

MASTER'S ESSAY.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGUE: HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO HER TIMES.

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LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU: HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO HER TIMES.

Few people in the history of English literature can boast such contradictory reputations as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. To some of her contemporaries, she was merely a woman of fashion, and a lover of gossip, who spent her many leisure hours, either in making third rate poetry, or in writing loosely constructed letters. To others, she was a blue-stocking and a patroness of literature, remembered as the lady, whom Young consulted about his tragedy, "The Brothers", and to whom Fielding dedicated his first play. Horace Walpole said of her in one of his letters, "Her dress, her avarice, and her impudence must amaze any one that never heard her name.", while Mary Astell, in 1724 hailed her as a benefactor of humanity. This same lady wrote a eulogy, which served as a preface to an edition of Lady Mary's letters. She said, "Rather let us freely own the superiority of this sublime genius, as I do, in the sincerity of my soul, pleased that a woman triumphs, and proud to follow in her train. Let us offer her the palm which is so justly her due, and if we pretend to any laurels, lay them willingly at her feet."

She had friends among the highest in the land, enemies among the most learned. The king and queen flattered her with friendship; Pope hated her; the Duchess of Portland turned to her as a loyal and staunch friend.

Modern writers treat her with as much varied criticism, as did her contemporaries. Sir Walter Baghot thinks it clear that, "she was a miserable, ambitious, wasted woman," while Carlyle pays her high tribute by saying, that she, "deserves to be remembered as the first Englishwoman, who combined the knowledge of classical and modern literature with a penetrating judgment and a correct taste."

What idea can we, one hundred and fifty years after her death, form, of the real personality of a woman so variously portrayed? The very fact of these inconsistent accounts, lends a fascination to the subject for the student. This high born English lady, much talked of, much hated, much feared, was certainly an important figure of her day. It will be the aim of this paper to show, how far she was important and what were her real contributions to her times. These contributions may be divided into three heads; her literary efforts, set forth in her poetry and her letters as well as her occasional criticism; her introduction of inoculation into England; and the more indirect influence of her ideas on politics and education.

Lady Mary Pierrpont was born in London in May 1689. Her father was Sir John Evelyn, later Earl of Kingston, a man of position and wealth, belonging to the great whig aristocracy. Her mother was the daughter of William Fielding, third Earl of Denbigh, so that Lady Mary's heritage on both sides was good. She had two sisters and a brother, all younger than herself. Her mother died in 1697, leaving these four little

children to the care of their father, a gay, pleasure-loving man of the world, who found little time to guide their education. Lady Mary affirmed that her father had "the grand air", and that Richardson took him as the model for his character of the father of Sir Charles Grandison. Anyone who knows the personality of that man about town, will realize that he was far too fine a gentleman to be a considerate parent.

The family of children moved to Thorseby, where they spent most of their time, though there was a house in Arlington Street, to which they repaired for longer periods, as they grew older. Lady Mary called her education, "one of the worst in the world." It was haphazard, to say the least. She occasionally had lessons from her brother's tutors. She was given the free run of her father's library where she found a host of books to amuse and entertain as well as to instruct her. She developed a distinct love for learning early in life, and this she kept to the day of her death. She may have been cynical on most subjects but she always spoke of learning, with the most sincere respect.

She spent most of her time, during her girlhood, in learning Latin, which she accomplished almost entirely by herself. She discovered that it was not customary for girls to enjoy rigid study of any kind, so she kept her work much to herself and even in later life was rather shy of acknowledging her real love of erudition. Bishop Burnet was a true friend to her. He encouraged her in her classical pursuits--an act of kindness which she never forgot. At the age of twenty, she translated Epictetus' Enchiridion and sent it to him, accompanied by a letter. This letter, among her first gives an excellent picture of a serious, vivacious personality. Already she had realized the difficulties under which women pursued any kind of learning. She struck a note of rebellion-- the keynote to her life-long attitude towards the obstacles, that stood in the way of intellectual women. She said;

"There is hardly a character in the world more despicable or more liable to universal ridicule than that of a learned woman." and again;

"My sex is usually forbid studies of this nature and folly reckoned so much our proper sphere, we are sooner pardon ed any excasses of that than the least pretentions to reading or good sense."

She learned French and Italian as well as Latin and the two former she could speak and use with ease. She wrote short essays in French, the one, " Sur La Maxime de M. de Rochefaucault qu'il y a des Mariages commodes, mais point de délicieux" has more of humor in it than any other of her works. Italian, she liked to read. Once or twice, she translated her own poems into Italian verse. Of Greek she knew very little.

She had many girl companions.; Dolly Walpole, Miss Banks, Lady Anne Vaughan being among the number. But of all her friends; the one with whom she was most intimate was Anne Wortley daughter of the Hon. Sydney Montagu, who lived at Wharncliffe Lodge, about thirty miles from Thorseby. The two girls wrote long, rambling letters to each other, full of the extravagances and conceits of the times. It was at Wharncliffe Lodge That

Lady Mary first met Edward Wortley Montagu, brother to Anne, who was destined to play such an important part in her life. He was a cultivated, much travelled, rather blazé young man, fond of literature and notoriously fastidious in all his tastes. Bagot says that he was a slow, orderly rather dull person with a taste for quick companions. It is true he numbered among his friends some of the rare spirits of the century-- Congreve, Steele, Garth, Mannwaring and Addison was his intimate associate. Lady Louisa Stuart speaks of her grandfather as a man of soundness of judgment, and clearness of understanding, with the erudition of a true scholar. He was somewhat taciturn and reserved, perhaps a little lofty in his attitude. He was not only amazed at the spriteliness of his sister's young friend, but entirely enchanted with her literary tastes and the brilliancy of her mind. They started a correspondence, first through Anne Wortley, as a kind of middleman. At her death which occurred in 1709, they wrote to each other directly.

The courtship is one of the most interesting in literature. It was fraught with a hundred difficulties, not the least of these being the obstinate personalities of the two lovers. The love letters, published by Lord Wharncliffe in 1837 are written by both parties in a business like spirit. We look in vain for any confession of passion, though Lady Mary on the whole shows more feeling, perhaps than her cool but determined lover. There are innumerable quarrels, innumerable letters, "which will be the last," followed by innumerable reconciliations. There was admiration on both sides and a certain amount of affection on the part of Lady Mary; a kind of passionate jealousy, which took the place of affection on the part of Edward Wortley Montagu. It was a union doomed for unhappiness. They had many tastes in common, but their natures were too much alike to be congenial, both cold, rather hard, obstinate and exacting.

Lady Mary's father refused to give his consent to the marriage, because Edward Montagu would not settle a definite sum upon a son, should one be born to them. The lovers however, continued to correspond, and through the kind assistance of the Steeles saw each other occasionally. They finally decided to take things into their own hands and elope, which they did in 1712.

The young bride, instead of going at once to the fashionable London world, was taken to a small furnished house near Huntingdon, and later to other small furnished houses near York in the north. Her husband was often away on business, and she was lonely and sometimes bitter. Thus she began a letter to her husband, in December, three months after her marriage, "I am alone, without any amusements to take up my thoughts. I am in circumstances, in which melancholy is apt to prevail even over all amusements, dispirited and alone and you write me quarreling letters."

Again in 1714;

"Adieu. I wish you would learn from Mr. Steele to write to your wife."

In May 1713 her son, Edward Wortley Montagu Jr. was born. She wrote enthusiastically of him, and whatever may have been her attitude to him in later life, when he was a child

she was a patient and devoted mother.

