CRUELTY THAT MERCY MAY BE SHED

Presentation of the View That Scientific Experimentation Has Been Vital to Modern Medicine and Surgery.

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

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Washington, Dec. 23.—The crusaders against vivisection in the United States have been very active during the past year and it is probable they will try to secure legislation by congress forbidding vivisection in the future. They take the ground that it is a cruel practice, which causes more suffering than it prevents and which does more harm than good. They think it has a brutalizing effect on those who practice it, and that on the whole, the game is not worth the candle. This extreme view is not shared by all anti-vivisectionists, however. Some of them admit its value and its necessity in the hands of scientific men, but decry it as practiced in schools and in the hands of irresponsible investigators. But these liberal anti-vivisectionists are in the minority. The great majority would blot out the practice entirely and forever.

The victories of science over disease offer reading matter more fascinating than fiction. And when one comes to listen to the scientist as he names these victories, he is impressed by the large proportion of them that rest upon the foundation of vivisection. There are three great fundamental discoveries made within the time of living men that have entirely revolutionized the art of healing—anesthesia, antisepsis, and the germ theory. With these discoveries as the foundation, the magnificent superstructure of modern medicine has been reared. Without anesthesia the wonderful surgical operations that have reduced the death rate so materially in peace and war, would have been impossible, since the human frame can stand only a given degree of pain. Without antisepsis those operations could have been performed only to result in blood poisoning, gangrene, or other equally fatal malady. And without the germ theory medical men would still be treating tuberculosis, typhoid, yellow fever, cholera, scarlet fever, diphtheria—every contagious and infectious disease in the category—without knowing its source or its cause.

Mice to Save Human Lives.

Yet the scientist has given all these great discoveries to men solely through experiments on animals. The state of the public mind has not yet reached the point where it will warrant a doctor's trying new and unproved theories on mankind. His only recourse is to try them on animals first and thereby develop and prove his theories. The guinea pig, the rabbit, the mouse, and the dog are his favorite subjects for experimentation. In 1855 two water companies in London experimented on a half million people, with the result that there were 3476 deaths from cholera. The same year Theirch of Leipsic, experimented on 56 mice. Had the lessons he learned from his experiments on a half hundred mice been heeded, the cholera epidemic in London would have been averted.

The Dwindling Death Rate.

Since the advent of modern medicine the death rate for the whole world has shown a remarkable falling off. The death rate from tuberculosis, for instance, has been reduced practically one half in nearly all civilized countries since the discovery of the germ that causes it. The death rate from diphtheria in Baltimore has been cut down to one tenth its former proportions, and in Chicago to one third what it used to be. Typhoid fever, scarlet fever, yellow fever, cholera, bubonic plague and other epidemical diseases have been forced out of their strongholds. Every time the world's death rate is lowered one per thousand, it means the saving of a million and a half lives every year, and it has been so lowered more than once.

In the United States the taking of one per thousand away from the total death rate means the saving of 80,000 lives a year. Mortality statisticians assert that more than one per thousand has been substracted from the total death rate. In fact, the total death rate in 1906 was 26.1 per thousand, as compared with 19.6 in 1890. Comparing the mean rate between the two periods with the 1890 rate it is found that some 2,000,000 lives have been saved by improved medical methods.

This, then, is the answer of science to the anti-vivisectionist.

Tuberculosis and Guinea Pigs.

It is interesting to note with what care the scientist proves his case before he tries his theory on a human being. Dr. Koch, who discovered the bacillus of tuberculosis, first took sputum and stained it, so as to overcome the transluscence of the little jelly like rods which he suspected of being responsible for the disease. These he introduced under the skin of a guinea pig. After a certain time it was killed, and he found tubercles in its body when he held his post mortem examination, and the germs were also present. To the ordinary mind that would be conclusive proof. But not to the scientist. To complete the proof he inoculated another guinea pig with the virus of the one killed, and it in turn showed tubercles and bacilli. So his theory was proved. The world would have regarded such experiments on human beings as criminal.

