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THE VALUE OF PAIN.

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PAIN is one of the essential conditions of progress. Not merely in the sense of being part of the friction which necessarily accompanies all movement, but as a vital precedent of all possibility of movement. Ask any biologist what is the first and most important property of living matter, and he will tell you that it is "irritability"—the power of responding to stimuli or impressions. Touch with a needle point the most beautiful and brilliant crystal, and you get absolutely no response; turn to the grayest and flabbiest bit of ditch-water animal-jelly that you can find, and he moves himself away from the steel at once. He can feel, therefore he lives. And if he feels at all, he must be able to feel pain as well as pleasure. Nay, it is even more important that he should perceive the disagreeable stimulus than the agreeable, for the former needs to be moved away from, while the latter does not. Leave him capable of only pleasurable sensations and he will be destroyed within an hour.

In this earliest form, the powers of sensation and of responding to impressions are combined in the same cell, but as the organism becomes more complex, more extensive and powerful movements are called for, and special cells are set aside for contractile purposes alone, leaving to the surface cells the duty of sensation only. Later, it becomes not merely a question of escape, but also of retaliation; and a central office to combine the muscle-strands in orderly military movements is needed, and the ganglion-brain is called into being. In the meantime, the surface cells have been dividing up the work of feeling among themselves; some have educated themselves to catch the finest variations in the light-rays, some confine their study entirely to the sound-waves, others to the changes of temperature, while the vast majority of them simply refine upon their original powers of contact-perception or touch. Thus out of the simple possibility of discomfort arise the five senses, their muscle-standing-army, and their joint judicio-executive brain. Pain is the mother of the mind, and muscle is its father.

Nor can this powerful factor in the creation of the body-organism be permitted to "rest upon the seventh day," like the Jahveh of Genesis, when its work is apparently completed. The possibility of the continuance of life absolutely depends upon its incessant activity. Cut the nerve which connects any part or organ with the conscious brain, and