

The American Humane Association.

SOCIETIES OF THE UNITED STATES ORGANIZED FOR THE

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AND CHILDREN.

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AND THE PRESIDENT.

Chicago, Ill., March 10, 1895.

Dear Sir:--

The AMERICAN HUMANE ASSOCIATION, deeply interested in the growing practice of Vivisection in this country, feels that the time has come when public sentiment should take in regard to it some definite attitude. Upon certain aspects of the question, and as an aid in determining its future position, the Association seeks the judgment of those who represent the best interests of moral and intellectual culture, and who thus direct the trend of current thought. It therefore desires to ask you which one of the four distinct statements (herewith enclosed) most accurately represents your opinion regarding Vivisection.

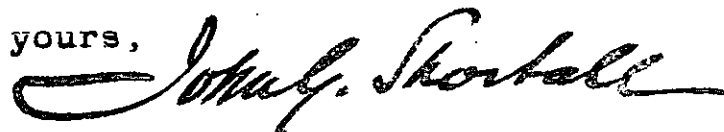
It will be seen that in making this inquiry, the AMERICAN HUMANE ASSOCIATION takes, for the time being, an absolutely neutral position. Your opinion as an "expert" upon the value to Science of animal experimentation it does not ask. But what would be your judgment regarding Vivisection, viewing the practice from every standpoint? Is it best that it should continue as at present, unlimited, unchecked, and absolutely without restraint? Ought it to be wholly abolished and treated as a crime as desired

by Anti-vivisectionists? Or, may distinctions be drawn, and should some methods of Vivisection be permitted, while others are disallowed?

In order to encroach as little as possible on your time, and for the more ready classification of opinions, the Association has had prepared for comparative consideration four carefully formulated statements of different views. With one of these it is hoped that you may find yourself in approximate accord. To that statement, will you kindly affix your signature and return to the Association as therein directed? If however, you can only partly agree with either statement, the Association will then esteem it a favor if you will sign the one which most nearly represents your views; and at the same time, by separate letter, indicate the reasons for your disapproval, and the special clauses which you are unable to endorse. The fullest expression of your judgment on this subject will be most welcome.

Tendering you in advance the cordial thanks of the AMERICAN HUMANE ASSOCIATION for the great assistance you will thus render it, I am, dear sir,

Respectfully yours,



President.

Special Committee:

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ALBERT LEFFINGWELL, M.D., Cambridge.

PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY TO

ALBERT LEFFINGWELL, M.D.,

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III. VIVISECTION ALLOWABLE IF WITHOUT PAIN.

Whether that experimentation upon living animals known as Vivisection is justifiable or not, depends, in our judgment, *exclusively on the question of pain*. Utility alone cannot give Science her authority; for then might she ask, as she sometimes has already done, for the living bodies of the criminal, the idiot, or the savage, wherein to search for the mysteries of life. We believe that Man's dominion over the animated world beneath him is not absolute; that the power to kill does not cover the right to torture; that our power is responsible; that our Humanity invests us with certain moral obligations toward the lower forms of life; and that under these Man is not free to treat even the scorpion or the tiger as they might treat him. But the use of chloroform and ether have made it possible to perform certain experiments and demonstrations upon living animals without the slightest pain, and these only we regard as justifiable for demonstration or research.

The dangers of this practice, however, are so many, the temptations to excess are so strong, the abuses to which it has led are so notorious and deplorable, that the decision of this question of pain should not be left to the judgment of each experimenter; but the whole practice, like the study of human anatomy with dissection, should be regulated by definite laws, confined to certain objects, permitted only to competent and trustworthy persons, and restricted to licensed places which shall be open at all times to inspection by the Presidents of Humane Societies for Protection of Animals or their authorized representatives.

III.
VIVISECTION ALLOWABLE IF WITHOUT
PAIN.

Name,

Profession,

P. O. Address,

IV. ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION OF VIVISECTION.

All experimentation upon living animals we consider unnecessary, unjustifiable and morally wrong. Some of the highest medical authorities have asserted that Vivisection does not benefit mankind ; that owing largely to differences between the structure of men and animals, the results of operations and the tests of drugs upon the latter are wholly misleading, and that the practice has accomplished nothing of real value in the treatment of disease. The greatest physiologist of our century, Sir Charles Bell, declared that such "experiments have never been the means of discovery ;" and that "the opening of living animals has done more to perpetuate error than to enforce the just views taken from anatomy and natural science." Sir Lawson Tait, one of the most eminent of living surgeons, claims that but for the fallacies of Vivisection, the art of healing would be to-day "at least a century in advance of its present position ;" and Dr. Bell Taylor, the leading oculist-surgeon of Great Britain, affirms that "no good ever came from the practice, and no good ever will." With these scientific authorities we are in perfect accord.

