

# **PLAIN FACTS ON VACCINATION**

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Plain facts on vaccination by Geo. Oliver

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**GEO. OLIVER**

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PLAIN FACTS

VACCINATION:

BY

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"The keenest of all arguments for or against the practice of Vaccination will be those which are engraven with the point of the lancet."

JENNER.

The Author proposes to issue shortly a brief summary (suitable for general distribution,) of the principal facts contained in this publication, in the hope it may be useful to Public Vaccinators and others desirous of removing fallacious objections to Vaccination.

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## P R E F A C E.

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**T**HE following digest of facts may give the public a better notion than it possesses, of what Vaccination is—of what it has done—and of what it can yet do—as a means of saving human life, and lessening human suffering. It is more than probable, the prejudice with which a portion of the public regard the popular medical question—Vaccination—is born rather of ignorance of the real facts of the case, than of a correct knowledge of the subject. Hence, it is a wiser thing to diffuse knowledge freely among the people, so that they may be informed of the grounds on which compulsory legislation on Vaccination is based, than simply to insist on coercion by law, as *the means* by which the benefits of Vaccination are to be extended. The evidence in support of compulsory Vaccination is unquestionably great—indeed so great—that an authority on the subject has declared “that he who disputes it is

equally unreasonable as he who opposes in like manner any proposition in Euclid.' (*Alison.*) Nevertheless, to compel persons ignorant of such conclusive evidence to obey the law, in the face of the prejudices which they have acquired from fallacious reasoning on what they conceive to be facts, must indeed be worse than useless. How much better is it to appeal to the reason, to supply it with convincing facts bearing on all sides of the subject, than to impose on the transgressors of the law penalties or imprisonment. When these are inflicted, the antipathies (erroneous though they be) against the practice of Vaccination are apt to be thereby incited—and to gain on the public. The would-be-martyrs to the law find no lack of sympathisers,—and thus a strong reaction against the law is encouraged.

Those persons who object to compulsory Vaccination, and exert their influence to move others to oppose it—succeed the best when they dwell almost exclusively on whatever excites the imagination and feelings, so that these may be made to sway the judgment against it. But it is the duty of those who regard Vaccination as a discovery which has conferred—and is still capable of conferring incalculable benefit on the human race, to adopt a different course; they should state in the most distinct manner the *facts* and *reasons* which have led them to decide in favour of Vaccination. The inferences drawn being clearly circumscribed by the facts, the advocates of Vaccination should on this ground alone—on the ground of fact and inference that cannot be dis-

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puted—unfold the whole case to the public. In this way, not only the views of opposers of Vaccination may be corrected, but the unsettled opinion of those somewhat doubtful of the benefits of this sanitary measure may be decided.

Those acts of the legislature which deal with health and so-called "personal liberty" should be *supplemented* by the efforts of those who are fully acquainted with the facts and correct inferences from them which have guided the legislature. *Then*—if the law is transgressed, it cannot be wrong to compel obedience. *During epidemics of Small-pox* it is clearly the *duty* of the Guardians of the Public Health, to enforce Vaccination. The State should protect the lives of its subjects when—in times of unusual danger—jeopardised by prejudice or ignorance.

From their scientific education, and Vaccination being part of their daily thought and work, the members of the medical profession ought to constitute the best qualified class to judge correctly of all sides of the question, and to inform the community. They are protectors of health : and inasmuch as life is imperilled by imperfect knowledge and prejudices concerning Vaccination, it is their duty to deal with the arguments urged against this sanitary measure, as much as to prevent disease by any other means. Such a course ought not to be regarded (as it is to be feared it too often is) as undignified.

It is surely a philanthropic work of *any* person convinced of the benefits of Vaccination, to spread a