In 1715 she and her husband returned to London. Edward Wortley was rising in the political world, and his wife did much to bring popularity for them both at court. He was the member for Westminster, and in addition he was appointed one of the Commissioners of the Treasury. Lady Mary now entered upon her own. No longer forced to live in irksome retirement in the country, she could enjoy to the full the gaities and frivolities of society life in London. She was easily one of the most brilliant of the ladies of fashion, a friend and relation of nobles, a patroness of literary men, and a woman of considerable intellectual ability as well. Both she and her husband wrote brief essays, describing life at the court of George I. The lady's is full of vivacity and color, whereas her husband's is somewhat dull and ponderous. She uses her discerning intellect to good purpose here, and is not afraid to write that the Prince of Wales had "small understanding" and the Princess had, "a low cunning which gave her an inclination to cheat all the people she conversed with."

It was during this period in London that Lady Mary met Alexander Pope, who was to be first her devoted friend and later her bitterest enemy. The poet was much flattered by the attentions of this beautiful lady of fashion. She wrote and Pope criticised, though she would allow few corrections by him, as she shrewdly remarked, that if he corrected, he would be credited with all the good points, whereas the real author would be blamed for the bad ones. She wrote six Town Eclogues--society verses which reflected the temper of the times.

In 1716, Edward Wortley Montagu was appointed by the Crown, ambassador to Constantinople and consul-general for the Levant. Turkey, in the reign of Achmet III, from 1703-1736 was one of the great powers of Europe. Trade relations with the Levant were extremely important, as caravans from the far east came through Turkish territory. The mission of Montagu was to mediate in conjunction with the representatives of the other powers between the Turks and the Imperialists, who were then at war. From a historical point of view, the mission was a failure, as Mr. Wortley Montagu could get no satisfaction from the Turks; from a literary point of view it was a success as it was a means of giving to literature, the charming letters from Turkey, written by Lady Mary, during her long journey and interesting sojourn in the East.

She caused astonishment among her friends in London by determining to accompany her husband to Constantinople, and to take with her, her little son, then three years old. This determination is in keeping with the rest of her impulsive, independent character. The journey, in those days was fraught with innumerable hardships, and not a few dangers. Of course the Montagus had every convenience possible at the time, and a retinue of servants. They went to Rotterdam, The Hague, Cologne, Nuremburg, Ratisbon, Vienna, Prague, Leipsig, Brunswick, Hanover, back to Vienna, then on to Peterwaradin, Belgrade, Adrianople, where they remained three months, as the Sultan Achmet was holding his court there.; and so on to Constantinople. Lady Mary wrote long, detailed letters from each of these places, giving her impressions tersely and vividly. Her correspondents

were numerous-- Mrs. Thistlethwayte. Mr. Pope, Countess of Mar, (her sister) receiving most of her epistles.

While she was in Turkey, her second child was born-- a daughter, who later became the countess of Bute, and who was a great comfort to her mother in her old age, when her son had long ago forfeited her affection, by his wild and ungovernable habits. In Turkey Lady Mary first observed the practice of inoculation, which she so admired that she introduced it into England, on her return. Of that I shall speak elsewhere.

Edward Wortley Montagu was recalled to England in 1718. The journey was by man-of-war to Tunis and then to Genoa, proceeding from there to Turin, Lyons, Paris. Lady Mary was not, on the whole overjoyed to return to London, though she had been homesick for it several times, while she was in the East. To the period, between her return from Turkey, 1718, and her departure for the continent in 1739, belongs the most important part of her life as a fashionable lady, a writer of satirical verses and a companion of "litterateurs."

In 1720-i the Montagus went to live in a villa at Twickenham, not far from the home of Pope, who was as yet an ardent admirer of the wit and beauty of Lady Mary. The cause of the enmity which finally grew up between them, has never been properly accounted for. It is not within the scope of this paper to go into the details of the quarrel, which were disgraceful enough to both parties concerned. Perhaps it was, as some critics would have us believe, Lady Mary's too sharp tongue. Perhaps, as Lady Louisa Stuart relates, Pope declared his passion for Lady Mary, only to receive a burst of laughter from her, which he could never forgive. At any rate Lady Mary was persecuted unmercifully by Pope and most of the unsavoury stories circulated about her, were due to his malignant tongue-invention. Horace Walpole, too was never friendly, though he did do her the justice of praising her letters² in spite of spite". Lady Mary was a person, who kept out of quarrels with difficulty. She fully recognised the keenness of her wit and success at repartee turned her head, so that she often sacrificed a friend to a brilliant epigram.

She had many domestic troubles. Her son was her chief source of anxiety. He ran away from school twice, the last time being found in Oporto and returned by the British consul. Her sister, Lady Mar in 1727 went out of her mind, so that the correspondence with her, from which we get all our information concerning this period, ceased.

We find in these letters a growing tendency towards cynicism and dissatisfaction with the life in London. She found that the shams and conceits wore very badly; the quarrels and intrigues of court life, wearied her. She was made for better things, for serious pursuits, the formation of sincere friendships, a leadership devoid of the petty jealousies, that seemed almost an inevitable part of the life she was forced to lead. Yet with all this disillusionment, she kept her mind alert and open, and her faculties keen. She still loved a good book, nor did her desire for knowledge diminish a whit.

In 1739 Lady Mary, now a woman of fifty, determined to journey to the continent and started out, as George Paston

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says, "on her lonely pilgrimage, little thinking probably that she would never see her husband again, and that more than twenty years would pass, before she was to return to her native land."

It has never been clear just why she came to the decision of leaving England, home, children, and husband in this unexpected fashion. There have been various explanations. Lady Mary, herself is said to have told Lady Shadwell that she left England because, "people had grown so stupid she could no longer endure their society." This sounds like Lady Mary and should be taken for what it is worth. It was well known that she was not happy with her husband. There was no open quarrel, nor, strange to say, any scandal, notwithstanding Lady Mary's many admirers. She continued to write to him frequent letters while she was abroad, and these abound in an exceptional respect and deference for his judgment. Her daughter, Mary, had married in 1738 Lord Bute, a Scotch nobleman; her son had long ago severed his connection with his family, and wandered on the continent, leading a fast and dissolute life. Lady Mary had no ties to keep her in her own country.

Whatever her reasons, the fact remains that in 1739 she left for Venice. For the next twenty three years she lived in various places on the continent, moving from time to time, now in Venice, now in Rome or Florence, or Avignon, now renovating a house at Lovere, where she had her dairy, her bees and her poultry. Often she met distinguished friends, sojourners in foreign parts. During all this time, she carried on a full and interesting correspondence, chiefly with her daughter, the Countess of Bute, her husband, and Lady Pomfort, a lady of the Bedchamber to the late queen. Others were Sir James Stuart and his wife, and occasionally Lady Hertford and acquaintances here and there. In her long exile, she seemed still to keep up her love of gossip. She asked after the life in London, and hailed all spicy pieces of news with delight. The letters of this period are extremely entertaining. Her daughter sent her boxes of the latest novels, which Lady Mary devoured assiduously, writing in return, clever, searching criticisms, sparing no author because of his popularity or fame.

In 1761, Lady Mary heard of the death of her husband. At once, she determined to return to England. This move goes to confirm the opinion of those critics, who would say that her exile had been on account of her husband. She had a trying, uncomfortable journey. She was detained for two months at Rotterdam where she met Mr. Sowden, the English chaplain, to whom she gave the manuscript of her letters from Constantinople. In January 1762, she arrived in England. She had only a few months to live as it was discovered that she was suffering from cancer. She concealed her trouble for sometime and received, as in early days, her friends among the great in the land. She was sadly changed. If we can trust Horace Walpole's account, she had grown slovenly in her dress and careless in her manners. Up to the last, she kept up that fine courage and keen perception, that had been her characteristic of her whole life. Her last letters are notes written from bed, and they are pathetic efforts at keeping up her flagging spirits. She said at last;

"I own I am weary of fighting with one hand tied behind."

On August 21, 1762 she died in her seventy-fourth year. She was buried in Grosvenor Chapel, London.

