

Hints to parents on the comparative advantages of small-pox and cow-pox inoculation / by William Blair.

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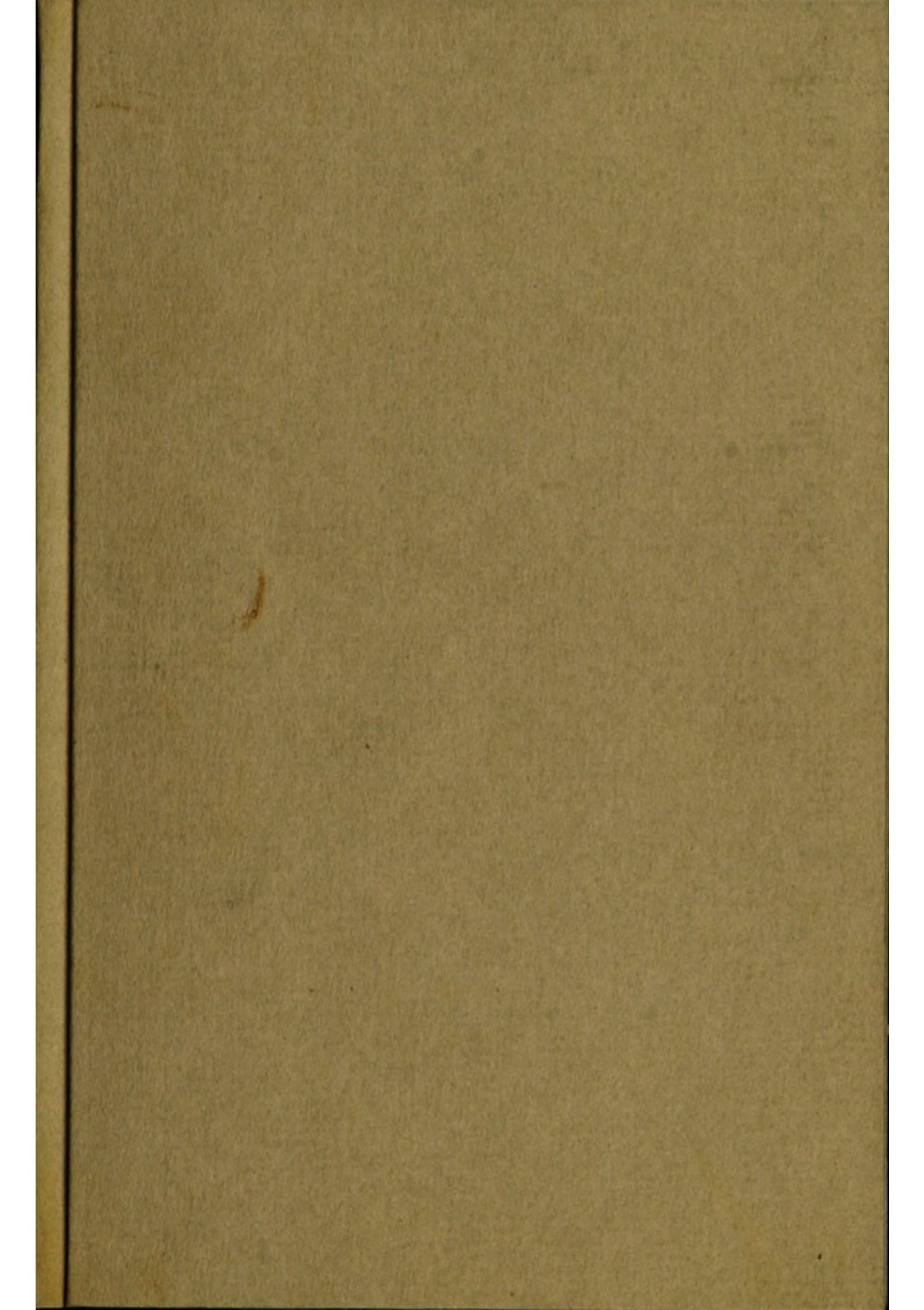
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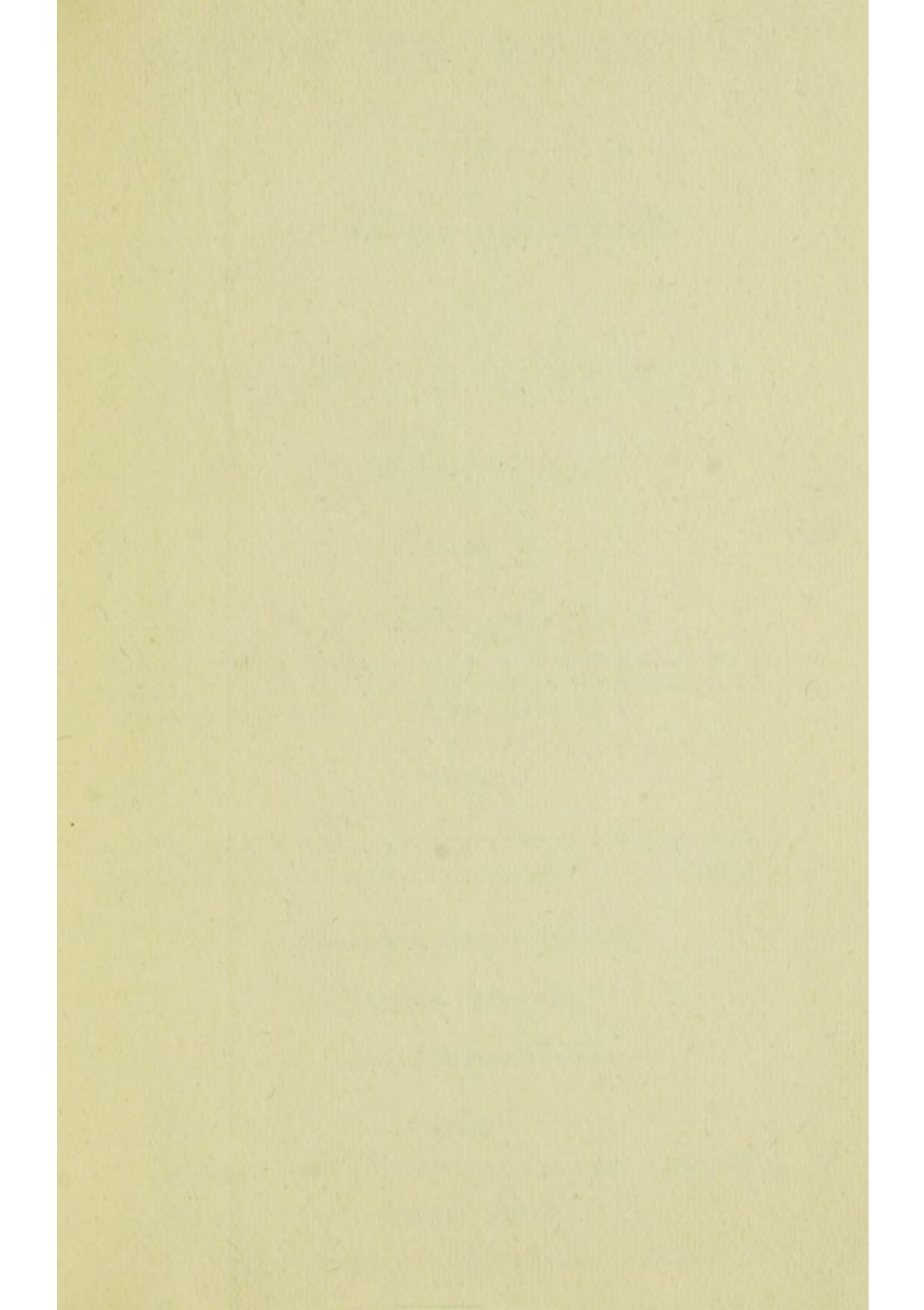


