

*To the Editors of the Medical and Physical Journal.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE efficacy of Inoculation of the Matter of Cow-pox, in rendering the human body unsusceptible of Small-pox, appears now to be fully and completely established; at least, *as far as we can conclude from the experiments hitherto made, and the time that has elapsed since their institution.*

Every generous mind will congratulate himself on a discovery that promises so much benefit to mankind, and will experience the highest pleasure from the successful labours of those who have so ardently exerted themselves in the cause of humanity and science.

I feel myself deeply interested in the success of this Inoculation; and it is with reluctance I here take the liberty of submitting a Case, that seems to militate against the permanent preventive influence of the Variolæ Vaccinæ.

This is the grand desideratum, the determination of which can be effected only by length of time. Three weeks since, I was requested to visit Mrs. Dredge, aged 55 years, living in the neighbourhood of Castle-Cary, whom I found labouring under Small-pox of the distinct sort, which she caught from a servant-boy living in her house. She informed me, that she did not expect this disease, since she had taken, twenty-eight years before, the Cow-pox from milking cows affected with the same. She observed her disease was very severe, having had numerous pustules on the hands and fingers; lost two nails; had a considerable tumour in the axilla, and great pyrexia. Sixteen years ago, she was much exposed to Small-pox in her own family, having children ill of it, both naturally and from inoculation, and whom she constantly attended, but escaped infection. She says, that she has not been subsequently exposed to it till the time abovementioned. Her sister was affected with Cow-pox at the same time, and from the same cows; had a large tumour in the axilla, several pustules, and much pyrexia. Twenty years afterwards this woman attended her own children in the natural Small-pox, (one of whom died) but without receiving any infection. The disease among the cows extended through the whole dairy, consisting of about twenty cows; and the milk was so much affected, as to be rendered unfit for use for some time.

The above History may be considered as an addition and illustration of the two Cases communicated by Dr. Sims, in the first and second volumes of the Medical and Physical Journal.



Journal. It will probably be said, that, from the large and decisive experience of the infallibility of the Cow-pox virus in preventing Small-pox, little credit or confidence can or ought to be given to the few and almost solitary opposing instances now adduced, and especially as some dubiety remains of the genuine nature of the disease. I admit the propriety and force of this reasoning, but cannot at the same time, withhold this information from the public eye. I am, &c.

JAMES WOODFORDE, M. D.

*Castle-Cary, Dec. 5, 1800.*

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GENTLEMEN,

CONVINCED that no preliminary Dissertation is necessary to invite your attention, or that of the whole medical world, to any circumstance which will tend to promote the very general and humane attempts to introduce the Cow-pox: I shall presume to make an observation or two, which I venture to believe will tend in some degree to promote the grand, benevolent design. In the practice of medicine, generally considered, it is impossible that practitioners can ever devote too much attention to all the minor parts of the subject which calls for their consideration; a want of this care has too frequently defeated the best laid plans, and the almost apparent certainty of success: This observation applies more particularly to the attempts at introducing a new disease; every little circumstance attached to it is of the highest importance, and every endeavour must be used to combat general as well as local prejudices, to render its good effects as manifest as possible. The common practice of conveying the variolous matter from one town or village to another, when Inoculation for the Small-pox became pretty general, was by means of threads imbued with the matter, enclosed in paper; a pretty free incision was made in each arm to receive the thread, in order that infection might be certain: But when it was found that Small-pox matter was of a very virulent nature, and that portions of it, when detached in this way from the body of a sufferer, retained their poisonous nature for a considerable time, Operators contented themselves with barely moistening the point of a lancet or needle with it, for use on some distant day; a method which but rarely failed, where every other circumstance was favorable  
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