But whether any useful knowledge can be thus acquired or not is beside the question. Even if utility could be proved, Man has no moral right to attempt to benefit himself at the cost of injury, pain or disease to the lower animals. *The injury which the practice of Vivisection causes to the moral sense of the individual and to humanity far outweighs any possible benefit that could be derived from it.* Dr. Henry J. Bigelow, Professor in Harvard College Medical School, declared that "*Vivisection deadens the humanity of the students,*" and nothing which thus lowers morality can be a necessity to progress.

We hold the infliction of torture to be a moral offense ; and believe experience has demonstrated that Vivisection cannot be sanctioned in any form without opening a door to that offense. We assert that no legal protection from the utmost extremity of torment can ever be given to an animal once it is laid on the vivisection table in the laboratory ; and that no line can be drawn between experiments that are painless and those involving the utmost torture. ~~The claim that Vivisection has been rendered~~ generally painless by the use of anæsthetics is wholly misleading ; for physiologists themselves admit that there are no less than thirteen classes of experiments which cannot be satisfactorily performed on anæsthetised animals.

To allow one kind of Vivisection because "painless" and to condemn another because "painful" is thus utterly impracticable. No distinctions could be drawn that the enthusiastic experimenter would regard, and no legal restrictions are possible that would be conscientiously observed. Painless or painful, useless or useful, however severe or however slight, Vivisection is therefore a practice so linked with cruelty, and so pernicious in tendency that any reform is impossible, and it should be absolutely prohibited by law for any purpose.

IV.
ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION OF
VIVISECTION.

Name,

Profession,

P. O. Address,

WHY YOUR OPINION IS DESIRED.

The question has been asked: "Why does the AMERICAN HUMANE ASSOCIATION bring up, at this time, the subject of vivisection? Are abuses prevalent,—or even possible? Is the practice extending? For what reasons should Public Opinion be invoked regarding it?"

Without assuming in any way to prejudge the case, replies to these inquiries are as follows:

I. In one form or another, Vivisection as a method of study has been very widely spreading during recent years, throughout the United States. Every medical school of repute now has its physiological laboratory wherein students are frequently required to perform the principal vivisections for themselves, (some operations involving most painful processes), simply as a means of assisting memory. Nearly all the larger Universities and Colleges have during late years, established Biological Laboratories, wherein young men who have no thought of studying medicine, are taught certain branches by demonstration and practice upon living animals.

II. While State laws generally prohibit cruelty, yet, in the great majority of cases, *there is no law, no college rule, or regulation even*, preventing the infliction upon living animals of the utmost conceivable torture, *so long as it is done within the walls of the college laboratory and by permission of the instructor*. The proof of this statement rests upon replies made by different college presidents to letters of inquiry.

President Harper of the UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO writes: "We have not thought it wise to place any restriction upon experimentation involving prolonged or severe pain." President Patton of Princeton said: "THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY has not defined or limited the extent to which living animals may be subjected to pain." President Dwight of YALE, answered: "We have had no occasion to lay down any definite restrictions as to the matter to which you refer." President Jordan of STANFORD

UNIVERSITY, going still further, says: "I am decidedly of the opinion that *no restrictions should be put upon the student*, except those which the professor may lay upon him." The idea finds wide acceptance that infliction of extreme pain is simply a question for the instructor to decide. "We have felt that the matter could be safely left *to the discretion of the preceptor*," says President Rogers of the NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY. President Carter of WILLIAMS COLLEGE states that "The principle has always been *to trust the professor wholly*, unless there seemed reason for distrust." "We leave the decision *to the judgment of the investigator*," says President Day of SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY. These quotations by no means exhaust the list, but they indicate the freedom that now exists. Further examples may be found in the recently printed volume, *Animals' Rights*, published by Macmillan & Co., of New York.

III. Has this freedom led to abuse? It has. On this point it is not desirable to give the proofs. But unlimited and absolute power seldom exists without temptation somewhere to license. Prof. William James, M. D., of Harvard University, by no means an anti-vivisectionist, says: "I believe that there goes on in medical schools a lot of purely wanton vivisection for purposes of demonstration, which the class does not see and which is wasteful of life and condemnable. I believe in keeping up a sore state of public opinion as to this sort of cruelty."

IV. Finally, Vivisection has to some extent been introduced as a method of study in certain of our public and private schools. Upon the wisdom of this new departure in the education of youth, the American Humane Association has sought for the judgment of those best qualified to give it; and the report of its inquiry will shortly be given to the public. It now asks whether you think that, all things considered, Vivisection should be abolished as too dangerous to morals and too easy of abuse; whether it is possible and desirable by legal restrictions, to confine it to certain definite ends; or whether freed from all criticism, it should be permitted the widest liberty of expansion in every direction.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN G. SHORTALL,

President of the American Humane Association.