Men used to act on the theory that lockjaw was caused by treading on a rusty nail. In 1884 Nicalaier announced that it came from a germ, and that this germ originated in the soil. Even the medical world looked askance at such a proposition, but the discoverer tried the germ on some rats he had and proved the correctness of his theory. Deaths from lockjaw used to be frequent, even from surgical operations; now lockjaw so contracted is a curiosity to the medical fraternity. The same is largely true of other diseases which used to follow surgical operations.

Lister and the Horse.

In 1867 Lord Lister, then unknown to fame, tied the great carotid artery of a horse with a piece of pure silk, saturated in a solution of carbolic acid. He found that it worked satisfactorily and did not produce a secondary hemorrhage. In 1868 he tried the same principle on a woman. She afterward died from another cause, and he made a post mortem examination which showed that his operation had been entirely successful and was not followed by the secondary hemorrhage. He then tied the carotid artery of a calf with catgut, and when the calf was killed it was found that it had been entirely assimilated. These experiments laid the foundation of all modern antiseptic surgery. Without the animal experiments surgeons might still be unaware of that great principle that has saved thousands of lives. Before Lister's introduction of these catgut antiseptic ligatures, thousands of people who had undergone surgical operations bled to death from secondary hemorrhages. Now such a thing is unheard of.

Domestic Animals.

Through animal experimentation the medical value of hundreds of important drugs has been established. Cocaine was introduced in this way and proper use of digitalis was found. But these experiments are not limited to the saving of human life and the alleviation of human suffering. They are of as great value to hogs, dogs, cattle, chickens, and other animals as they are to humankind. The principles of veterinary medicine and surgery are as fully founded on the studies of vivisection and animal experimentation as are human medicine and surgery. Leaving entirely out of the question the direct benefits derived by mankind from the suffering caused by vivisection and animal experimentation, any veterinarian will declare that the benefits to animals alone more than justify it.

Trichinasis and Yellow Fever.

Then there are many indirect benefits derived from it. Through careful microsconic examinations scientists have located the little germ pest and have mastered him. In doing so they have done a service of immense commercial value. Foreign countries had laid an embargo on American meats because of the presence of trichina. The vivisectionist showed the American meat grower how to get rid of it, and millions of dollars were saved to the people. But for the successful crusade against yellow fever, the Panama canal could never be built without the sacrifice of more lives than the world would be willing to give to that cause. Yet that crusade was based on lessons learned from vivisection, experiments on animals establishing the fact that the germ was non-communicable until it had passed through the mosquito.

Certain Inconsistencies.

It is argued that many of the anti-vivisectionists are not consistent. Their very hearts will bleed at the woes of the rat which is being experimented on in a scientist's laboratory; yet they set traps of a most cruel mechanism for rats, or they will put out rat poison, which will produce as horrible a death as can be imagined. Women anti-vivisectionists will denounce the child that robs the bird of its eggs, yet on their hats they will wear feathers and wings which may have caused a brood of nestlings to die of pitiless starvation. If they happen to be men they will often denounce the vivisectionist today and tomorrow proceed to take a hunting trip that spells more suffering and sorrow than that inflicted by the vivisectionist, and in a cause not nearly so worthy.

Of course this is the extreme picture. Not all vivisection is done in any real interest of science, and not all anti-vivisectionists are sickly sentimentalists, unconsciously cruel and heartless themselves. Those anti-vivisectionists who seek to limit the practice to scientists, and to eliminate it from girls' schools and such places where it is practiced for naught but the gratification of a misguided curiosity, will have the cooperation of scientific men everywhere.

SINKING EARTH IS A BENEFIT

Canal Authorities Say Only the Expected Has Happened—All Is Well.

(United Press Leased Wire.)

