

**THE HEART OF THE
ANTI-
VIVISECTIONIST**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649266821

The Heart of the Anti-vivisectionist by Charles Sidney Bluemel

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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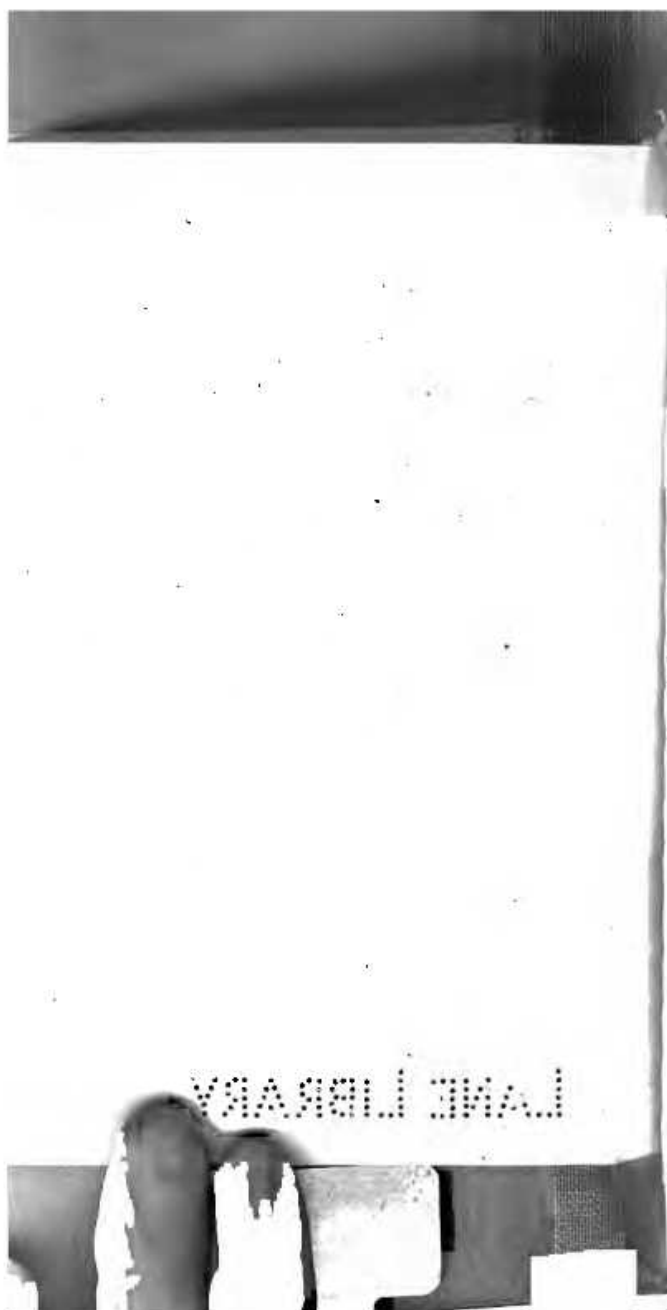
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THE HEART OF THE ANTI-VIVISECTIONIST.

"Of a sudden a casement wildly opened just above my head, and a woman gave three frightful screeches and then cried, 'Oh, death, death, death.'"

It was the plague of London, and cries and lamentations were universal. Infected houses had large red crosses painted on their doors, with the woeful prayer "Lord have mercy upon us!" These houses were padlocked on the outside and were guarded by watchmen so that none might leave or enter. So great was the devastation that men feared the living would be unable to bury the dead. In a measure this became true, for coffins and formal funerals were abandoned, and the corpses were gathered into dead-carts and dumped into pits. In Aldgate a pit was dug so large that the church wardens were accused of preparing to bury the whole parish. But in two weeks this pit was full, and others were commenced.

Many people fled to the country, but armed guards stopped them at the surrounding towns. Often they died by the wayside, and villagers dug graves to the windward of the bodies, and pushed them in with poles.

These things are recounted by Defoe in his "History of the Plague in London." It is a story of human anguish and helplessness. The people knew nothing of the cause of the plague, and while some attributed it to a comet, others thought it was due to "smells and scents" from infected dwellings or to musty and unwholesome casks in tippling houses.

In their helplessness people sought to ward off infection by washing their hair with vinegar, by making smoke with brimstone and gunpowder, by holding garlic and rue in the mouth, and by taking "sovereign cordials," "anti-pestilential pills," and "plague water."

Today we know that plague is caused by germs conveyed to man by fleas that formerly lived on infected



rats. Plague still exists, even in America, but its spread is prevented through the extermination of rats and fleas.

The Ethics of Taking Animal Life.

The extermination of these pests seems reasonable and justifiable to the average mind; nevertheless there are persons who object to the measure on moral grounds. Poisoning rats and catching them in traps might cause suffering; wherefore one should refrain. The same line of argument of course applies to all other lower animals. "I would not have one mouse painfully vivisected to save the greatest of human beings, or the life dearest to me." This is an extraordinary statement, but it was made by a witness before the British Royal Commission on Vivisection, and it exemplifies the anti-vivisectionist's point of view.

