

## Disciplined Sympathy.

BY LINA MOLLETT.

"Man is the Missionary of Order; he is the servant, not of the Devil and Chaos, but of God and the Universe."—CARLYLE.

**H**EROISM, sympathy, self-sacrifice—there are no more common virtues. Thank Heaven, we need not burrow in the dust of antiquity to find them. The spirit of Horatius and Antigone can live in tailor-made clothes—ay, and in homely fustian and washed-out print. It is quite "at home" in the latter garments. "If we doubt it, let us humbly go among the *very* poor—as *pupils* (not as teachers). We will there learn why the saying, "Poverty could not live without poverty," has become a truism.

Tales of love and sympathy unto death are interwoven with the "History of Suffering," that forms so large a part of the "History of our People." Golden deeds were done, we know, by the afflicted for the afflicted—in Lancashire and Irish famines, in times of cholera and flood; and are being done, hour by hour, to-day, under the shadow of this strange plague that is spreading mourning throughout our land. Most of them the Recording Angel *only* will chronicle, and we may not know till hereafter who were princes among us.

One wearies of the fretful whine about our hard-hearted and selfish age—the eternal dirge over "the good old times." Statistics prove that we have improved, if decrease of crime in proportion to population, general education, improved sanitation, cabmen's shelters, free libraries, People's Palaces, and twenty thousand trained Nurses in the United Kingdom, go for anything. But, after all, Norse Skalds mourned over the good old times a good many years B.C.

Was the ancestral jelly-fish floating in the warm ocean of young earth contented with his age? Darwin does not say. Would any of us wish to retain the flabbiness of this (if naturalists teach correctly) placid father of our race? Would we be happier if that enterprising fish, some geologists ask us to believe in, had never turned land-lubber, and become the progenitor of descendants who grew feathers for scales, wings for fins, who floated on air, and who with their improved attire developed warm blood and an appreciation of suffering? There are people who affirm that tranquillity is happiness, as there are people who

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intellectually have never got beyond the fish stage.

Sorrowing with the sorrowful (or sympathy) seems to be an attribute of the higher animal, and the higher the animal the more refined are its methods for the minimising of pain.

The most elementary form of surgery is extermination of disease and patient.

The stork's autumnal sanitary consultation is well known. Before departing for the "Land of the Pharaohs," the thoughtful leader of the class reviews his fellow-travellers, and with his long bill spears those who seem likely to collapse on the way, or who would die of cold and hunger if left behind to face the winter. The method is not unkind, and calls to mind that of many infant nations, who invoked (and still invoke) Death as the universal doctor. There is, however, a great gulf between such manifestations of disciplined sympathy and those of the pensive cat, who goes in for systematic massage and sham-pooing. Many other four-legged creatures adopt this treatment for the preservation of health and banishment of disease. Self-doctoring is as common among animals as among housemaids. But this is by the way.

It is curious that carnivorous animals should not be galled by any sense of discord in the wholesale destruction of life they themselves indulge in, for gastronomical purposes. The dog, who rescued the drowning cat he loved, and licked her warm, did not grieve over the rabbit he hunted to exhaustion; and a baby is not afraid of a butcher's shop.

We have not as a nation risen to the height of the vegetarian lady, who wept when she thought of the origin of "roast beef," and regretted that she belonged to an age that made a scorched carcass the *pièce de résistance* of its festive board. Most of us are content to be kindly carnivorous, and (if we have ambition in that direction) to expend the greater part of our instincts of sympathy on our kind.

Nowadays we have got past making a merit of a natural bent of our being, and acknowledge that the privilege of showing sympathy is a luxury to some men and to most women. We recognise that sympathy is a talent to be cultivated, and that left to grow on the "sweet wild-flower" system it may, under circumstances, be a weed, though a pretty one!

What would Charles Lamb say about the "Decay of Beggars" to-day, when our philanthropists uphold the police so staunchly in

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