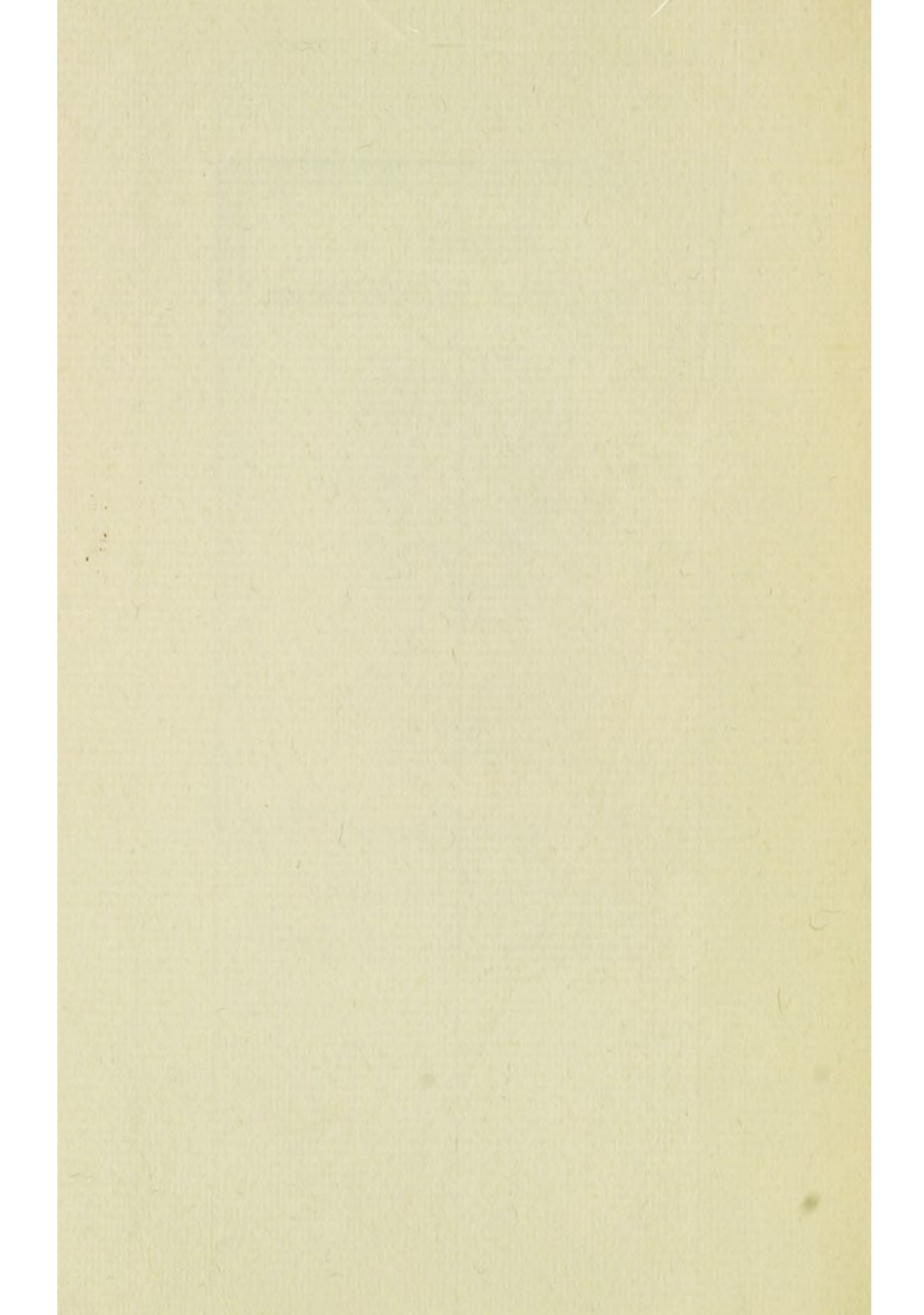
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J.W.
HINTS TO PARENTS,

