

# **THE VIVISECTION QUESTION**

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The vivisection question by Albert Leffingwell

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**ALBERT LEFFINGWELL**

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VIVISECTION QUESTION

BY  
ALBERT LEFFINGWELL, M.D.



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## PREFACE.

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The present work consists mainly of reprints of essays and criticisms pertaining to a subject of perennial controversy. A few years ago it occurred to me that my personal acquaintance with vivisection, both in this country and in Europe, justified an effort to reconcile certain opposing views. The opening essay in this volume embodied that attempt, and everything written since has been based upon the same endeavor.

I wish that the purport of this book were less certain to be misstated or misjudged, and principally by critics who have no excuse for such misjudgment. Of those who glance at the title, many will doubtless conclude without further examination, that it is written from the standpoint of antivivisection or of antipathy to all scientific investigation upon living creatures. On the contrary, I think a distinct line may be drawn, separating what may be permitted from that which ought to be condemned. The entire abolition of animal experimentation, I cannot conceive as possible of present realization, or until an age dawns when all sacrifice of animal life for food or raiment shall be equally abhorrent to civilization. When a writer asserts—as in an article before me,—that “vivisection is the most atrocious of crimes,” what meaning, I wonder, does he attach to his words? If all scientific experiments upon living animals are understood, how it is possible to regard as “an atrocious crime,” the hypnotization of a lizard or a fowl, or

the demonstration under a microscope of the circulation of blood in the webbed foot of a living frog? Such writers simply confound the abuses of the practice with the practice as a whole.

But these abuses are beyond question. No words can exaggerate either their cruelty or their malign influence. What I have advocated therefore in this volume *is the prevention of abuse by legal regulation*. This position may be stated as follows:

I. By "Vivisection" is meant experimentation of any kind, painful or painless, made upon a living creature for an alleged scientific purpose.

II. Within certain limitations and to a certain extent, the utility of animal experimentation makes it justifiable and right.

III. The abuses to which the practice is liable are so great, that vivisection should be regulated by law, and placed under the control and supervision of the State.

In order to prove need of the legal regulation here advocated, it has been necessary to refer to cruelties and abuses, incident to the practice as now carried on. The revelation of these has induced criticism; but I cannot see how otherwise, there could be adduced any proof of necessity for legal control.

In one respect, the task made necessary by controversy on this subject has been exceedingly distasteful. It is by no means a pleasant literary employment to point out the inaccuracies or to demonstrate the blunders made by men of national repute in their opposition to the regulation of experimentation. But no fact is more clearly apparent than that too eager laudation of vivisection without control has evoked a carelessness of statement.

or a disregard for accuracy, utterly opposed to the interests of scientific truth. And it is truth, and truth only that we ask for, as concerns vivisection or anything else. "Truth," cried Carlyle, "though the Heavens crush me for following her; no Falsehood, though a whole celestial Lubberland were the price of apostacy!"

The references to various scientific authorities have been made with extreme care and are believed to be absolutely correct. In reprinting several of these articles the opportunity for revision has been freely used.

It only remains to thank the conductors of various periodicals for permission to use articles which wholly or in part first appeared in their pages.

*A. L.*

Brooklyn, 1901.





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