Lady Mary was a very beautiful woman. She was rather small, with an oval face, dark, rich, black hair, and sparkling vivacious eyes. Of her likenesses, the painting by Kneller is the best. In this she looks every inch a lady, with fine features, shapely hands and a proud bearing. After the smallpox it is said she lost her eye-lashes and her beauty was therefore impaired. Her contemporaries are unanimous in crediting her with a considerable amount of personal beauty.

The Town Eclogues were the only works of Lady Mary published during her lifetime. They fell into the hands of Edmund Curll, who published them under the title, "Court Poems by a Lady of Quality." in 1716, the year of the Embassy to the East. In 1863, the year following her death were published her letters from Turkey by one, Cleland. He is supposed to have received them from her relations, who bought them from Sowden, the English chaplain at Rotterdam for 500 pounds. In 1803, James Dallaway published the Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with an introduction. In 1837 Lord Wharncliffe published all her letters and works, with introductory anecdotes by Lady Louisa Stuart, her grand daughter. These same letters have been re-edited and revised by W. Moy Thomas in two editions, one in 1861 and another in 1887.

Lady Mary's contribution to literature has never been considered of the first rank. She wrote poems, a few fragmentary essays, and letters. It is to these last that she owes her fame, both for their lively and vivacious style, as well as for their substance, which was happens to be concerned, not only with travels in distant and little explored lands but also with a period of English life, full of real and valuable interest. She began writing poetry at a very early age, and her first poems took the form of imitations and translations from the classics. At twelve years of age she wrote a poem, entitled, "Julia to Ovid," in imitation of Ovid's epistles. At fourteen she wrote "Irregular verses to Truth", very moral and mature to come from the pen of a schoolgirl.. She tried a variety of forms-- the elegy, eclogue, rondeau, ballad; but there is a sameness about her rhymes. One feels that she is but a faint echo of Pope. Her Town Eclogues, six in all, for each day of the week except Sunday, are a series of society verses, with varying subjects. In one, a lady recovering from smallpox, bemoans the loss of her beauty; in another are given reflections upon ill-luck at cards and ill-luck in love.; in another Lydia deploras her vanished bloom and faithless lovers. Like many others of her day, Lady Mary wrote society verses of topical interest only, which have very little attraction for the modern reader. At that time, everyone at court knew everyone else. Allusions to people of any social position were comprehended at once. It was a splendid time for social observation and Lady Mary made the most of her opportunity.

She was fond of writing epistles in rhyme, also of aiming satirical verses at old enemies like Mrs. Murray and Pope. There is little beauty in her lines, no imagination, no real feeling or passion. Her style is forced and concious. Occasionally she is forcible and turns off a witty couplet.

In "Verses written in the Chiosk of the British Palace at Pera overlooking the city of Constantinople," Dec. 26 1718, she gives the following description.;

"Herre at my window I at once survey,
The crowded city and resounding sea.
In distant views the Asian mountains rise,
And lose their snowy summits in the skies.
Above these mountains proud Olympus towers
The parliamentary seat of heavenly powers.
New to the sight, my ravished eyes admire
Each gilded crescent and each antique spire. ~~The marble mos~~
The marble mosques beneath whose antique domes, Pier
Fierce warlike sultans sleep in peaceful tombs."

When one realizes the beauty of the scene she viewed, it is amazing she could convey so little of it in her verses.

These poems circulated among her friends in Manuscript form, much praised by admirers, much criticised by enemies. Not seldom did her satires get her into trouble. "Verses to the Imitator of Horace", levelled at Pope caused a great stir. Lady Mary denied having written them, but it is nearly certain that though perhaps she was not the sole author, she and Lord Hervey collaborated in composing them. Her poems on the whole, are the least interesting of her works. I doubt very much, whether any of them would have been preserved had she not become famous through her letters.

As a writer of letters her reputation is established. During a long life time, her chief expression lay in letter writing and it cannot be doubted that she put the best part of herself into her correspondence; The letters, written during the embassy to Constantinople 1716-1718 were the first to be printed and the only ones which the author wrote, with a conscious plan for their ultimate publication. These letters, fifty seven in number, have lost a little in spontaneity from the very fact that she wrote them so obviously for publication. They give a series of impressions of the cities and countries, through which she and her husband passed on their way to Constantinople.

While she was in Turkey, as also during her life in London, she kept a voluminous diary, into which she put a truthful record of her life from day to day. It is quite certain that many of her "Turkish" letters were in a large part, copies from the diary. It is interesting to speculate on the complete contents of this document. But, though Lady Mary often read extracts from it to her friends, she left it to her daughter, only on condition that this latter destroy it shortly after her death. Lady Bute dutifully carried out her mother's wish. Lady Mary felt that this intimate account of herself and her times could not bear publicity. In consequence we have lost perhaps, many side lights on the history of the times, to say nothing of the personality of this singular woman.

Lady Mary was one of the first Englishwomen to live in the Near East for any length of time, and the first traveller to give an authentic, honest, clear-sighted account of the customs and manners of Turkey. Former travellers had filled their books with false and exaggerated statements. She prided herself on her honesty. She was enabled, through her position, to learn

much of the life of Turkish women, and her records are always to be trusted. Even to-day, many of the customs that she writes of, so accurately, are still in evidence in Turkey, that land of few changes. These letters soon gained an exceptional popularity and were translated into several European languages.

The other letters, which in Lord Wharnccliffe's edition, constitute the main bulk of the volumes, may be divided into three groups. Those written prior to her marriage, in 1712 mostly to Anne Wortley and her future husband; those written in London after her marriage, and after her return from the East, 1712-1716 and 1718-1739; and the last group from 1739, on her departure to take up her abode on the continent, until her death in 1762.

The first group which forms a long series of love-letters serves more than anything else to give the student an idea of her personality. The letters are non² of them passionate, and she never allows her heart to get the better of her head. The keynote seems to be a certain resolute good sense, and firmness of judgment, which are remarkable indeed in a young girl of twenty-one. There is a great feeling of strength of purpose, and vigor of action, underlying all she writes. She is completely candid. She will not let a sham pass her by unexamined. She is impulsive and generous minded and one is surprised at the humility of her manner sometimes, when she thinks she has been in the wrong.

The letters from London are valuable, in that they give a most graphic and unadorned account of the manners of fashionable society, there, in the mid-eighteenth century. Lady Mary, though believing in her own superiority of mind, and tastes was not averse to gossip, and was no better than the average lady of the times in her recounting of court intrigues and shameful scandals. She said clever, biting things about her enemies and recorded her quarrels with a kind of spiteful complacency. Occasionally, she was unnecessarily coarse, though we must take into account the freer expression of a hundred and fifty years ago.

The last group of letters are, after the "Turkish" letters, the most interesting. They were written with no thought of publication, and their manner is unaffected. In these, we have, besides her accounts of the places of her sojournings in Italy, and France, her reflections on life in general; on education, politics; criticisms of people and books and manners her thoughts on religion and her philosophy of life. Most of these letters are addressed to her daughter for whom she had a sincere affection, and to whom she wrote in her freest, happiest manner. It is pleasant to picture the dashing beauty of London, spending her last years in quiet Italian towns, using her time in the pursuits of outdoor life, and as always reading assiduously; writing home to her daughter, the reflections of her mature judgment, still enjoying the tail ends of gossip that filter through from the gay London world, always alert, and always interested in progress and learning.

Though Lady Mary's letters are singularly fascinating to read, she had none of the orthodox attributes of the memoir writer. She had no imagination and little tenderness. She was often loose in her construction, and careless in grammar and

spelling. But her letters are alive and full of interest. She tells a story well and her quick eye can pick out, at once the salient points both in a person and in a dramatic situation.

