

she did not need to know those things, moreover, my remark about how I felt was an abuse of language, a misapplication of terms —

“One does not *feel*,” she explained; “there is no such thing as feeling: therefore, to speak of a non-existent thing as existent is a contradiction. Matter has no existence; nothing exists but mind; the mind cannot feel pain, it can only imagine it.”

“But it hurts, just the same—”

“It doesn't. A thing which is unreal cannot exercise the functions of reality. Pain is unreal; hence pain cannot hurt.”

In making a sweeping gesture to indicate the act of shooing the illusion of pain out of her mind, she raked her hand on a pin in her dress, said “Ouch!” and went tranquilly on with her talk. “You should never allow yourself to speak of how you feel, nor permit others to ask you how you are feeling; you should never concede that you are ill, nor permit others to talk about disease or pain or death or similar non-existences in your presence. Such talk only encourages the mind to continue its empty imaginings” Just at that point the Stubenmädchen trod on the cat's tail, and the cat let fly a frenzy of cat-profanity. I asked with caution:

“Is a cat's opinion of pain valuable?”

“A cat has no opinion; opinions proceed from mind only; the lower animals, being eternally perishable, have not been granted mind; without mind opinion is impossible.”

“She merely *imagined* she felt a pain—the cat?”

“She cannot imagine a pain, for imagination is an effect of mind; without mind,

there is no imagination. A cat has no imagination.”

“Then she had *real* pain?”

“I have already told you there is no such *thing* as real pain!”

“It is strange and interesting. I do wonder what was the matter with the cat. Because, there being no such thing as a real pain, and she not being able to imagine an imaginary one, it would seem that God in his pity has compensated the cat with some kind of a mysterious emotion usable when her tail is trodden on which for the moment joins cat and Christian in one common brotherhood of—

She broke in with an irraited—

“Peace! The cat feels nothing, the Christian feels nothing. Your empty and foolish imaginings are profanation and blasphemy and can do you an injury. It is wiser and better and holier to recognize and confess that there is no such thing as disease or pain or death.”

“I am full of imaginary tortures,” I said, “but I do not think I could be any more uncomfortable if they were real ones. What must I do to get rid of them?”

“There is no occasion to get rid of them, since they do not exist. They are illusions propagated by matter, and matter has no existence; there is no such thing as matter.”

“It sounds right and clear, but yet it seems in a degree elusive; it seems to slip through, just when you think you are getting a grip on it”

“Explain.”

“Well, for instance; if there is no such thing as matter, how can matter propagate things?”

In her compassion she almost smiled.