**THE NEW HUMANITARIANISM**

In 1813 Elizabeth Fry, visiting Newgate, found women chained to the ground, lying in a dark cell, on straw changed once a- week, clothed only in a petticoat, hardly visible for vermin. In 1897 a deer was impaled and killed during a run of the Royal Buckhounds. The epithets spat- tered over the latter fact by part of the public press in London would not have been at all inade- quate as applied to the former. We read of " the terrible death of the deer," "the piteous story," the "brutal cruelties," "barbari- ties," and "atrocious incidents" of the hunt. Both Newgate and the Royal Buckhounds are public institutions, and the country is by way of being responsible for them. Yet Elizabeth Fry was held something of an eccentric for objecting to this form of the pun- ishment of the guilty in Newgate ; while there are certainly hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people in Britain who hardly find the abuse above quoted sufficient for the iniquities of the Buckhounds. Concrete instances like this show such a change of sentiment well within the span of the closing century as can only be called pro- digious. We say provisionally a change of public sentiment, and not of public morality; for if it should turn out a question of mor- ality, then we must conclude either that the contemporaries of Wel- lington and Peel were all devils or that the editor of the ' Star ' is an angel.

The root of the revolution lies in the respective values which two generations set upon physical pain. You will see the same even more clearly by going back an-

other couple of generations to the days of Tom Jones or Roderick Random. " Coarse " and " brutal " are the epithets which our age selects for theirs. But again the root of the difference lies in the importance our modern fashionable sentiment — shall we say " fashion- able can't" at once and be out with it? — attaches to the avoid- ance of physical pain. Ensign Northerton was a brute in his day, and Tom Jones was a man; in ours Tom is a brute and the Ensign a demon. It may be the essence of civilisation, or an acci- dent of it ; but all our Victorian sentiments, all our movements, all our humanitarianist talk, trend in one direction — towards the convic- tion that death and pain are the worst of evils, their elimination the most desirable of goods.

To many people — so fast are we soddening with that material- ism which calls itself humanity — this proposition about death and pain and their antitheses will seem a truism. But perhaps some of them will falter in that belief when they see to what monstrosi- ties this deification of painlessness can give birth. It is throttling patriotism and common-sense and virility of individual character; it is even stunting its own squat idol by taking away pain with one hand only to foster it with the other; and, worst danger of all, its success means the destruc- tion of all manlier ideals of char- acter than its own.

Consider the gospel of pain- lessness in a few of its develop- ments ; and take first the simplest. Whence come the flaccid ideas of to-day in point of health and sick- ness? Why do we hatch out addled babies from incubators? Why does the 'Daily Telegraph' endow cripples with Christmas hampers? In order, you would naturally answer, first, to bring into the world beings who must needs be a curse to themselves and to everybody about them ; second, to persuade these beings that there is some kind of merit in being such a curse. Everybody who know? anything of working men's home;? knows how proud of its deformity a cripple of that class can be, and how that pride is pan- dered to and even shared by all who can claim kinship with it. At a charitable Christmas enter- tainment held annually in the East End, it is the custom to put up the most misshapen cripples procurable to sing a hymn by themselves; and the hideous ex- hibition is by far the most popular turn of the evening. Now, noth- ing can be more rankly unwhole- some than such a state of senti- ment. It may be unjust to blame cripples; it is as unjust and far more pernicious, remembering that their case is nearly always due to the vices or negligence of parents, to pamper them. Parents should be taught to be ashamed of crippled children. And children, both in this higher states of life, ought to be taught to be proud of being well, not of being ill ; to be taught that sickness is not a source of interest, but a badge of inferiority ; that to be healthy is the prime condition of all things desirable in life, and that the only way to palliate ill -health is to ignore it. Such an education might be trusted to breed healthy bodies controlled and mastered by healthy minds. But that would be blasphemy against the gospel of painlessness. Pain is to be assuaged if possible, but cocked in any case; to be pitied, adver-tised, rewarded — anything except silently endured.