Her criticisms of contemporary literature were not only interesting, but ^{also} considered valuable in their time. Her last group of letters contains most of her criticism. She was as honest as a critic as she was as a writer. Her value was recognised, for Fielding submitted his "Modern Husband" to her for approval. Fielding's "Amelia" pleased her but she remarked that she considered the type of novel mischievous, as it placed "a merit on extravagant passions and encouraged young people to hope for impossible events."

There were certain prejudices, she could not eliminate. She could not recognise the superiority of Pope's genius, even after his death, for the enmity he bore her still rankled in her breast. Most of her criticism was adverse. She condemned Bolingbroke for his vanity, Swift for his cynicism. On her first reading of "The Rambler" she wrote rather caustically to her daughter;

"The Rambler" is certainly a strong misnomer; he always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors, following The Spectator. I should like to know the name of this laborious author."

She read Richardson and condemned him at once, saying that his "Pamela" must be the joy of the chambermaids of Europe. She was truthful enough to admit however, that she wept on reading "Clarissa Harlowe" though she thought herself a fool for so doing. She wrote of Richardson;

"Richardson is a strange fellow. I heartily despise him and eagerly read him. He is as ignorant in morality as in anatomy."

Both Addison and Steele were her friends. Addison was an intimate friend of her husband's and the Steeles had helped her to meet her lover, in the days before her marriage. Of the "Tatler and Spectator" she spoke with praise, but she deplored the fact, that both papers rather pandered to the weaknesses of her sex rather instead of appealing to their better natures. "Mr. Bickerstaff has very wrong notions of our sex. I can say there are some of us, who despise charms of show and all the pageantry of greatness, perhaps with more ease than any of the philosophers."

Lady Mary's letters show a hundred different moods; she produces a hundred different effects. She had various ^{styles} for each of her correspondents. To her husband she was diffident, respectful and a little restrained; to the Countess of Pomfret, witty and full of humor; to her daughter affectionate, sensible, frank, almost tender at times; to Pope she wrote in a spirit of raillery. At all times it is evident that she was a facile writer. Her understanding is almost masculine in its strength and clearness. She will always live as a clever writer of letters and through these last, a truthful interpreter of the life of her times.

The introduction of inoculation into England was one of Lady Mary's most important contributions to her times. Smallpox, in the eighteenth century was a very live danger to all classes of society. Lady Mary had lost her own brother in 1713 by it,

and had been attacked herself, according to her grand daughter Lady Louisa Stuart about 1715 (sometime between the death of Anne and the embassy to Turkey.) One of the Town Eclogues, "Flavia" describes the terrors of a lady, recovering from the disease who fears that her beauty has been impaired and dares not look into the mirror, which she holds reversed in her hand. According to several authorities (Lady Louisa Stuart and Lady Hertford) the sentiments expressed in this eclogue are Lady Mary's own when she was convalescing. Be that as it may, it was quite certain that Lady Mary shared, with the rest of the eighteenth century world, a horror of small-pox.

During her journey to Constantinople, while she was staying in Adrianople, her attention was drawn to the strange practice of inoculation, which she saw among the natives of the place. She wrote a full account of this in a letter from Adrianople dated April 1. 1717 to Mrs. S. C. (Miss Sarah Chiswell)

Evidently inoculation in its first crude form, was a very different process from our modern vaccination. Two or three veins were opened and the serum "engrafted", as Lady Mary says; At the end of eight days the patient was seized with a fever, which lasted three days. This fever practically amounted to a slight attack of the disease. At the end of this time, the scars healed over, and the patient was immune from further attack. Lady Mary was so convinced of the efficacy of this practice that she tried it upon her son, with excellent results.

In this same letter to Miss Chiswell, she declared, that she wished to introduce inoculation into England, which she proceeded to do on her return in 1718. Her attempts met with the greatest opposition and she said, that in the following years she often repented of her patriotic and generous impulse for it opened the way to all kinds of persecutions. The conservatism of the English public was evidently as difficult to overcome two hundred years ago as it is to-day. The doctors were her greatest enemies and laughed at her "old wives' " ideas. Lady Louisa Stuart relates that "She was descanted from the pulpits on the impiety, of thus seeking to take events out of the hands of Providence." -- a remark so often used by reactionaries that it has come to have a special flavor of humor all its own. She was called an unnatural mother, for having risked the lives of her children. Anyone (and there were many) who wished to give a vengeful "dig" at Lady Mary, found now an admirable opportunity.

She triumphed in the end however. Caroline (then Princess of Wales) championed her and by 1724 the practice was fairly common. In "The Plaindealer," an article, very likely written by Mary Astell, spoke very high praises of the learned lady, who introduced inoculation into the country. It certainly needed courage, but of that virtue Lady Mary had her full share.

A cenotaph in Lichfield Cathedral commemorates this service to her countrymen. The monument represents the figure of Beauty weeping over the ashes of her preserver, supposed to be enclosed in the urn, inscribed with the initials M. W. M. It reads as follows;

Sacred to the memory of
 The Right Honorable
 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
 who happily introduced from Turkey
 into this country
 the salutary art
 of inoculating the smallpox.
 Convinced of its efficacy
 she first tried it with success
 on her own children
 and then recommended the practice of it
 to her fellow-citizens.
 Thus by her example and advice
 We have softened the virulence
 and escaped the danger of this malignant disease.
 To perpetuate the memory of such benevolence
 and to express her gratitude
 for the benefit she herself received
 from this alleviating art
 this monument is erected by
 Henrietta Inge,
 relict of Theodore William Inge Esq.
 and daughter of Sir John Wrottesley Bart.
 in the year of our Lord MDCCLXXXIX. 1789.

Carlyle, in his essay on Lady Mary in the Edinburgh Encyclopedia, states that she procured the knowledge of inoculation from the peasants of Belgrade, a small village on the shores of the Bosphorus, about ten miles from the city of Constantinople. It is possible that at Belgrade, the natives also used inoculation, but it is quite certain that Lady Mary first became aware of the practice in Adrianople, several months before she arrived in Constantinople.

Lady Mary's literary achievements and her introduction of inoculation into England were both very valuable contributions to her times. But her opinions on questions of universal interest were as valuable though their influence is more difficult to trace. Still it would be a mistake to believe that a woman, who held advanced views on liberty, education and the position of women, could move in London society for a number of years without leaving a very marked impression on her contemporaries. Certainly, though her ideas had little tangible effect during her life-time, they helped to mould the thought of the succeeding generation.

Education for women in the middle of the eighteenth century had fallen to its lowest level. There were few schools for girls and in these only the rudiments of learning were taught. Girls of quality were educated at home by tutors or governesses, in a rather desultory and by no means thorough manner. Learning for women was not considered either necessary or appropriate. We have but to turn to the satires of the day, to the letters of men of fashion and politics, to the pages of the Tatler and Spectator to see, in what contempt the powers of the weaker sex were held. The idea, that education might be useful to

13. women, if only to while away the many leisure hours of the day, was just beginning to present itself to the eighteenth century mind.

Lady Mary was one of the pioneers in voicing the needs of her countrywomen. Having acquired most of her own education by painstaking and unaided efforts, and having a passion for learning, which only increased with the years, we are not surprised that she could speak with warmth and vigor on the subject of education for women.

As early as 1710, when she wrote to Bishop Burnet she already recognised the obstacles in the way of a woman's pursuit of learning. Later she wrote;

"I think it the highest injustice to be debarred the entertainment of my closet, and that the same studies which raise the character of a man should hurt that of a woman." and again;

"We are educated in the greatest ignorance and no art omitted to stifle our natural reason."

Yet one is amazed at the moderation of her suggestions to her daughter, in regard to the education of her grandchildren. These suggestions were given in letters, written from the continent to Lady Bute. She often admitted her fondness for writing in this vein, for she ends up a long letter by saying; "This subject is apt to run away with me. I will trouble you with no more of it."

