Even among human beings there are great differences in the reaction to pain. Probably most people nowadays would prefer to die of sickness, rather than be killed in battle, but it has not been always so. "What a shame," said the great Duke Sigeward of Northumberland, when dying of a lingering disease, "what a shame for me not

[1] Hilton.

to have been permitted to die in so many battles, — and to end thus by a cow's death. At least put on my breast-plate, gird on my sword, set my helmet on my head, my shield in my left hand, my golden battle axe in my right, so that a great warrior like myself may die as a warrior." In those days it was felt that a man who had never been wounded lived a weary life; and the conception then current of the happiness of heaven was desperate fighting during the day, and at night, with wounds all healed, feasting and other sensual pleasures.

It is certainly a fact that the condition of a sick or wounded person often seems to be far more distressing than it is actually.[1]

Wounds received unexpectedly, as by accident or during warfare, do not seem to be attended by much immediate pain. The present writer has questioned many injured persons on this point, and the testimony is almost unanimous that at the moment the injury was inflicted little pain was felt. Then it is well known that soldiers often go on fighting, ignorant of their severe and apparently very painful wounds. The prolonged and deliberate infliction of pain on a conscious subject,

[1] "A year later he was seriously ill of pneumonia, with various painful complications, and I find another note about his sensation written a few weeks after his recovery: I am told, (he says) that my sufferings were horrible to witness, and the nurse dwells particularly on my struggles for breath. Of those I was completely unconscious, and I am not aware of having even suffered discomfort in breathing. Other things were temporarily painful, but the memory of them has so far faded from my mind that it is scarcely to be weighed against the recollection of one sunny hour. The idea of pain is constantly before us because a few people out of a vast number are always suffering from accidents and diseases which are described in newspapers, or talked about by their friends. This produces the illusion that pain is a constant factor of everybody's life. It is, on the contrary, but a mere incident in the lives of the vast majority" (Quoted in Horton's "My Belief," p. 265).

as by the tortures of the Inquisition, is in another and more terrible category. But there is a merciful limit to human endurance. After a time, either the pain is not keenly felt, owing to the obtunding of all sensation, or else death gives relief. The continued progress of medicine and surgery will abolish more and more the pain of disease, and man's inhuman treatment of man will diminish as he becomes more loving and wiser.

In further confirmation of this view, of differences of level of the pain threshold, it is said that in idiots the sense of pain is so obtuse that they can hardly distinguish between heat and cold, and seem hardly to know what pain is. In their dull lives such pain as can be excited in them may literally be accepted with welcome surprise.[1] Therefore the stimulus which gives pain to a very sensitive human being is not to be taken as the measure of the suffering in less sensitive creatures. Within limits, it may be in them the stimulus exactly suited to call forth the latent powers of the organism. At any rate, those creatures which in the course of evolution shrank from pain and risk of death by taking refuge within a hard protective covering (as the echinoderm within its calcareous skin, the mollusk in its shell, the crustacean beneath its carapace, the ganoids within their heavy armor) were debarred from further progress, and many species became decadent or extinct.

But naturalists are almost unanimous in affirming there is very little prolonged pain among the lower animals in the wild, free state. Their worst sufferings come from contact with mankind, and these, inasmuch as it is generally believed there can be no possible compensation for them, are the cause of deep distress and moral perplexity to many minds. It is a partial solution of the mystery that animals advance or recede

[1] Galton.

in their qualities with the goodness and intelligence of man; there is a solidarity sufficiently comprehensive to include even them. The shepherd-dog, trained to be the friend and intelligent companion of its owner, is a higher animal than the homeless, mangy scavenger of an Oriental city, or the wolf on the plains. It is on this ground of solidarity that all animals justifiably come under the law of vicarious suffering; they as well as human beings must suffer and die for the good of the whole. The vivisection which tender-hearted people so strongly condemn, properly and mercifully performed, as it ought to be in every case, does not cause suffering, and the knowledge so acquired has been of such inestimable value to the human race, that it is well worth all that it has cost. The benefit gained is shared also by the lower animals. If such a terrible disease as hydrophobia is stamped out by human science, the lower animals are first saved from it. Further, with a glory and breadth of vision we hardly appreciate, the Bible points forward to a time when conflict and distrust between mankind and the lower animals shall completely disappear, and all shall share in a grand redemption. If they suffer with and for man, they will also share his blessings.

The last great enemy, death, which Aristotle declares to be of all things the most terrible, will always be with us, but it is an event not greatly to be feared because of its pain. It is said that people nowadays dread the actual experience of dying more than they do death itself. In the churches, perhaps the dread is fostered by hymns containing lines such as,—

> "When my last hour cometh,
> Fraught with strife and pain,"

> "When my dying hour draws near,
> Darkened with sorrow, pain, and fear,"

and others of similar import. As a matter of fact, the exit

from life in the great majority of cases is very peaceful.[1] The nearest approach to conscious physical or mental distress which the present writer has seen, and he has observed many deaths of Christian and heathen, has been when the dying person has spoken of falling or slipping away, no doubt due to the sensation of physical collapse, and has asked or motioned to be held by the hand. It is safe to say that the harrowing death-bed scenes, which appear to have been quite common formerly, if one may judge by the tracts written for the terror and admonition of the ungodly of the period, are now seldom witnessed, and were due to mental rather than physical causes. One of the greatest of English surgeons, as the result of his wide experience, was inclined to the opinion that death, as a natural act, is accompanied with the sense of ease and satisfaction, which generally accompanies all natural acts, such as is felt in falling asleep when tired out after a hard day's work. This is probably true in the case of those dying naturally of old age. In the course of time we may confidently hope this will be the peaceful ending of nearly all human beings.

Surveying the whole subject of pain that is purely physical, there is ample ground for holding that its ministry has been most beneficial, and that as the race advances in wisdom and kindness, it will at last almost cease to be a problem.

[1] Careful records of about five hundred death-beds, studied particularly with reference to the modes of death and the sensation of dying, show that as to the latter, "ninety suffered bodily pain or distress of one sort or another, eleven showed mental apprehension, two positive terror, one expressed spiritual exaltation, one bitter remorse. The great majority gave no sign one way or the other; like their birth, their death was a sleep and a forgetting" (Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 19).