

XI.

Account of a Deception with respect to Vaccine Inoculation. By Dr John Forrest, Physician, Stirling. Communicated to Dr Duncan senior.

SEVERAL unlucky cases having happened in our neighbourhood, of children, supposed to have been inoculated for, and to have really had, the cow-pox, who afterwards suffered severely from the smallpox; (of which one, I believe, twice inoculated with matter, deemed to be vaccine, and, for security's sake, soon after with variolous matter, died, about the eruption of that distemper): I beg leave to state a case, that occurred to me lately; of which you may make what use you think proper.

On the 27th of May, I inoculated a fine healthy boy, about two and a half years old,
with

with what I thought cow-pox matter, taken on the evening of the seventh day. The part inflamed sooner than usual, and continued gradually to increase till the 6th, when it began sensibly to diminish; and the inoculated part could hardly be distinguished on the 9th day.

I concluded then, that though the child's arm, from which I took the matter, had all the evidences of the cow-pox, (the inflammation having continued to increase till the 10th day, from which it gradually decayed), yet it was not in reality cow-pox matter, with which I had inoculated. The arm being itchy, the child had rubbed it so much, that the cuticle of the inoculated part was entirely abraded; which had the appearance of a raw, watery sore, pretty much inflamed.

In about fourteen days, therefore, I inoculated the boy again, with recent vaccine matter. All went on well, the arm gradually inflaming till the 10th or 11th day; after which, the inflammation abated, leaving that peculiarly dark-coloured crust, so strikingly conspicuous in perhaps most cases of genuine cow-pox.

Was

Was it purulent matter, or simple uncontaminated serum, with which I had inoculated, and failed?

That the child, from whom I took the matter, had really the vaccine disease, is perhaps proved, by its having gone through the usual stages of that disease in the usual way, and by my having since inserted, with much ease, in six or seven different places, genuine recent cow-pox matter without effect; matter which succeeded in producing the disease upon others.

I could have wished to have also tried the smallpox, but *that* the parents would not submit to; which I regret, as depriving the cow-pox of an occasion of evincing its value; and the cow-pox (one of the greatest blessings, in this eventful age, conferred upon mankind) ought to have fair play, by acknowledging, with equal freedom, our successes, our failings, and our blunders.