

# THE ARCHIVE COLLECTION

AN ARTICLE FROM  
THE SHAFTESBURY GAZETTE, 1869

I FOUND A COPY OF THIS NEWSPAPER  
AMONGST A COLLECTION OF PAPERWORK  
BELONGING TO MY GRANDMOTHER,  
BACK IN THE EARLY 1990s.

AN INTERESTING FIND  
& AN INTERESTING READ.

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• 2017 •

## VACCINATION.

Acting on the well-known maxim, *Salus populi suprema lex*, that the health or the welfare of the people is the highest aim of law—Parliament many years ago made vaccination compulsory. Never, we believe, was a more salutary law passed. Vaccination was not the *crochet* of an hour; it had received the sanction of men of science and the seal of success from experiments on a large scale before it was enforced; and it was then felt to be so important a preventive of the spread of small-pox that its adoption could not be safely left to the mere whim of ignorant and prejudiced people in opposition to known facts. This compulsory law has, on the whole, worked well for society, and the decrease of small-pox, which before the preventive was enforced committed frightful ravages, stands a convincing proof of the soundness of this compulsory legislation. But circumstances have recently arisen which place the matter in a new light. Cases have occurred in which diseases have been clearly traceable to vaccination; other cases have occurred in which vaccination is supposed to have led to disorders; and an opposition to vaccination has sprung up which is daily increasing in force. Lord Castlereigh spoke of “an ignorant impatience of taxation.” That there is an ignorant impatience of vaccination may be partly true, but it is also partly untrue. The opposition does not all come from ignorant and uneducated parents, but well-informed persons in all ranks of life are now to be found among the opponents of vaccination, who assert that whether it does or does not prevent the small-pox, it certainly does in many cases cause other diseases. Add to this that mothers have been imprisoned and are still imprisoned for refusing to obey the law, and that the anti-vaccination party is undoubtedly increasing, and we think these facts in themselves are sufficient to demand legislative inquiry. A compulsory law ought

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to be a perfect law, so far as human nature can secure perfection, perfect in its principle, its details, and its operation. But it is, we think, too clearly proved that this law, however good it may be in itself, is frequently badly administered and made subject to conditions which the Act never contemplated. Vaccination under proper conditions is undoubtedly a boon to society; but what if those conditions are not fulfilled? This is the real question at issue. It is not a question of vaccination or not, but of wholesome vaccination and pernicious *inoculation*; which vaccination has become in too many instances. The whole subject must come before Parliament next session, for by that time the opposition to the present law will have acquired serious proportions; but in the mean time the medical profession might well devote their unprejudiced attention to the matter, so that defects of administration may be discovered preparatory to the necessary amendment of a salutary but partially perverted Act of Parliament.

*As a medicinal and Dietsary Intelligence*

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Weekly chronicle and general advertiser for  
Shaftesbury, Gillingham, Knoyle, Hindon....etc

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1869