She advised the Countess of Bute to encourage her daughters in reading, as "it is as necessary for the amusement of women as the reputation of man." They should be permitted to learn languages though erudition does not consist in being a linguist. "True knowledge," Lady Mary remarked, "consists in knowing things not words." She advised the Countess to talk over the books her daughters read, and thus help them form their taste. They must not be merely bookworms, however, for a knowledge of domestic arts was necessary in the education of every girl. She said in her forcible way; "I think it as scandalous for a woman not to know how to use a needle, as for a man not to know how to use a sword."

She told her daughter never to rule by deceit, but to be straight forward and honest in all her dealings. Children should be trained free from prejudices. They should be allowed to think out their own philosophy and not have it ready made for them.

On marriage she spoke cautiously. She admitted that "In a lottery, where there are (at the lowest computation) ten thousand blanks to a prize, it is the most prudent choice not to venture."

Notwithstanding the trite advice to her daughter, Lady Mary feared her views on education might be considered somewhat radical. A letter followed which began in this vein;

"I am afraid Lord Bute will be extremely shocked at the proposal of a learned education for daughters, which the generality of men, believe as great a profanation, as the clergy would do, if the laity should presume to exercise the functions of the priesthood." She finished up her letter by saying; "I could add a good deal on this subject but I am not now endeavoring to remove the prejudices of mankind."

That at times she did have the desire to remove the prejudices of mankind, seems quite evident though she never set out systematically to do so. If she had not been so well-born or ~~in~~ such a commanding position, or so well to do, she might have been more drastic in her appeals for liberty, as were other women in the eighteenth century, like Hannah More and Mary Astell.

Lady Mary showed a great deal of good sense in her advice. She was never sentimental for she was thoroughly disillusioned. She had a reverence for the austere virtues. Yet with all the strength of her convictions she realized fully the prejudices of the day, and had no Quixotic ideas of breaking them down at one blow. Her clear understanding helped her to be temperate. It is surprising to find how much she was the victim of prevailing opinions, notwithstanding her advanced views. She ended her admonitions to the Countess of Bute, as to the education of her daughters by the following; ----" a second caution to be given her (and which is most absolutely necessary) is to conceal whatever learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness; The parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy and consequently the most inveterate hate of all the he and she fools. "

Lady Mary has been accused of a certain vanity in her own learning. Walpole likes to make her out a conceited blue-stocking and Pope calls her Sappho with utter scorn and sarcasm. But, though she may have used her sharp wit to the discomfort of her companions, she was essentially modest. She showed in her letters true humility, an absence of vanity which is remarkable in a self-conscious memoir writer of the eighteenth century. She quoted Thucydides as saying that, " Ignorance is bold, knowledge is reserved. " On all occasions she condemned the self-opinionated, and impressed her daughter with a sense of reverence for truth and modesty.

In politics, Lady Mary's attitude should not be overlooked. Baghot says in his essay on her, " c A lightening element of female influence is to be found through much of the politics of the eighteenth century. "

Political and court life were very much bound together and much less complicated than they are to-day. London was little more than a very large overgrown country town, where all those of any station were well known to each other. Edward Wortley Montagu was a member for Parliament all his life, for Westminster Huntington, and Peterborough. His wife, though somewhat bored by her husband's personality, was always interested in his political career. She was ready with advice and encouragement and often urged him on at times, when his cautious nature would have hesitated fatally. She followed the movement of Parliament with keen enjoyment. She summed up the eccentricities of politicians with her usual quick perception. She never longed for leadership nor participation in politics herself, but she could not help enjoying the pleasures of the spectator. That women should ever desire a share in the management of affairs of state, never had occurred to her in her wildest dreams. She wrote in one of her letters-

" I do not complain of men for having engrossed the government

in excluding us from all degrees of power they preserve us from many fatigues, many dangers and perhaps many crimes."

She recorded in a letter of March 1739 to the Countess of Pomfret, an occurrence in Parliament, which shall be quoted at length, for it shows several interesting points. First, it is a good example of Lady Mary's skill in telling a good story, second, it relates a circumstance that might easily have taken place within the last few years in England, and third, it indicates the interest taken by a few women in Parliamentary affairs of the times.

"At the last warm debate in the House of Lords, it was unanimously resolved that there should be no crowd of unnecessary auditors; consequently the fair sex were excluded, and the gallery designed to the sole use of the House of Commons. Notwithstanding which determination, a tribe of dames resolved to show on this occasion, that neither men nor laws could resist them. These heroines were Lady Huntington, the Duchess of Queensberry, the Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Westmoreland, Lady Cobham, Lady Charlotte Edwin, Lady Archibald Hamilton and her daughter, Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Pendames and Lady Frances Sanderson. I am thus particular in their names, since I look upon them to be the boldest assertors, and most resigned sufferers for liberty I ever read of. They presented themselves at the door at nine o'clock in the morning, where Sir William Sanderson respectfully informed them the chancellor had made an order against their admittance. The Duchess of Queensberry as head of the squadron, pushed at the ill-breeding of a mere lawyer and desired them to let them upstairs privately. After some modest refusals, he swore by G--- he would not let them in. Her Grace with a noble warmth answered by G--- they would come in, in spite of the chancellor and the whole House. This being reported the Peers resolved to starve them out. An order was given that the doors should not be opened till they had raised their siege. These Amazons now showed themselves qualified for the duty even of foot soldiers; they stood there till five in the afternoon without either sustenance or evacuation, every now and then, playing volleys of thumps, kicks and raps against the door, with so much violence that the speakers in the House were scarce heard. When the Lords were not to be conquered by this, the two Duchesses (very well apprised in the stratagems of war) commanded a dead silence of half an hour; and the chancellor, who thought this a certain proof of their absence, (the Commons also being very anxious to enter) gave order for the opening of the door, upon which they all rushed in, pushed aside their competitors and placed themselves in the front row of the gallery.

They stayed there till after eleven, when the House rose, and during the debate gave applause and showed marks of dislike, not only by smiles and winks (which have always been allowed in these cases) but by noisey laughs and apparent contempt; which is supposed the true reason poor Lord Hervey spoke miserably. I beg your pardon, dear madam, for this long relation, but 'tis impossible to be short on so copious a subject, and you must own this action very well worthy of record, and I think not to be paralleled in history, ancient or modern."

Among the many interesting characters of the eighteenth century Lady Mary stands out as a figure, full of originality and force. She has given much delight through her "Piquante" letters, to her own generation as well as to ours. The country owes her a debt of gratitude for her introduction of inoculation and her sex should not forget the plea she made for them, when the subject of woman's education had none of the popularity it now enjoys.

She was a brave, solitary spirit whose courage we may admire, while we deplore her cynicism. She was disappointed in what life had to offer her, and yet if she had lived in another age and indifferent surroundings, she might have been a Jane Austen or a George Eliot. As it was, her contributions to her times, were such as to give her, though not a place in the limelight of fame, still, an assured position among the many interesting minor figures of English Literature.

by Mary Wortley Montagu;
Her Contributions to Her Times.

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
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of Arts in the Faculty of Philosophy,
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Lady Mary Wortley Montagu Her Contributions to her Times.

Few persons in the history of English literature can boast such contradictory reputations as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. To some of her contemporaries she was merely a woman of fashion, & a lover of gossip, who spent her many leisure hours either in making third-rate poetry, or in writing loosely constructed letters. To others she was a blue-stocking & patroness of literature, remembered as the lady, to whom Young consulted about his tragedy "The Brothers"; & to whom Fielding dedicated his first play. Horace Walpole ^{said of} her in one of his letters, # "that ~~she was~~ ~~the~~ ~~most~~ ~~perfect~~ ~~of~~ ~~her~~ ~~age~~ ~~in~~ ~~her~~ ~~country~~ ~~and~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~"; while Mary Astell, in 1724 hailed her as a benefactor to humanity. This same lady wrote a eulogy, which later served as a preface, to an edition of Lady Mary's letters.