Moreover, this new humanitar- ianism is always conspicuously il- logical in the working out of its own creed. Aiming at nothing higher than the extinction of pain, its disciples, by sheer feather-head- edness, cause a great deal more suffering than they alleviate. It is too early to follow the after-life of the incubator - hatched baby ; but it is fairly safe to predict that throughout a brief and puny life its unwholesomeness will mock the false humanity that would not let it die. As for the cripples, there is in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, a small, but very admirably managed, hospital for that branch of them which suffers from hip -disease. Now, if you are to cherish cripples, you would think that there could be no better way of doing so than this — the more so in that hip-dis- ease is both incurable and incapaci- tating. But no. That hospital, because it is quiet and no hand at advertising, is indigent to the point of shutting its doors ; whilst money flows in merrily to buy turkeys for other cripples' relatives' Christmas dinners. Perhaps the reason for the antithesis is that the object must not merely be an imperfect human being, but, in order to win full sympathy, must exhibit him- self as such in public.

Yet it may be neither by over- sight nor by inconsideration that this little hospital is starved. For you must know that among our humanitarians is a strong wing, which objects strenuously to hos- pitals altogether. It is an extra- ordinary irony that the self-sent apostles, whose mission is to do away with pain, should launch some of their finest diatribes against hospitals, which have no other mission in the world than themselves to combat pain. An extraordinary irony — but it is perfectly true, and the fact is very fruitful of enlightenment. You will find in the writings of these apostles attacks on the atrocities of hospitals set out with language almost too strong to be applied to a dead deer. Hospitals, they tell us, are shambles where human victims are vivisected for the curiosity, not to say the enter- tainment, of cold scientists. We are exhorted in fervent rhetoric to rise all together and stop the butchery of our fellow-men for a surgeon's holiday. This cry, which peals periodically from a part of the press of London, is almost the most instructive of all the mani- festations of the new spirit. The surgeon understands what he is doing with his patient; his de- tractors do not. His aim is ulti- mately the same as theirs — to eliminate pain from life ; they can hardly dispute that. But just because he understands, because he takes a broad view, because, without neglecting the individual case, he looks beyond it to prin- ciples which may prove of general beneficence — because of this he is next door to a murderer. Here- in, not expressed but involved, you have the craven fear of pain in its naked simplicity. You must not cut to save a limb, to save a life, to save ten thousand lives — because we cannot bear to see the blood. Send out as many cripples, as many veterinarians as you will — but we cannot bear to think of the supreme moment of kill or cure. Put us under morphia to muffle our pain, let a nurse sit holding our hand and stroking our forehead. But if you inflict one healing pang, exert one touch of salutary discipline, then you are no benefactor, but a heartless devil.

