

prevalence of smallpox. At first it was supposed that the immunity conferred by the vaccination lasted throughout life, and so when the disease began to claim victims among those who had been vaccinated, faith was lost in the practice. Then came the knowledge that re-vaccination is necessary to secure permanent immunity, and from time to time great improvements have been effected in the methods of preparing lymph and in the technique of the operation, until we now have a means by which one may with complete safety acquire all but absolute protection against smallpox. The disease, in reality, is now probably easier to deal with effectively than any other of the infectious diseases which trouble us. Its presence to-day in our midst is as unpardonable as it is unnecessary, and shows laxness in administration of our health regulations. An unfortunate prejudice against vaccination, which perhaps had some justification in the days when vaccine was not as carefully prepared as it is at present, prevails in some quarters, and is responsible for the fact that a considerable portion of the population is not protected against smallpox, except for the partial protection handed down by vaccinated parents, which may explain the mildness of the disease as we now see it. One argument offered against the practice is that it is but a scheme on the part of the doctors to extort money from the unwary. While the reasonableness of this might be questioned, I will let it pass with the remark that before the days of vaccination, Lady Mary Wortley Montague, wife of the British Ambassador at Constantinople, wrote to friends in England a description of the inoculation of smallpox then being practiced in some countries, which produced a comparatively mild form of the disease and conferred subsequent immunity. A quotation from one of her letters indicates that she had another idea than that doctors would favour inoculation because it would add to their income. She said—"I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this useful invention into fashion in England, and I should not fail to write to some of our doctors very particularly about it, if I knew any of them that I thought had virtue enough to destroy such a considerable branch of their revenue for the good of mankind. But that distemper is too beneficial to them, not to expose