

**CHAPTER XXXII.**

"Now," said Benjulia, "what is it to be? The favourite public bugbear? Vivisection?"

"Yes."

"Very well. What can I do for you?"

"Tell me first," said Lemuel, "what is Law?"

"Nobody knows."

"Well, then, what ought it to be?"

"Justice, I suppose."

"Let me wait a bit, Nathan, and get that into my mind."

Benjulia waited with exemplary patience.

"Now about yourself," Lemuel continued. "You won't be offended--will you? Should I be right, if I called you a dissector of living creatures?"

Benjulia was reminded of the day when he had discovered his brother in the laboratory. His dark complexion deepened in hue. His cold gray eyes seemed to promise a coming outbreak. Lemuel went on.

"Does the Law forbid you to make your experiments on a man?" he asked.

"Of course it does!"

"Why doesn't the Law forbid you to make your experiments on a dog?"

Benjulia's face cleared again. The one penetrable point in his ironclad nature had not been reached yet. That apparently childish question about the dog appeared, not only to have interested him, but to have taken him by surprise. His attention wandered away from his brother. His clear intellect put Lemuel's objection in closer logical form, and asked if there was any answer to it, thus:

The Law which forbids you to dissect a living man, allows you to dissect a living dog. Why?

There was positively no answer to this.

Suppose he said, Because a dog is an animal? Could he, as a physiologist, deny that a man is an animal too?

Suppose he said, Because a dog is the inferior creature in intellect? The obvious answer to this would be, But the lower order of savage, or the lower order of lunatic, compared with the dog, is the inferior creature in intellect; and, in these cases, the dog has, on your own showing, the better right to protection of the two.

Suppose he said, Because a man is a creature with a soul, and a dog is a creature without a soul? This would be simply inviting another unanswerable question: How do you know?

Honestly accepting the dilemma which thus presented itself, the conclusion that followed seemed to be beyond dispute.

If the Law, in the matter of Vivisection, asserts the principle of interference, the Law has barred its right to place arbitrary limits on its own action. If it protects any living creatures, it is bound, in reason and in justice, to protect all.

"Well," said Lemuel, "am I to have an answer?"

"I'm not a lawyer."

With this convenient reply, Benjulia opened Mr. Morphew's letter, and read the forbidden part of it which began on the second page. There he found the very questions with which his brother had puzzled him--followed by the conclusion at which he had himself arrived!

"You interpreted the language of your dog just now," he said quietly to Lemuel; "and I naturally supposed your brain might be softening. Such as it is, I perceive that your memory is in working order. Accept my excuses for feeling your pulse. You have ceased to be an object of interest to me."

He returned to his reading. Lemuel watched him--still confidently waiting for results.

The letter proceeded in these terms:

"Your employer may perhaps be inclined to publish my work, if I can satisfy him that it will address itself to the general reader.

"We all know what are the false pretences, under which English physiologists practice their cruelties. I want to expose those false pretences in the simplest and plainest way, by appealing to my own experience as an ordinary working member of the medical profession.

"Take the pretence of increasing our knowledge of the curative action of poisons, by trying them on animals. The very poisons, the action of which dogs and cats have been needlessly tortured to demonstrate, I have successfully used on my human patients in the practice of a lifetime.

"I should also like to ask what proof there is that the effect of a poison on an animal may be trusted to inform us, with certainty, of the effect of the same poison on a man. To quote two instances only which justify doubt--and to take birds this time, by way of a change--a pigeon will swallow opium enough to kill a man, and will not be in the least affected by it; and parsley, which is an innocent herb in the stomach of a human being, is deadly poison to a parrot.

"I should deal in the same way, with the other pretence, of improving our practice of surgery by experiment on living animals.

"Not long since, I saw the diseased leg of a dog cut off at the hip joint. When the limb was removed, not a single vessel bled. Try the same operation on a man--and twelve or fifteen vessels must be tied as a matter of absolute necessity.

"Again. We are told by a great authority that the baking of dogs in ovens has led to new discoveries in treating fever. I have always supposed that the heat, in fever, is not a cause of disease, but a consequence. However, let that be, and let us still stick to experience. Has this infernal cruelty produced results which help us to cure scarlet fever? Our bedside practice tells us that scarlet fever runs its course as it always did. I can multiply such examples as these by hundreds when I write my book.