The outcry against vaccination, against vivisection, furnishes an ex- actly parallel case. The same senti- ment is at the heart of both — the un- conquerable shrinking from initial pain, even though it promise to repay itself by tenfold exemption in the future. Of course the agi- tators against vaccination and viv- isection assure themselves that there are no repaying benefits to follow, and in a way they are sin- cere. But their sincerity is not that which comes from a cool-head- ed review of known facts ; it is the sincerity of an emotion which has overwhelmed reason. An unbias- sed deduction from the experience of smallpox epidemics, from the records of medical progress, must convince the most unwilling of us that the benefits of both vaccina- tion and vivisection are real and appreciable. Whether they out- weigh the death of a few weakly infants and the suffering of a few insensitive animals is an- other question — most people would readily answer it with a "Yes." The anti-vaccinators and anti- vivisectors might, on considera- tion, answer it with a "No." But the instructive feature of their case is that they do not con- sider at all. They never get so far. The sight of the scabs on a baby's arm, the idea of the yelping of a tortured dog — the first hint or imagining of physical pain — is enough to paralyse their reason. The same blind horror of physi- cal pain may be found at the bot- tom of half the 'isms of the day. In almost all, when they are strongly felt, it seems actually to destroy reason till the fad contra- dicts itself — as, for one more ex- ample, in the vegetarian, who abstains from beef and chicken out of pity for bullocks and fowls, yet eats butter and eggs without ever asking to what fate he is thus dooming superfluous bull - calves and cockerels. The like uncon- scious self - condemnation awaits our humanitarians when they pass forth the domain of physical to that of moral incapacity. No- where do they show their senti- mentality and their unreason bettor combined than in what is called prison - reform. A plain man who sees the warm, airy, light, clean cells of British prisons is apt to ask himself wherein, but for the necessary loss of liberty, the hardship of punishment con- sists. Let him turn to the ex- ponents of painlessness and he will discover that. Our prisons also, as well as our hospitals, are dens of hideous cruelty. When he tries to find out what it is all about, he discovers that some prisoners have meagre fare, that a few are set to really hard physical work, that convicts spend a small part of their sentence .without constant companionship, that habitual insubordinates can, on a magistrate's order, be whipped with a whipcord cat, and that warders do not always speak to convicts with respect. This is called cruel, tending to madness, brutidising. Our grandfathers would have laughed at such charges. Such cruelty, they would have replied, would come not amiss! to wife - beaters, ravishers, swindlers : if a man goes mad in nine months, although he can con- stantly speak to his fellow-pris- oners at exercise or when at work about the corridors, then his men- tal balance is no loss to himself or anybody ; the very cat can hardly brute Use him, since he has to be brutal before he could earn it. But such replies are not for our soft-hearted generation. Instead they point us westward to free America, whose felons, as a native authority has said, are " better housed, fed, clad, and comforted than the labouring poor of any other portion of the globe " ; whose housebreakers feed on beef -steaks and hot biscuits for breakfast, and street - walkers get jam to their tea. They point us to Elmira, that university miscalled a prison, where the embezzler is taught German, shorthand, and tele- graphy, and the disguise - artist is encouraged to model in wax.

It is all one more outcrop of exactly the same folly. Avoid immediate pain — no matter at what cost hereafter. And here again the folly is exactly as ironi- cally self -destroy ing. It would be absurd to ask whether criminals inflict or suffer the more pain. It may be all one to you whether pain be deserved or not ; to save the guilty the greater suffering, you may, as would willingly many of our crack-brained sentimental- ists, inflict the lesser upon the innocent. But this is exactly what they do not do : to save the guilty the lesser evil, they plague the guiltless with the greater. In point of fact, the modern vice of pampering criminals may fairly be held to cause greater inconvenience both to the innocent victims and to the interesting agents. For laxity does not reform. It was supposed that the University Ex- tension course of Elmira did pre- vent those who had experienced it from returning for a further term of instruction; only one day it came out that the lectures on Moral Philosophy were supple- mented by smacking with a sort of butter - patter, and we may fairly attribute the deterrent effect to the bodily influence rather than the spiritual. For the rest, crime increases in lax America. In Great Britain — severe by compari- son with America, though lax enough when you consider the punishments of former days — crime is decreasing. The only other European country of which you can say the same is Belgium, where our humanitarians will hold up horrified hands to hear that sentences of nine years' solitary confinement are enforced, and that a sort of convalescent prison is needed to bring the criminal gradually back to his reason. No such barbarity for us ! Among us you will find a tumult of voices ever crying aloud for less, not more, severity. And, so far as crime can be checked or encouraged by punishment, they are asking for reforms that will spread crime, involve more frequent if less sure terms of detention for criminals, and thus add prodigiously to the sum-total of suffering among guilty and guiltless alike. Here once more the gospel of painlessness recoils to its own defeat.

Nowhere will you find the new doctrine better exemplified than in politics. It is a guiding prin- ciple of that school which delights to cry down British methods, British policy, British achieve- ments. If pain, as such, is the one great evil, it is all one whose pain it is. There is no more dis- tinction between your own coun- trymen and another. There is no more tragedy in the death of your countryman doing his duty than in the death of an Orukzai who shoots his uncles from behind walls. There is no such possi- bility as patriotism left. You will start reasonably enough : the true patriot, you will say, desires the highest good of his country, which is not to be found in killing Orukzais ; and though you hold an Orukzai's life just as high as a Gordon Highlander's, you do not hold it a whit higher. An Armenian is a human life and a Turk is a human life, and the one is as precious as the other.