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ON THE

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

OF

SMALL-POX AND COW-POX

INOCULATION.



BY WILLIAM BLAIR, M. A.

Surgeon of the Lock Hospital and Asylum, the Bloomsbury Dispensary, and New Rupture Society; Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, and of the Medical Societies of London, Paris, Brussels, Aberdeen, &c. &c. &c.

*"Thou shalt not be afraid for the Pestilence that walketh in Darkness,
nor for the Destruction that wasteth at Noonday."* Psalm 91.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. MURRAY, 32, FLEET STREET.

APRIL, 1806.

Price Two-pence, or Eighteen-pence a Dozen.

ADVERTISEMENT.

April, 1806.

Great Russel Street, Bloomsbury.

A GREAT BOOK is a great incumbrance, and therefore is very ill adapted for *popular use*. The subject of these few pages, being of universal concern, an endeavour has been here made to compress some weighty remarks in as narrow a compass as possible ; for the benefit of persons who have neither money to purchase, nor inclination to read, more ample and complete treatises.—These HINTS are copied from the latter part of a pamphlet, (*price half a crown*), bearing the following title : THE VACCINE CONTEST : or, “ Mild Humanity, Reason, Religion, and Truth, against fierce, unfeeling Ferocity, overbearing Insolence, mortified Pride, false Faith, and Desperation ;” being an exact Outline of the Arguments and interesting Facts, adduced by the principal Combatants on both Sides, respecting Cow-pox Inoculation ; including a late official Report on this Subject, by the Medical Council of the Royal Jennerian Society. Chiefly designed for the Use of Clergymen, Heads of Families, Guardians, Overseers of the Poor, and other unprofessional Readers who may be concerned for the Welfare of Mankind. By WILLIAM BLAIR, M. A. Surgeon of the Lock Hospital and Asylum, &c. &c. &c.



Little Queen Street.

HINTS TO PARENTS,

&c. &c.

YOU who are blessed with the gift of children, are no less bound by the Christian religion, than prompted by parental affection, to preserve your offspring from every threatening evil; and particularly from those destructive pestilential diseases which may be caught, either by infectious air, or the breath of contaminated persons.

If a plague or a putrid fever raged in your neighbour's family, you would deem it a crime to expose your children to its contagious influence; and, if you knew any mode of securing your babes from infection, through life, how anxious would you be to use such means as early as possible! Then let me ask, if you ever considered the *Small-pox as a dreadful plague*, much more dangerous than a common putrid fever? Do you not know, that the small-pox kills every year about forty thousand inhabitants of this kingdom, little as it is in comparison of many empires? Did you never learn that, in London alone, nearly three thousand individuals are annually cut off by this single disease? Surely it is impossible not to have heard, that the natural small-pox destroys a sixth part of those who catch it; and that considerably more than half the population of this Island have the disease, during one period or another of their lives! Those who recover from it, are too commonly disfigured by visible marks; some have their constitutions ruined, or their limbs completely disabled; while others suffer the loss of hearing or sight, and are ever afterwards afflicted with the scrofula, or consumption, &c. &c. so as to drag on a miserable and burthensome existence!

Should you think to prevent all those distressing consequences by inoculating your children for the small-pox; it is to be remembered that the same kinds of disorders may even then follow the inoculation, although the danger is thereby

much lessened. However, there is a deplorable consequence to which, perhaps, you may not advert, though commonly produced by inoculation: Your neighbours will thus be exposed to a most direful distemper, which did not before exist among them; the infant you inoculate may happen to escape with its life, but the children of others may catch the small-pox from your babe, and perish! Let me first notice the danger of your own child's situation; since one in two hundred generally, and often a still greater proportion, will die of the small-pox, when produced by inoculation: and the circumstance of your having voluntarily exposed your child to a fatal disease, would be always a bitter subject of reflection to your tender feelings. At best, recollect how much nursing, and medicine, and precaution are required, to support an infant under such a very afflicting and loathsome complaint as the inoculated small-pox; and after all, you know there is some probability of your child dying, as it were by your own hands! But, likewise, give me leave to impress your mind with the hazard you subject your fellow-creatures to, by bringing an infectious disease among them. The doing this without deliberation, is wantonly to expose your neighbour's life to a certain and immediate danger; in order to escape an absent evil, which might, possibly, have been kept at a distance as long as your child lived!

Suppose, for a moment, that you could prevent the small-pox from infecting your child in the natural way *by paring its nails*, as certainly as you could by inoculating it for the small-pox; would you not be deemed insane, to refuse performing so slight an operation? Most undoubtedly you would. And, if I could tell you of another little operation, which only raises a small blister on the arm, and would not occasion any illness in your child, but is quite as certain as the inoculated small-pox of preventing all future infection; I am sure you

could not be so cruel to your infant, as to neglect this simple mode of prevention. Such refusal on your part, would arise either from ignorance or perverseness; and, after what I next will tell you, it shall not be possible to plead ignorance.

The *Cow*, from which your children and yourselves receive nourishment, is sometimes troubled with an eruption upon her nipples, called the COW-POX; and if, either through accident or design, any one gets this disorder by imbibing a little of the matter discharged from the eruption upon the cow, the small-pox can hardly ever be communicated to that person so long as he lives! This fact has been proved by thousands and millions of trials: there is the same security, if a particle of this matter be taken from one human being so affected, and then inoculated by a scratch upon another person, without coming directly from the teat of the cow; which indeed is the method now practised almost all over the world, according to the directions of DR. JENNER, who has been rewarded with ten thousand pounds, by the British Parliament, for so invaluable a discovery.