"Briefly stated, you now have the method by which I propose to drag the scientific English Savage from his shelter behind the medical interests of humanity, and to show him in his true character,--as plainly as the scientific Foreign Savage shows himself of his own accord. He doesn't shrink

behind false pretences. He doesn't add cant to cruelty. He boldly proclaims the truth:--I do it, because I like it!"

Benjulia rose, and threw the letter on the floor.

"I proclaim the truth," he said; "I do it because I like it. There are some few Englishmen who treat ignorant public opinion with the contempt that it deserves--and I am one of them." He pointed scornfully to the letter. "That wordy old fool is right about the false pretences. Publish his book, and I'll buy a copy of it."

"That's odd," said Lemuel.

"What's odd?"

"Well, Nathan, I'm only a fool--but if you talk in that way of false pretences and public opinion, why do you tell everybody that your horrid cutting and carving is harmless chemistry? And why were you in such a rage when I got into your workshop, and found you out? Answer me that!"

"Let me congratulate you first," said Benjulia. "It isn't every fool who knows that he is a fool. Now you shall have your answer. Before the end of the year, all the world will be welcome to come into my workshop, and see me at the employment of my life. Brother Lemuel, when you stole your way through my unlocked door, you found me travelling on the road to the grandest medical discovery of this century. You stupid ass, do you think I cared about what you could find out? I am in such perpetual terror of being forestalled by my colleagues, that I am not master of myself, even when such eyes as yours look at my work. In a month or two more--perhaps in a week or two--I shall have solved the grand problem. I labour at it all day. I think of it, I dream of it, all night. It will kill me. Strong as I am, it will kill me. What do you say? Am I working myself into my grave, in the medical interests of humanity? That for humanity! I am working for my own satisfaction--for my own pride--for my own unutterable pleasure in beating other men--for the fame that will keep my name living hundreds of years hence. Humanity! I say with my foreign brethren--Knowledge for its own sake, is the one god I worship. Knowledge is its own justification and its own reward. The roaring mob follows us with its cry of Cruelty. We pity their ignorance. Knowledge sanctifies cruelty. The old anatomist stole dead bodies for Knowledge. In that sacred cause, if I could steal a living man without being found out, I would tie him on my table, and grasp my grand discovery in days, instead of months. Where are you going? What? You're afraid to be in the same room with me? A man who can talk as I do, is a man who would

stick at nothing? Is that the light in which you lower order of creatures look at us? Look a little higher--and you will see that a man who talks as I do is a man set above you by Knowledge. Exert yourself, and try to understand me. Have I no virtues, even from your point of view? Am I not a good citizen? Don't I pay my debts? Don't I serve my friends? You miserable creature, you have had my money when you wanted it! Look at that letter on the floor. The man mentioned in it is one of those colleagues whom I distrust. I did my duty by him for all that. I gave him the information he wanted; I introduced him to a friend in a land of strangers. Have I no feeling, as you call it? My last experiments on a monkey horrified me. His cries of suffering, his gestures of entreaty, were like the cries and gestures of a child. I would have given the world to put him out of his misery. But I went on. In the glorious cause I went on. My hands turned cold--my heart ached--I thought of a child I sometimes play with--I suffered--I resisted--I went on. All for Knowledge! all for Knowledge!"

His brother's presence was forgotten. His dark face turned livid; his gigantic frame shuddered; his breath came and went in deep sobbing gasps--it was terrible to see him and hear him.

Lemuel slunk out of the room. The jackal had roused the lion; the mean spirit of mischief in him had not bargained for this. "I begin to believe in the devil," he said to himself when he got to the house door.

As he descended the steps, a carriage appeared in the lane. A footman opened the gate of the enclosure. The carriage approached the house, with a lady in it.

Lemuel ran back to his brother. "Here's a lady coming!" he said. "You're in a nice state to see her! Pull yourself together, Nathan--and, damn it, wash your hands!"

He took Benjulia's arm, and led him upstairs.

When Lemuel returned to the hall, Mrs. Gallilee was ascending the house-steps. He bowed profoundly, in homage to the well-preserved remains of a fine woman. "My brother will be with you directly, ma'am. Pray allow me to give you a chair."

His hat was in his hand. Mrs. Gallilee's knowledge of the world easily set him down at his true value. She got rid of him with her best grace. "Pray don't let me detain you, sir; I will wait with pleasure."

If she had been twenty years younger the hint might have been thrown away. As it was, Lemuel retired.