You may start with these plau- sible principles, but you will not maintain them. The very friction with your simpler fellows, who hold any one British life worth any half-dozen others, will irritate your theoretic philanthropy into a steady prepossession against your own countrymen. The sight of any man violating your precept will stir your humane indignation to a bloodthirsty desire for the suffering of the violator. This is called righteous anger, but in its effects, had it but free play, it is the old irony — humanitarianism defeating its own end. What better instance than the Anglo- Armenians, who first fanatically swallow oriental tales of outrage, then frantically exaggerate and agitate till they have stirred the half truth into hideous reality; then they are for war and slaugh- ter, as though a stream of blood were to be slaked by a deluge. The professed war -haters have been of late the very men who cry most savagely for a war more deadly than a century of barbar- ous faction - fighting. The party of force - at - no - price, of abstract quixotic justice, is the first to find unsuspected — and non-existent — points in favour of the United States when the Republic makes baseless claims on their own coun- try and backs them by unman- nerly bluster. It must be so inevitably. No man is so super- human in his dry intelligence that he can keep a principle impartially applied to affairs that stir the pas- sions of nations. And he that is not with his country is against it. Perhaps these are illustrations enough. It is not alleged that the various modern tendencies here touched on are all ramifica- tions of a gigantic conspiracy labouring to impose its formula on the world. They have their family likeness and their mutual sympathies, but their fundamental unity is unconscious. Yet that fundamental unity exists : the ele- vation of pain and — not pleasure, mark, but — the absence of pain into the ultimate standards of evil and good. Applied without common-sense or self-control, it is plain that this standard works its own undoing. But that, it will be urged, is no valid aspersion on the standard itself. Would not the test of avoidance of pain, honestly and judiciously applied, furnish a trustworthy guide for public action? Does not civilisa- tion itself consist exactly in this — in an organised common effort for the extinction, so far as is attainable, of pain and of death?

Certainly there is a measure of truth in this. The organization of a civilized State is a vast con- spiracy for the preservation of life. A rank socialist might see his way to denying this : yet it remains undeniable that even for the lowest, weakest, and poorest a modern civilized State gives such security of life as the low and weak and poor know in no other form of society. Civilisa- tion lays a restraining hand on the strong and bold, who would bully us : it furnishes great de- vices ; and combinations whereby we may win comforts from nature which without them would be too hard for us. It finds incubators to help us into the world, and disinfectants to keep us from helping our fellows out of it.

Certainly civilisation does all this. And yet there is no divine virtue in civilisation, either the word or the thing. If civilisation is a conspiracy for the preserva- tion of puny life, lowering the physical standard of the race, then civilisation may be no blessing, but i curse. Civilisation, further, is not only not divine; it is human. If its broad and general tendencies are unrecognised by those in the stream of them, they are not less products of human will. We can change or guide the stream of civilisation, after all; it behoves us the more, therefore, to look anxiously to its direction.

The present direction in Britain appears on the above showing to be a wrong one ; and if we are not careful it will lead us straight to national perdition. Civilisation is making it much too easy to live ; humanitarianism is turning approval of easiness of living into the one standard of virtue. A wiser civilisation would look, not to the indiscriminate preservation of life, but to the quality of the life preserved. A wiser humani- tarianism would make it easy for the lower quality of life to die. It sounds brutal, but why not? We have let brutality die out too much. Our horror of pain has led us to foster only the softer virtues and leave the harsher alone. Again, it sounds absurd even to use such a phrase as 11 harsher virtues " — though Aris- totle, to take one instance of a man perhaps as wise as we, knew very well what they are. His ideal of character was not the kind man, nor the man opposed to corporal punishment, nor the man superior to mere patriotism, but the great -souled man. This quality is " the crown of all virtues ; it enhances them, and cannot begin to exist without them." And among the attri- butes of the great -souled man were these. He was the man "who holds himself worthy of great deserts, and is so worthy. . . . The great-souled man despises justly, whereas the crowd despises at haphazard. To be respected by the lowly he holds as vulgar as to use his strength against the weak. ... In his life he takes no heed of any but his friends : to do otherwise is servile ; which is why all flatterers are coarse and all the lowly are flatterers. . . . He is no gossip ; he will tattle neither of himself nor of others, for it is all one to him whether others praise or condemn him."

