

AN AMBASSADOR'S WIFE WHO VANQUISHED SMALLPOX.

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Many of us are familiar with that picturesque figure of the eighteenth century, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. The many published editions of her now famous "Letters" give an accurate description of Life in the East during her time, and her sparkling style makes most entertaining reading.

Lady Mary, though by no means a medical, was one of the pioneers of preventive medicine, when she was in Turkey, where her husband held the post of British Ambassador, she witnessed the practice of inoculation or ingrafting, as it was called, against smallpox. According to her description the practice was carried out by a certain set of old women as a means of earning a living.

A party of friends and relatives was arranged and one of these old women would arrive bringing with her a nutshell of what is described as "matter from the best sort of smallpox." Then each member of the merry party would be inoculated by the old woman with a needle she carried, the matter being scratched into four or five veins. Lady Mary was undoubtedly very much impressed with the success of the practice, for it must be remembered that the ravages of smallpox in England at that time were very terrible, it is on record that in the year 1721 in London alone there were 2,375 deaths from the disease, and this figure was quite apart from the many people who recovered from an attack, but suffered disfigurement for life. It is not therefore to be wondered at that such an opportunist as Lady Mary should have been greatly impressed by the practice of inoculation and she had her little son to whom she was much attached so protected.

This inoculation was carried out at Pera, in March, 1717, and it is interesting to note that this little boy later in life proved to be something of a rolling stone, at an early age he ran away from home on several occasions, and on the last of these adventures was identified by the inoculation scars on his arm.

On the recall of her husband to England in 1718, Lady Mary with characteristic vigour immediately set about securing the establishment of inoculation in England. Despite the active support of many influential personages, she met with spirited opposition both from the Clergy and certain sections of the Medical profession. Lady Mary was, however, a woman of great determination and resource, forming a plan she obtained permission to experiment on seven condemned criminals in Newgate Jail. These unfortunate men were offered a free pardon if they would submit to the experiment, and to this they all agreed and exchanged certain death at the executioner's hands for the somewhat uncertain fate after inoculation.

August the 9th, 1721, was the day appointed for the great experiment and the inoculations were duly carried out; in due course all of the men developed a mild form of the disease, from which they recovered. The successful outcome of this public experiment made a profound impression and as a result many people were inoculated, including the two children of Caroline Princess of Wales.

There can be no doubt that Lady Mary's campaign was directly responsible for a marked fall in the deaths from smallpox in England about that time, but inoculation continued to have many opponents. Objections to the practice there certainly were, for though in general its use seems to have been attended with very little risk, from time to time severe illness and even death did occur. Also a person inoculated was for the time being a possible source of infection to others and it was thought that the disease was so spread. However, despite the activities

of its opponents, inoculation continued to be practised until Jenner discovered vaccination, in which instead of using matter from a case of smallpox, a milder type of the disease called cowpox was employed. With the establishment of Jenner's work, the need for direct inoculation passed, and in 1840 the English Parliament passed an Act forbidding its use in this country.

A GREAT LADY.

The Editor of *The Quarterly Bulletin* of the Frontier Nursing Service expresses a world-wide regret in the following reference to the death of the great Lady Dufferin.

"One death in Great Britain in the autumn has touched the Frontier Nursing Service profoundly, and that is the death of the Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, at the advanced age of 93. It has been the rare privilege of this editor to know her for years and to have a close friendship with her daughter, Lady Hermione Blackwood. To us she was more than a public character because we had fallen under the influence of one of the most charming and fascinating characters of the time. To us Lady Dufferin will always represent the great lady, for her private life was as kind and courteous as her public life was devoted to human welfare. In a world filled with fine ladies, the presence of a great lady holds the threads of social life together, and we mean social in its broadest sense.

"As the wife, for nearly forty years, of one of the most brilliant statesmen of his time, Lady Dufferin will be remembered not only as his companion but for the things that she did in her own name: the medical aid she arranged for the women of India, her work with lepers, her immense interest in nursing. This interest was kept alive by her three daughters, and one of them as Lady Plunkett, wife of the Governor-General of New Zealand, founded the first extensive remotely rural nursing service on this planet. Another one of her daughters, Lady Hermione Blackwood, took the arduous training as a nurse and as a midwife, and it was when we were both nursing in France that we met.

"Lady Dufferin outlived her husband, all of her sons, her generation. In closing this brief sketch of a noble life, we quote from the poem written by Rudyard Kipling, 'The Song of the Women,' commemorating Lady Dufferin and her work in India.

"If she have sent her servants in our pain,
If she have fought with death and dulled his sword;
If she have given back our sick again,
And to the breast the weakling lips restored,
Is it a little thing that she has wrought?
Then Life and Death and Motherhood be nought."

ANIMAL WAR VETERANS TO DIE IN PEACE.

Four veterans who served England well during the War, three old horses and a one-eyed mule, have come home at last to end their days in peace, the only ones of a batch of 50 bought in Belgium by Our Dumb Friends' League fit to travel. The remainder were humanely destroyed. These brave fellow-creatures did good service in the War and were left behind to help Britain's allies in the work of reconstruction.

Mr. Keith Robinson, the Secretary of the League, who brought the animals home, said that the work of rescuing other War horses in Belgium and France would go on where there were hundreds still at work. Money should be forthcoming to put an end to the stigma of horses which served in the Allied cause during the War having to live and work in misery in their old age. Please send a few pennies to the Dumb Friends' League.

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