

Suttons, Dimsdale, and others would seem to have variolated thousands of individuals. Dimsdale indeed was invited over to Russia to inoculate the Empress, the great Catherine, and he did this with such success that he was made a baron of the Russian Empire, appointed Councillor of State, physician to her Imperial Majesty, and, in addition to an annuity of £500, was presented with the not inconsiderable douceur of £10,000—truly an imperial gift. But while this process of variolation spread, small-pox at the same time became increasingly frequent. The process, indeed, was essentially dangerous; while it is true that those who were variolated very rarely died, not unfrequently the same could not be said concerning their friends and neighbours, for those who were variolated suffered from the true disease, and were as much liable to be carriers of infection as were the victims of pox by natural means—indeed more so, because the mildness of the induced disease led to a lack of care. Thus it was that towards the end of the eighteenth century small-pox, instead of being stamped out, was more prevalent than ever. It would not seem to be an exaggeration to say that almost every second man was pock-marked.

While this was the case, it had also been recognised among the farming classes, not in Great Britain alone, but elsewhere—sporadically—that milkmaids were specially exempt from the disease; and it was further noted that there was a relationship between this exemption and the fact that these milkmaids had at one time or another been affected with cow-pox, a disease of a vesiculo-pustular nature, appearing in an epizootic form, and showing itself more especially upon the teats of milch cattle. And it is evident that even before Jenner's great experiment there had been occasional inoculations with cow-pox, so as to protect against small-pox. The best authenticated of these cases was that of Benjamin Jesty, a Dorsetshire farmer, who in 1774 inoculated his wife and two sons with virus taken on the spot from the cows of Farmer Eford, of Chittenhall, whither Mr. Jesty carried his family for that purpose; and in 1791 a schoolmaster in Holstein, Peter Plett by name, did similarly. Holstein then as now was a great dairy district, and there, as in the south and west of England, the tradition existed that milkmaids who had been infected with cow-pox were unaffected by small-pox. Thus, having seen a physician practise variolation, Schoolmaster Plett came to the conclusion that he would employ cow-pox lymph, and in the year above mentioned, there being an epizootic of cow-pox in the neighbourhood, he inoculated three children with the virus from a cow. His method was rather crude, he used a pocket-knife and made cuts upon the back of the