Nobody wants to re-establish a Greek standard of character for British men — the less so in that its results as handed down by the Greeks themselves are not over- worthy of admiration. Never- theless we might well admit these heathen virtues of proper pride and a sort of self-respecting egoism, and others, as a bracing tonic to our later morality. We ought not to forget to temper mercy with justice — even with that rude and brutal exercise of superiority which maybe called natural justice. It was not by holding all men — not to say all beasts — as of equal right with ourselves that we made ourselves a great nation. It is not thus that we keep ourselves great. We became and are an Imperial race by dealing necessary pain to other men, just as we become powerful men by dealing necessary pain to other animals —whether they be slaughtered oxen or hunted stags. There is no reason in gloating over the pain we have risen upon, but there is even less in pretending that it does not exist. We may as well recognise that if we are to remain, nationally and individ- ually, fitted to cope successfully with nature, with rival animals and with rival men, we must find and observe some other virtues besides those which consist in combating pain. Already our gentler civilisation has softened us physically. We make bicycle records, but we are not prepared to converse coolly while having our legs cut off, as was the way of our great-grandfathers. We are better fed, better clothed, better housed than they were ; probably we enjoy better health, and cer- tainly we live longer. But we do not drink so well, love so well, suffer so well, fight so well ; physically and emotionally we have subdued ourselves to a lower plane. Partly this follows inevi- tably on alleviated material con- ditions which we could not put back if we would; but partly it is due to the softening of our current ethics. It is believed in our generation that men who are ready to inflict pain are precisely the men who are unready to en- dure it ; though, curiously, that same generation refuses to flog wife - beaters and assaulters of children. In their case the prin- ciple may be broadly true ; but it was not true of our forefathers — Covenanters, buccaneers, poli- ticians, sailors, pitmen ; what you will. They burned and marooned and beheaded and shot and fought cocks ; but they were quite ready to bear the like sufferings when their turn came. So they bred hardihood ; yet, brutes as you may call them, they still con- tinued to be not less generous, loving, even self-sacrificing, than we. Within the limits they re- cognised as claiming their duty — family, friends, country — they could be all sweetness; outside they could be pitiless. On these painfully unhumanitarian princi- ples they built the British empire. At present we keep it on these principles — only we try not to let ourselves know it. We shoot down dervishes who are fighting for their religion as sincerely as did our own Ironsides, and Matabele who have every whit as pure a belief in the righteousness of slave -raiding as

we in its iniquity; we drive Afridis into the bitter snow to starve be- cause they think it well to steal rifles and shoot strangers, while we do not. The naked principle of our rule is that our way is the way what shall be walked in, let it cost what pain it may. Meantime our humanitarians preach exactly the contrary. And if they are right we have two courses before us. Either we may go on, as now, conducting our empire by force, and pretend that we do so by charly and meekness ; or we may cease to conduct it by force, and try to do so by charity and meek- ness. In the first case we shall finally engrain hypocrisy as the dominant trait of our national character; in the second we shall very soon have no national char- acter or national self-esteem or national existence to lose.

