

Selected Article.

VIVISECTION.

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There are questions of science and there are questions of sentiment; but there are also questions in which both science and sentiment are combined. To this class vivisection belongs, and the present aim is to establish the proper relation existing between these two factors. Much work has been done on this subject at different times, and evidence has been adduced on both sides by the staunchest opponents. The evidence has been recorded, but no systematic attempt has been made at a summing up from which any plain unprejudiced mind could draw an authoritative conclusion. All that now remains is to consider the evidence offered, and to point out on which side, according to all reasonable rules, the decision must lie.

The store of published facts concerning vivisection in America is singularly small, because in this country it has never really become a public question, but in England, on the occasion of the first attempt at restrictive legislation, in 1876, the conflict between those who favored the practice and those who opposed it was singularly keen.

There are two classes of persons working to lessen pain: those who oppose vivisection, striving to prevent the sufferings of animals, and the vivisectors whose motive is the seeking after truth and knowledge, which will go toward alleviating the sufferings of humanity, and of the animals themselves through scientific medicine or applied physiology. That these two classes, who have a common aim, should hold views so conflicting must be due to some misapprehensions which it is intended the present exposition of facts will help to remove.

If it can be shown that the pain and death which vivisection implies have been wrought for the good of humanity, by leading to knowledge, light, and power, and that this knowledge, light, and power could have been arrived at in no other way, and that these are so considerable that mankind would be badly off without them, then the case for vivisection may be considered proven. But if, on the other hand, it is clear that vivisection is practiced indiscriminately