Colon, Panama, Dec. 23.—To answer the stories that serious errors in the construction of the Gatun dam have caused a collapse of a portion of the wall and have caused a serious slide under the trestle of the re-located Panama railroad at Gatun and that the site of the Gatun dam had been inadvertently placed over a subterranean lake, an official statement has been issued by the authorities in charge of the construction of the big ditch.

The collapse of the dam wall is described as a minor happening, which, instead of ruining previous work, only goes to insure the future permanency of the wall, inasmuch as it means that the rock fill will keep sinking until it reaches firm bottom. The slide underneath the trestle, it is said, has been expected and others will follow. These slips also are interpreted as only minor happenings in the natural settling of earth fills.

The story that an underground lake lies beneath the Gatun dam is pronounced absurd, although it is admitted that in boring close to the dam site water under pressure was found in most of the holes. The engineers assert that the dam is being built on a very firm foundation of impervious clay and that there is no doubt about the satisfactory character of the whole task.

TRACED STRING TO LOADED GUN

Deputy Marshal Faulkner of Juneau Too Wary for Assassins.

(United Press Leased Wire.)

Tacoma, Dec. 23.—Deputy United States Marshal Burt Faulkner of Juneau narrowly escaped assassination at that place last Sunday night, according to dispatches just received in this city. Some enemy tied a cocked revolver to the fence in front of his house and attached a string to the trigger in such a way that on Faulkner's opening the gate the weapon would be discharged into his abdomen. Faulkner had been visiting friends in the evening and on his return noticed the string dangling at the gate. He supposed it to be evidence of some practical joke and traced the string to the pistol before he threw the gate open. He is at a loss to explain the motive for the murderous plot.

CONVENTION OF HOME ECONOMICS STUDENTS

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.)

Washington, Dec. 23.—For the purpose of forming a national organization for the study of home economics a convention has been called to meet in this city next week. For 10 years a group of devoted workers has been meeting for a week's conference each summer on problems related to the home, under the name of the Lake Placid Conference of Home Economics. Last summer by invitation the conference met at Chautauqua and at that time the conference voted that the time had come for a country wide organization. It is to take the initial steps toward forming this organization that the conference will meet in Washington during the coming week.

The proposed organization will include primarily those engaged in educational subjects connected with home, whether in lower or higher schools or collegiate institutions, and also those engaged in household and institutional management and in social and municipal work for home betterment.

The organization will aim to arouse public interest in the importance of such subjects as food and nutrition, hygiene in its personal, home and public aspects, a more enlightened care of children, the intelligent financing of the home through atention to standards, budgets and accounting and such municipal topics as clean streets and markets.

Wyoming Off on Oil Test.

(United Press Leased Wire.)

Vallejo, Cal., Dec. 23.—Bound for San Diego, the monitor Wyoming left the Mare Island navy yard yesterday for her first cruise since she was fitted with oil burning engines. The Wyoming is being used as an experimental ship to determine the advisability of using oil to supply motive power for the ships of the navy, now using coal. The Wyoming will cruise along the coast and if the tests are satisfactory will later go to Honolulu.

Eclipse Not Visible Here.

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.)

Washington, Dec. 23.—The last eclipse to be recorded for the year 1908 takes place today, but it will not be visible in North America. It is a central eclipse of the sun, annular at the beginning and end, and total in the middle. The path of the eclipse crosses the southern part of South America, the South Atlantic, South Africa and the southern portion of the Indian ocean.

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SECRET ENEMY THREATENS JUDGE

Oakland, Dec. 23.—Fearful that an unidentified person has planned to emulate the example set by Mrs. Isabella Martin in the blowing up of the home of Superior Judge Ogden, Supreme Justice Hy A. Melvin has appealed to the police for protection.

For some weeks it has been whispered in official circles that Judge Melvin had lived in constant dread of an unknown enemy. His fears became more acute when his wife was both insulted and threatened over the telephone. Detectives are making efforts to protect the jurist and his family from possible harm.