(2) She said: "Rather let us freely own the superiority of this sublime genius, as I do, in the sincerity of my soul, pleased that a woman triumphs, & proud to follow in her train. Let us offer her the palm which is so justly her due, & if we pretend to any laurels, lay them willingly at her feet."

She had friends among the highest in the land, enemies, among the most learned. The King & Queen flattered her with friendship; Pope hated her; the Duchess of Portland turned to her as a loyal & staunch friend.

Modern writers treat her with as much varied criticism as did her

① "Her dress, her air, her impudence must
amaze any one that never heard her name."

① letters to Hon. Henry Conway.
Horace Walpole's letters edited by Mrs. Paget
Toynbee, Clarendon Press. vol I. p. 84.

② Preface by Mary Astell (M.A.)
letters of Right Hon. Lady M - Y, W - Y, M - ne
published 1779 in one vol.

- contemporaries. Sir Walter Bagot
- ① I think it clear that, "she was a miserable ambitious, wasted woman", while Carlyle pays her high tribute by saying,
 - ② that she "deserves to be remembered as the first-Englishwoman, who combined the knowledge of classical + modern literature with a penetrating judgment and a correct taste."

What idea can we, one hundred + fifty years after her death, form, of the real personality of a woman so variously portrayed? The very fact of these inconsistent accounts, lends a fascination to the subject for the student. This high born English lady, much talked of, much hated, much feared, was certainly an important figure of her day. It will be the aim of this paper to show, how far she was important + what were her real contributions to her times. These contributions may be divided into three heads; her literary efforts, set forth in her poetry other letters as well as her occasional criticism; her introduction of inoculation into England; + the more indirect influence of her ideas on politics, & education.

Lady Mary Pierrepont was born in London in May, 1689. Her father was Sir John Evelyn, later Earl of Kingston, a man of position + wealth, belonging to the great Whig aristocracy. Her mother was the daughter of William Fielding, third Earl of Denbigh, so that Lady Mary's heritage on both sides was good. She had two sisters and a brother, all younger than herself. Her mother died in 1697, leaving these four little children, to the care of their father, a gay pleasure-loving man of the world,

- ① Literary Studies, Sir Walter Raleigh vol III p. 256
has many words, Mountain 1862. Longman Green & Co. 1965
- ② Edinburgh Encyclopedia - has many words
Mountain by Carlyle.

who found little time to guide their education. Lady Mary affirmed that her father had "the vantage air," & that Richardson took him as ~~the~~ model for his character of the father of Sir Charles Grandison. Anyone who knows the personal- of that man about town, will realize that he was far too true a gentleman to be a considerate parent.

The family of children moved to Thoresby, where they spent most of their time, though there was a house in Arlington Street, to which they resorted for longer periods, as they grew older. Lady Mary called her education "one of the worst in the world." It was half-hazard, to say the least. She occasionally had lessons from her brother's tutors. She was given the free use of her father's library where she found a host of books, to amuse & entertain, as well as to instruct her. She developed a distinct love for learning, early in life & this she kept till the day of her death. She was, however, an opinionator on most subjects but she always spoke of learning & the acquisition of knowledge, with the most sincere respect.

She spent most of her time, ~~while~~ during her girlhood ~~she was growing up~~, in learning Latin which she accomplished almost entirely by herself. She discovered that it was not customary for girls to enjoy rigid study of any kind, so she kept her work much to herself even in later life was rather shy of acknowledging her ^{real} love of erudition. Bishop Burnet was a true friend

① letters to me, Wootley Mountain Dec. 1712.

letters & words of lady Wootley Mountain vol I. p. 80

to her. He encouraged her in her classical pursuits - an act of kindness which she never forgot. At the age of twenty, she translated Epictetus' Enchiridion & sent it to him, accompanied by a letter. This letter, among her first, gives an excellent picture of a serious, vivacious personality. Already she had realized the difficulties under which women pursued any kind of learning. She struck a note of rebellion - the key note to her life-long ~~rebellion~~ ^{attitude} towards the obstacles that stood in the way of intellectual women. She said:

① There is hardly a character in the world more despicable, or more liable to universal ridicule than that of a learned woman.

and again:

② "My sex is usually forbid studies of this nature, & folly reckoned so much our proper sphere, we are sooner pardoned any excesses of that, than the least pretensions to reading or good sense." The learned French & Italian as well as Latin & the two former, she could speak pure with ease. She wrote short essays in French; the one, "Sur la Maxime de M. de Rochefoucault qu'il y a des mariages commodes, mais point de délicieux", has more of humor in it than any other of her works. Italian, she liked to read. Once or twice she translated her own poems into Italian verse. Of French she knew very little.

She had many girl companions: Dolly Walpole, Miss Baines, Lady Anne Vaughan being among the number. But of all her friends, the one with whom she was most intimate was Anne Wortley, daughter of the Hon. Sydney

MS. A. 1. 1. 24-1

(1.) Letter to Bishop of Salisbury July 20. 1710. ~~to~~
works & letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
published by Wharcliffe, with memoir by Mrs. Thomas
Bohn's Standard Library 1887. vol II p. 4.
[all references to this edition]

(2.) Ibid.

Montagu, who lived at Wharfedale Lodge, about thirty miles from Horsey. The two pills wrote long, rambling letters to each other, full of the extravagances & conceits of the times. It was at Wharfedale Lodge that Lady Mary first met Edward Wortley Montagu, brother to Anne who was destined to play such an important part in her life. He was a cultivated, much travelled, rather bloated young man, fond of literature & notoriously fastidious in all his tastes. Bayly says that he was a slow, orderly, rather dull person with a taste for quiet companions. It is true he numbered among his friends some of the rare spirits of the century — Congreve, Steele, Garth, Keen-warming; & Addison was his intimate associate. Lady Louisa Stuart speaks of her grandfather as a man of soundness of judgment, & clearness of understanding with the erudition of a first-rate scholar. He was somewhat laconic & reserved; perhaps a little lofty in his attitude. He was not only amused at the wit & bluntness of ~~the~~ his sister's young friend, but entirely enchanted with her literary tastes & the brilliancy of her mind. They started a correspondence, first through Anne Wortley, as a kind of middleman. At her death which occurred in 1709 they wrote to each other directly.

The courtship is one of the most interesting in literature. It was fraught with a hundred difficulties, not the least of these being the obstinate personalities of the two lovers. The love-letters, published by Lord Wharfedale in 1837 are written by both parties, in a businesslike spirit. We look in

vain for any confession of passion, though
lady Mary, on the whole, shows more feeling
perhaps than her cool but determined lover.
There are innumerable quarrels, innumerable
letters, "which will be the last," ^{followed by} innumerable
reconciliations. There was admiration on
both sides & a certain amount of affection
on the part of ~~of~~ lady Mary; a kind of
passionate jealousy; which took the
place of affection, on the part of Edward
Wortley Montagu. It was a union
doomed for unhappiness. They had many
tastes in common, but their natures
were too much alike to be congenial,
both cold, rather hard, obstinate &
exacting.

Lady Mary's father refused to give his
consent to the marriage, because Edward
Wortley Montagu would not settle a
definite amount upon a son, should
one be born to them. The lovers however
continued to correspond, and through
the kind assistance of the Steeles, even
saw each other occasionally. They finally
decided to take things into their own
hands and elope, which they did in
August 1712.

The young bride, instead of going at
once to the fashionable London world,
was taken to a small furnished house
near Huntington, & later to other small
furnished houses near York in the north.
Her husband was often away on business
& she was lonely & sometimes bitter. Thus
she began a letter to her husband in
December, three months after her
marriage:

① "I am alone without any amusements
to take up my thoughts. I am in
circumstances, in which melancholy

is apt to prevail over all amusements, dispirited & alone & you write me quarrelling letters.