The COW-POX OR VACCINE INOCULATION, as this new practice is named, causes no sickness or fever, of any consequence: it is never fatal, or even dangerous; it produces no other bad disorders; it requires no preparatory medicines; it may be performed upon old and young, or even on pregnant women, at all seasons of the year, with perfect safety; and can only be given by inoculation, so that no one can possibly catch it by breathing in the same room, or sleeping in the same bed, with a vaccinated person: and therefore, it is not to be regarded in the light of a serious disease, but as an inestimable blessing! The only appearance it makes, is that of a pock or vesicle on the inoculated part, surrounded by a moderate degree of inflammation; which goes off gradually in a few days, and leaves first a little brown scab, and then a small

roundish scar like the inoculated small-pox. By this easy and harmless mode, then, it is now in your own power to prevent your children from catching that loathsome disorder, which kills nearly a tenth part of mankind, without at the same time hazarding the safety of your neighbours or friends !

It must be admitted that the new inoculation has met with some opposition ; and objections have been urged, which it would be uncandid to pass over in silence. Some of these objections, and certainly the most weighty, relate to matter of fact and actual observation ; others have a more vague and doubtful ground.—It is unquestioned, that some cases have occurred, in which a *careless* inoculation of cow-pox has failed to produce the promised security : other cases have been met with, in which the symptoms of the complaint induced by inoculation are stated to have been so severe, and even fatal, as to perplex those who had been accustomed to view in the new practice nothing but an uniformly mild, safe, and effectual preventive of a most formidable contagion. In answer to those objections, it might be urged, that were ALL the alleged instances of ill success acknowledged to be true in their fullest extent, and the mildness of cow-pox allowed to be only proportional ; still this proportion, compared with the most favourable inoculation of small-pox, would give the new practice a decided claim to the preference of individuals, whilst its uncontagious nature (which is not disputed) would equally recommend it to public approbation.

But it would be highly unjust to the merits of cow-pox inoculation, to make this allowance : for, the action of cow-pox cannot prevent the constitution from being at the same time attacked by infantile and other prevalent diseases ; so that the few cases of fatal termination imputed to this source, may fairly be ascribed to the concurrent operation of some mortal disorder, wholly unconnected with the new inoculation.

It is the more candid to admit of this explanation, since by far the greater number of the supposed failures have been actually traced to some evident misrepresentation of facts; or have been most satisfactorily accounted for, from the want of experience to ascertain the characteristic marks of the *vaccine pustule*.

Two cases of death by the cow-pox having been published in the London bills of mortality, a committee of the Royal Jennerian Society was appointed to investigate their particulars. The committee reported, on the most authentic and satisfactory documents, that there was not the slightest foundation for attributing these instances of fatality either immediately or remotely to the cow-pox. One of the children died of a scarlet fever, twelve months after it had passed through the vaccine disease; the other, of convulsions from teething, fourteen weeks afterwards: in both, the inoculation was attended by none but the most favourable circumstances. These palpable errors arose with the *ignorant Searchers*; who, without any proper knowledge of the subject, have also reported a single death to have happened from the Cow-pox, during each of the years 1804 and 1805.

To conduct with safety and propriety this inoculation, simple as it is, an accurate knowledge of its genuine appearances, and of the spurious varieties which now and then exist, is indispensably necessary. Its simplicity has too often occasioned a degree of negligence in attending to its real character. Some precautions, not at first noticed, are now found to be requisite: for, as the success of all medical practice has experience for its basis, it would have been wonderful indeed, and next to miraculous, if every circumstance relating to the vaccine inoculation had been at once suggested to the minds of its earliest promoters, by intuitive discernment.