As the savage virtues die out, the civilised vices spring up in their place. Pride gives way to the ambition to be thought to have a right to be proud ; frank contempt and hatred are replaced by backbiting. The readiness to hurt or be hurt physically we ex- change for a smoother but deadlier unscrupulousness. The duel was hissed out of England because it killed the body ; in its stead reigns scandal, which kills the soul. Sport, which slaughters beasts, is yielding to betting on professional athletics, which fritters away the minds of men. As we become more sensitive to physical, we be- come more callous to mental agony. An educated woman, a woman in society, a good woman, will whim- per for a week if her child is to have a mole cut from its cheek, and cannot bear to see the opera- tion, lest she should faint at the sight of blood. But she will dress herself carefully and attend a trial for murder, dividing her opera-glass impartially, while the jury are away, between such part of the face of the accused as he can- not cover with his hands and the face of his wife. And yet, when that man is proved a cold-blooded murderer, this good woman will be the first to shudder at the re- flection that he is to be hanged. We talk of our age as spiritual, but what is this but gross materi- alism? Pain is no longer to be considered unless it can be felt with the body. So, while we shudder at the pains of a small war, and -would go to almost any humiliation to avert a great one, we are every year more in bondage to industrial strife — to the blind selfishness of the locker-out and the malignant factiousness of the trade-unionist. Here is more materialism : death is not death unless you can see the bleeding bodies. But then, of course, in- dustrial war only ruins our coun- try : the other kind of war might hurt foreigners. For — deplorably, perhaps, but incontestably — the content of the human affections is limited ; and the more love we spare for men of other race and speech and colour, the less we have left for our own.

And what a pitiful spirit in itself, this new crusade against pain ! It is not the cult of pleas- ure,— that its votaries would be the first to disclaim. It is a creed purely negative — a creed, there- fore, inferior to the merest epi- cureanism. A moral code that is positive is at least a creed that makes a man more of a man; a code that is all negative — all antis and no pros — makes nothing but a protesting machine — a string of self-righteous formulas. We must not hurt stags, and we must not whip criminals, and we must not, it now appears, cut out cancers ; but what may we do ? Attend

League football matches, teach garrotters moral philosophy, and dose the cancerous with homoeo- pathic globules'? The substitutes are inadequate enough ; but to do justice to those whom we are pro- testing against, it is not they who propose such substitutes. Faddists propose many ridiculous remedies for imaginary diseases; but the newest kind of sentimental hu- manitarian is not necessarily or even generally a faddist. He or she has simply a vague shudder at the thought of pain, and often backs it up by no fad or positive suggestion at all; it is merely a sentiment without principle. Only that sentiment is coming more and more to suffuse and to inspire all our British thought — the shudder is beginning to be accepted instead of a code of morality. It is all for forbidding and no permitting, for undoing and no doing, for an abstract average common weal, but no concrete individual weal. It tends towards a compact by which we shall all of us covenant to do nothing lest one of us might hurt another. It is not the frame of mind which makes great for- tunes, or great nations, or great men. No; nor even good men. Unless a good man is good in quite another way from a good horse or a good table, he is a man who most fully embodies the pro- perties of a man ; which object is assuredly not attained by the mere refusal to give or suffer pain. Goodness is difficult to define, and still more difficult to dogmatise about, but it is at least safe to say that it consists in action, not in abstinence from action. To suppose it lies in a negative, even of the most amiable kind, is an emasculation of the word fit only to produce a nation of blameless, praiseless nobodies. "It is our sins that make us great."

The idea that pain is the worst of evils destroys many virtues which we cannot afford to lose; it fosters many vices which we could gratefully spare; it is a bloodless, unfruitful basis for morality. And for the last point, it is in most cases — not in all, but in most — a lie. The people that pretend to elevate it to a principle do not really believe it. Out of paradox, out of moral self-conceit, out of genuine tenderness of heart, they may say they do ; but at heart they generally do not. How many genuinely believe, and practically enforce the belief, that a beast's pain should outweigh a man's profit? How many genuinely believe that a wife-beater should not be beaten ? How many truly think that it is as deplorable that an Afridi should be shot as that a Briton should 1 There are some such possibly : you will know them by their refusal to drink milk, their habit of allowing themselves to be pushed in a crowd without pushing back, their readiness to give their daughters in marriage to savages. With the rest humani- tarianism is not a principle, but a weakness. It is even a vicarious cowardice. By sympathy they transfer the pain of others to themselves, and their pity is not benevolence, but dislike of sen- sations painful to themselves. Now it is nobody's duty to like painful sensations ; but in a world full of them, and for all we can see inevitably full of them, it is everybody's duty to face them. To refuse to do so will certainly do little enough towards their extinction. And to the few who do honestly try to abolish the painful as such, we may make bold to say that, should they succeed, mankind would be poorer, weaker, and even unhappier with- out it.