Again in 1714:

- ① "Adieu. I wish you would learn from Mr. Steele, to write to your wife."

In May 1713 her son, Edward Wortley Montagu Jr. was born. She wrote enthusiastically of him, & whatever way have been her attitude to him in later life, when he was a child, she was a patient & devoted mother.

In 1715 she & her husband returned to London. Edward Wortley Montagu was rising in the political world & his wife did much to bring popularity for them both at court. He was the member for Westminster, & in addition, he was appointed one of the Commissioners of the Treasury. Lord Mary now entered upon her own. No longer forced to live in irksome retirement in the country, she could enjoy to the full, the gaieties & frivolities of society life in London. She was easily one of the most brilliant of the ladies of fashion, a friend & relation of nobles, a patroness of literary men, & a woman of considerable intellectual ability, ~~into the bargain~~ ^{as well}. Both she & her husband wrote brief essays, describing life at the court of George I. The lady's is full of vivacity & color, whereas her husband's is somewhat dull & monotonous. She uses her discerning intellect to good purpose here, & is not afraid to write that the Prince of Wales had "small understanding" & the Princess had, "a low cunning which gave her an inclination to cheat all the people she conversed with".

- ② had "small understanding" & the Princess had, "a low cunning which gave her an inclination to cheat all the people she conversed with"...

MS.A.9.2.15.135

(1.) Letter to Mr. Wootley Montagu Oct 27. 1748.
Letters & works of Lady Mary Wootley Montagu vol I
p. 94.

(2.) Account of the Count of George I.
Letters & works of Lady Mary Wootley Montagu
vol I p. 1.

It was during this period in London that Lady Mary met Alexander Pope, who was to be, first her devoted friend & later her bitterest enemy. The poet was much flattered by the attentions of this beautiful lady of fashion. She wrote and Pope criticised, though he would allow few corrections by him, as she shrewdly remarked, that if her corrected, he would be credited with all the good points whereas the real author would be blamed for the bad ones. She wrote six Tour Eclogues - society verses which reflected the temper of the times.

In 1716 Edward Wortley Montagu was appointed by the crown, ambassador to Constantinople & consul general for the Levant. Turkey, in the reign of Ahmet III, from 1703-1736 was one of the great powers of Europe. Trade relations with the Levant were extremely important, as caravans from the far east came through Turkish territory. The mission of Edward Wortley Montagu was to mediate, in conjunction with the representatives of other powers, between the Turks & the Imperialists, who were then at war. From a historical point of view the mission was a failure, as Mr. Wortley Montagu could get no satisfaction from the Turks; from a literary point of view it was a success as it was a means of giving to literature, the charming letters from Turkey, written by Lady Mary, during her long journey & interesting sojourn in the East.

She caused astonishment among her friends in London by determining

10.
on the whole overjoyed to return to London, though she had been homesick for it several times, while she was in the East. To the period, between her return from Suisse, 1718 & her departure for the Continent in 1739 belongs the most important part of her life as a fashionable lady, a writer of satirical verses & a companion of "litterateurs."

In 1720-1 the Countess went to live in a villa at Wickenham, not far from the home of Pope, who was as yet an ardent admirer of the wit & beauty of Lady Mary. The cause of the enmity which finally grew up between the two, has never been properly accounted for. It is not within the scope of this paper to go into the details of the quarrel, which were disgraceful enough to both parties concerned. Perhaps it was, as some critics would have us believe, Lady Mary's too sharp tongue. Perhaps, as Lady Louisa Stuart relates, Pope declared his passion for Lady Mary, only to receive a burst of laughter from her, which he could never forgive. At any rate Lady Mary was persecuted unmercifully by Pope & most of the unavailing stories, circulated about her, were due to his malignant invention. Horace Walpole too was never friendly, though he did do her the justice of raising her letters, "in spite or spite" - Lady Mary was a person who kept out of quarrels with difficulty. She fully recognised the keenness of her wit & success at repartee turned her head, so that she often sacrificed a friend to a brilliant epigram.

She had many domestic troubles. Her son was her chief source of anxiety. He ran away from school

11
there, at last time, being found by in O'bo's
& returned by the British consul. Her sister,
Lady Mary, in 1727 went out, her mind, so
that the correspondence with her, from which
we get nearly all our information con-
cerning this period, ceased.

Her mind in these years a growing tendency
towards cynicism & dissatisfaction with the
life in London. She found that the sham &
conceits were very badly; the quarrels and
intrigues of court life, wearied her. She
was made for better things, for serious
pursuits, the formation of sincere friend-
ships, a leadership devoid of the petty
jealousies, that seemed almost an in-
evitable part of the life she was forced
to live. Yet with all this disillusionment
she kept her mind alert & open and
her faculties keen. She still wrote a
good book, nor did her desire for know-
ledge diminish a whit.

In 1739 Lady Mary, now a woman of
fifty, determined to journey to the Continent
& started out, as George Paston says, "on
her lonely pilgrimage, little thinking
probably, that she would never see her
husband again, & that more than twenty
years would pass before she was to
return to her native land."

It has never been clear, just why she
came to the decision of leaving England,
home, children, husband in this un-
expected fashion. There have been various
explanations. Lady Mary herself is said
to have told Lady Madwell, that she left
England because, "people had grown
so stupid she could not endure their
society." This sounds like Lady Mary
& must be taken for what it is worth.
It was well known that she was not

① Lady Mountain the Times by Geo. Pastow (Putnam 1907)
p. 366.

② Lady Mountain the Times by Geo. Pastow
p. 367.

happy with her husband. There was no open ~~scandal~~ quarrel, nor, strange to say, any scandal, notwithstanding Lady Mary's many admirers. She continued to write to him frequent letters while she was abroad, & these abounded in an exceptional respect & deference for his judgment. Her daughter, Mary, had married in 1738, Lord Bute, a Scotch nobleman; her son had long ago severed his connection with his family, & wandered on the continent, leading a fast & dissolute life. Lady Mary had notes to keep her in her own country.

Whatever her reasons, the fact remains that in 1739, she left for Venice. For the next 23 years she lived in various places on the continent, moving from time to time, now in Venice, now in Rome or Florence, or Avignon, now renovating a house at Louvecq, where she had her own dairy, her bees, & her poultry. Often she met distinguished friends, sojourners in foreign parts. During all this time she carried on a full & interesting correspondence, chiefly with her daughter, the Countess of Bute, her husband, & Lady Pomfret, a lady of the Bedchamber to the late Queen. Others were Sir James Stewart - his wife & occasionally Lady Ventnor & acquaintances here & there. In her long exile she seemed still to keep up her love of gossip. She asked after the life in London, & basked in all the spicy pieces of news with delight. The letters of this period are extremely entertaining. Her daughter sent her boxes of the latest novels, which Lady Mary devoured assiduously, writing in return, clever searching criticisms. Many no author

because of his popularity or fame.

In 1761, Lady Mary heard of the death of her husband. At once she determined to return to England. This move goes to confirm the opinion of those critics, who would say that her exile had been on account of her husband. She had a trying, uncomfortable journey. She was detained for two months at Rotterdam, where she met Mr. Snowden, the English Chaplain, to whom she gave the manuscript of her letters from Constantinople. In January 1762 she arrived in England. She had only a few months to live, as it was discovered that she was suffering from cancer. She concealed her trouble ^{for} some time & received, as in early days, her friends among the great of the land. She was sadly changed. If we can trust Horace Walpole's account, she had grown slovenly in her dress & careless in her manners. Up to the last, she kept that fine courage & keen perception, that had been characteristic of her whole life. Her last letters are notes written from bed, & they are pathetic efforts at keeping up her flagging spirits. She said at last:

(1) "Down I am weary of fighting with one hand ty'd behind"

On August 21, 1762 she died, in her seventy-fourth year. She was buried in Grosvenor Chapel London.