Certain opponents of the new practice have spread an alarm

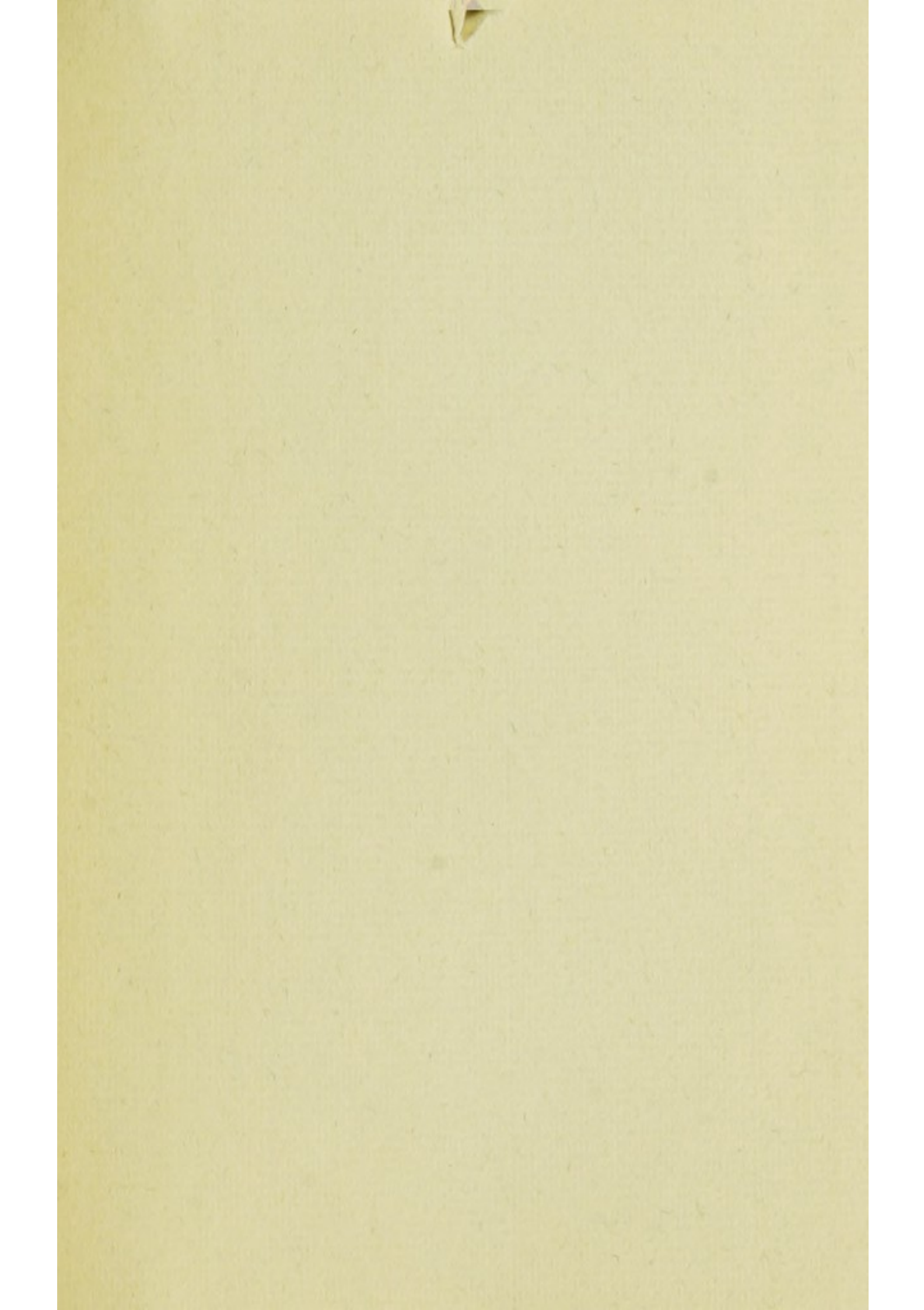
of some transformation, some mysterious change in the very nature and propensities of the human race, to be apprehended from the introduction of a disease originating in a brute animal! To such an absurd idea as this, which has never been fairly brought forward, and indeed seems almost entirely abandoned, I need only say, in reply; that it is unsupported by a single fact, or probable analogy, and is actually destroyed by the experience of time immemorial, in those counties where the cow-pox was first discovered. Since, then, the infection derived immediately from the Cow is found completely free from these objections; and since successive inoculations from one human subject to another have hitherto produced no other effect than to mitigate all the symptoms that attend the original disease; how can it be thought rash or presumptuous, to root out from amongst us a pestilential and destructive malady by the substitution of a mild and benign disorder, taken from an animal entirely devoted to the service of mankind?