A little analysis resolves this line of thought into the utmost absurdity: A man has a tapeworm. If he nurtures the tapeworm, it will have a billion eggs capable of becoming tapeworms, each having a billion eggs, and so on. The supply of human beings for those tapeworms would not be adequate.

It is therefore clear that lower forms of animal life must be destroyed in order that human life may be possible and tolerable. We must destroy pests that spread disease. We must destroy flesh-eating animals, lest they destroy us. We must kill plant-eating animals for food; and if not for food, for our own welfare, for otherwise they would consume the only form of food that would remain to us. Man is enjoined to do these things in the Bible, which in its first chapter bids him subdue the earth and have dominion over every living thing.

The Protest of the Anti-Vivisectionists.

Despite these facts there are a few persons, "anti-vivisectionists," who would accord man only limited dominion over the animals. When forced to admit that



he may kill animals for food, they deny that he may use them to promote health. He may kill animals to prevent death from starvation, but not to prevent death from plague or diphtheria. This is a strange argument, which would force us into our graves willy-nilly.

Anti-vivisectionists oppose particularly the use of animals for scientific research, which reveals the cause of disease and often furnishes the cure. It might be permissible to exterminate rats and fleas now that we know they spread plague, but to discover this fact by research on rats is reprehensible. Such animal research they call vivisection, and an anti-vivisection journal says of it: "Vivisection is utterly detestable. It is immoral and demoralizing. Anti-vivisectionists should keep up an unceasing agitation and work unitedly in asking legislatures for laws of an entirely prohibitory character."


How Plague is Prevented.

It would be well to look into this question of animal research a little and ask what it has done for us. Why are there no plagues nowadays in London, or in New York? Why is there no watchman at your door, and why do you not hear the bellman with the dead-cart?

There is still plague in most countries of the world, and during the past few years slight outbreaks have occurred in Oporto, Rio de Janeiro, Glasgow, Liverpool, San Francisco and Seattle. However, the cause of the disease is known, and the plague-carrying rat can be exterminated, or at least kept under control. Furthermore, people sick with the disease may be treated with a serum, and those exposed to it protected with vaccine. Thus any outbreak of the disease is quickly checked.

The doctors who have wrought this miracle of science are Yersin, Kitasato, Simond, Haffkine, Bannermann, Kolle, Calmette and Borrel. Few of us have ever heard their names, but many of us may owe our lives to their achievements.





The work of the rat is still seen in India. In that country the lower animals are held sacred and are protected. In consequence a million Hindus die annually of plague, which the rats perpetuate. Here we have a simple experiment in "anti-rvivisection;" it is infinitely more cruel than any experiment in animal research.

The Control of Smallpox.

The story of plague finds its parallel in the story of smallpox. The prevalence of this disease in earlier times is shown by a German adage: "From love and smallpox, but few remain free." In the eighteenth century only ten per cent of the world's population escaped smallpox; so love's majority could not have been large.

After an epidemic in the English town of Chester in 1744, only seven per cent of the population of 14,000 had never had smallpox. Eight years later there was an epidemic in Boston, Massachusetts. Eighteen hundred people in the population of 15,000 fled the city. Of those remaining, only 174 had not had smallpox when the epidemic subsided.

In some epidemics a third of the population perished, and thus the tragedy of the London plague was exceeded. But death was not the only calamity from smallpox, for many of the victims lost their sight. In those days smallpox was the commonest cause of blindness, and the records of the London Asylum for the Indigent Blind show that two-thirds of the inmates had lost their sight from this disease.

Such was the condition of things before 1798, when Dr. Jenner introduced vaccination. But so prompt and spectacular was the decrease in the disease with the introduction of vaccination that Thomas Jefferson predicted that future generations would know smallpox only through history. This prediction has not been fulfilled, for vaccination has not been universally enforced.

Where it has been enforced, the disease has been all



but eradicated. Some countries with compulsory vaccination have had no deaths from smallpox in an entire year. In Germany the death rate from smallpox is one person a year for every million inhabitants, and this one is often an unvaccinated Russian. In the army the record has been even better, owing to re-vaccination of recruits, and the official figures show only two deaths from smallpox in a period of forty years.

Such figures gain emphasis when contrasted with statistics for Russia. In that country, without compulsory vaccination, there are often a quarter of a million deaths from smallpox annually.

These figures prove the efficacy of vaccination. Still further proof is furnished by the daily incidents of hospital life, such as the immunity to smallpox of vaccinated nurses who work in fever hospitals, and the immunity of vaccinated babes who nurse from the breasts of mothers sick with the disease. Such demonstrations afford conclusive proof of the immunity conferred by vaccination.

Nevertheless, there are a few dissenters who decry vaccination. Their dissent was vehement a century ago, when they affirmed that children vaccinated with cowpox would grow hoofs, horns and tails. These views have proved false, but opposition to vaccination still survives on grounds of sentiment and "conscientious objection."

Much objection is offered to the use of calves for obtaining vaccine, and here we meet again the "moral issue." We will examine this issue from several viewpoints after a further brief consideration of the benefits of animal research.

Surgery Revolutionized.

First, a few words concerning the benefits that animal research has conferred upon surgery. It is conservative to say that research has entirely revolutionized