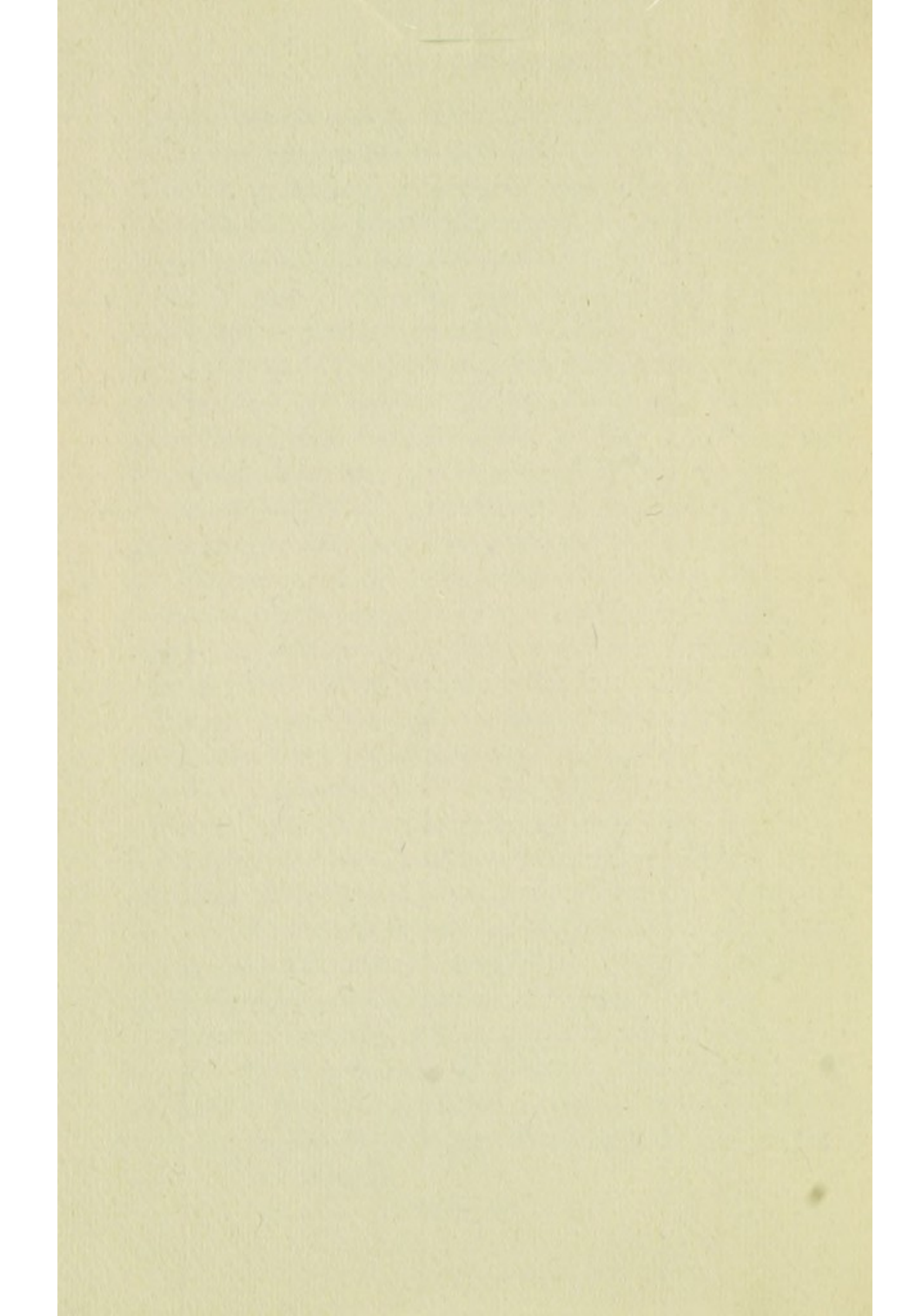
But, to inspire you with still greater confidence in the new inoculation, allow me to add, that a TESTIMONIAL of its perfect safety, mildness, and security, has been signed by ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, residing in London: besides which, a publication has been lately circulated by the ROYAL JENNERIAN SOCIETY (an institution supported by the first Princes and Nobility of this Kingdom), in answer to the various objections and falsehoods which are unhappily propagated against the Cow-pox.

After these remarks, I hope you will conscientiously use so providential a method of rescuing your offspring, and neighbours, from the small-pox contagion; which, for many centuries, has dreadfully alarmed and afflicted the whole human race.



THE END.





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Author Blair:
Hints to parents ..
1806.

Call no.

INOCULATION
VACCINATION