Lady Mary was a very beautiful woman. She was rather small, with an oval face, dark rich, black hair, & sparkling, vivacious eyes. Of her likenesses the painting by Kneeller is the best. In this she looks every inch, a lady, with fine features, shapely hands and a proud

(1)

Letter to Sir James Stewart.
Letters & works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.
vol. 1 p. 280.

bearing. After the smallpox, it is said that she lost her eye - lashes & some of her beauty was therefore impaired. Her contemporaries are unanimous in crediting her with a considerable amount of personal beauty.

Her own Epistles were the only works of Lady Mary's, published during her lifetime. They fell into the hands of Edmund Curll, who published them under the title, "Court Poems by a Lady of Quality" in 1716 - the year of the Embassy to the East. In 1763, the year following her death, were published her letters from Turkey, by one, Cleland. He is supposed to have received them from her relatives, who bought them from Snowden, the English shabbier at Rotterdam for £500. In 1803 Howard Chandler Christy, had, Mary's grandson ~~published all her letters~~ In 1803, James Dalhousie published the works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with an introduction. In 1837 Howard Chandler Christy published all her letters & works, with introductory anecdotes by Lady Louisa Stuart her grand daughter. These same letters have been re-edited & revised by W. May Thomas in two editions, one in 1861, & another in 1887.

Lady Mary's contribution to literature has never been considered of the first rank. She wrote poems, a few fragmentary essays, and letters. It is to these last that she owes her fame, both for their lively & vivacious style, as well as for their substance, which happens to be concerned, not only with travels in distant little explored regions, but also with a period of English life, full of real & valuable interest. She began writing poetry at a very early age, & her first poems took the form of imitations & translations of the classics.

lated into several European languages.

The other letters, which in Ford's edition, constitute the main bulk of the volumes, may be divided into three groups, for convenience. Those written prior to her marriage in 1712, mostly to Anne Wortley, her future husband; those written in London after her marriage, & after her return from the East 1712-1716, & 1718-1739; & the last group from 1739 on her departure to take up her abode on the continent, until her death in 1762.

The first group which forms a long series of love letters, serves more than anything else to give the student an idea of her personality. The letters are none of them passionate, & she never allows her heart to get the better of her head. The keynote seems to be a certain resolute good sense, & firmness of judgment, which are remarkable indeed in a young girl of twenty-one. There is a great feeling of strength of purpose, & vigor of action, underlying all she writes. She is completely candid. She will not allow a sham to pass her by unexamined. She is impulsive & generous-minded, & one is surprised ~~at~~ by the humility of her manner at times, when she has thought herself in the wrong.

The letters from London are valuable, in that they give a most graphic and unadorned account of the manners of fashionable society, there, in the mid-eighteenth century. Lady Mary, though believing in her own superiority of mind & tastes, was not averse to gossip & was no better than the average lady of the times, in her recounting of court intrigues & shameful scandals. She said clever biting things about her

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quick eye can pick out at once the salient points both in a person and in a dramatic situation.

Her criticisms of contemporary literature were not only interesting, but considered valuable in their time. Fielding dedicated her last group of letters contains most of her criticism. She was as thorough as a critic, as she was as a writer. Her value was recognized, for Fielding submitted his "Modern Husband" to her for approval. Fielding's *Amelia* pleased her, but she remarked that she considered the type of novel mischievous, as it placed "a merit on extravagant fashions encouraged young people to hope for impossible events."

There were certain prejudices, she could not eliminate. She could not recognize the superiority of Pope's genius, even after his death, for the enmity he bore her, still rankled in her breast. Most of her criticism was adverse. She condemned Bolingbroke for his vanity, Swift, for his criticism. On her first reading of "The Rambler" she wrote rather caustically to her daughter:

(2) "The Rambler is certainly a strong misnomer; he always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors, following the Spectator. I should like to know the name of this laborious author."

She read Richardson and condemned him at once, saying that his *Pamela* was much overrated. It must only be

(1) Letter to the Countess of Bute Aug. 23, 1755.
Letters & Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
vol II. p. 289.

(2) *ibid.* vol II. p. 288

the joy of the chambermaids of Europe. She was truthful enough to admit however that she went on reading Clarissa Harlowe, though she thought herself a fool for so doing. She wrote of Richardson:

- ① "Richardson is a strange fellow. I heartily despise him & eagerly read him. He is as ignorant in morality as in anatomy."

Both Addison & Steele were her friends. Addison was an intimate friend of her husband's & the Steeles had helped her to meet her lover in the days before her marriage. Of the Tatler & Spectator she spoke with praise, but she deplored the fact, that both papers rather banded to the weaknesses of her sex, instead of appealing to their better natures.

- ② "Mr. Brickerstaff has very wrong notions of our sex. I can say there are some of us that despise charms of show and all the pageantry of greatness, perhaps with more ease than any of the philosophers."

Lady Mary's many letters show a hundred different moods; she produces a hundred different effects. She had various styles for each of her correspondents. To her husband, she was diffident, respectful, a little restrained; to the Countess of Pomfret, witty & full of humor; to her daughter, affectionate, sensible, & frank, almost tender at times; to Pope she

- ① Letter to the Countess of Pomfret. Oct 20. 1755.
Letters & Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
vol II. p. 299.

- ② Letter to Mr. Wortley Montagu Mar. 28. 1710.
Letters & Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
vol I. p. 50.

While she was staying in Adrianople, her attention was drawn to the strange practice of inoculation, which she saw among the natives of the place. She wrote a full account of this, in a letter from Adrianople dated Apr. 1. 1717 to Mrs. S. C. (Miss Sarah Chiswell.)

Evidently inoculation, in its first crude form was a very different process from our modern vaccination. Two or three veins were opened & the serum "engrafted", as Lady Mary says. At the end of eight days the patient was seized with a fever, which lasted three days. This fever practically amounted to a slight attack of the disease. At the end of this time, the scars healed over, & the patient was immune from further attack. Lady Mary was so convinced of the efficacy of this practice, that she tried it upon her son, with excellent results.

In this same letter to Miss Sarah Chiswell she declared, that she wished to introduce inoculation into England, which she proceeded to do, on her return in 1718. Her attempts met with the greatest opposition & she said, that in the following five years she often repented of her patriotic & generous impulse, for it opened ^{the way} ~~her way~~ to all kinds of persecutions. The conservatism of the English public was evidently as difficult to overcome, two hundred years ago as it is, today. The doctors were her greatest enemies & laughed at her "old wives" ideas. Lady Louisa Stuart relates that "she was desecanted

At twelve years of age she wrote a poem, entitled "Julia to Ovid," i.e. imitation of Ovid's Epistles. At fourteen, she wrote "Irregular verses to Truth" — very moral & mature, to come from the pen of a schoolgirl. She tried a variety of forms, — the elegy, eclogue, rondeau, ballad; but there is a sameness about her rhymes. One feels that she is but a faint echo of Pope. Her Town School exercises in all, for each day of the week except Sunday, are a series of society verses, with varying subjects. In one, a lady, recovering from smallpox, bewails the loss of her beauty; in another are pious reflections upon ill-luck at cards & ill-luck in love; in another Lydia devotes her vanishing bloom and faithless lovers. Like many others of her day, Lady Mary wrote society verses, of topical interest only, which have very little attraction to the modern reader. At that time every one at court knew everyone else. Allusions to persons of any social position were comprehended at once. It was a splendid time for social observation that Lady Mary made the most of her opportunity.

She was fond of writing epistles in rhyme, also of aiming satirical verses at old enemies like Pope or Mrs. Murray. There is little beauty in her lines, no imagination, no real feeling or passion. Her style is forced & conscious. Occasionally she is forcible & turns off a witty couplet.

- (1) In "Verses written in the Chioza of the British Palace at Pera overlooking the city of Constantinople," Dec. 26. 1718, she gives the following description:
- (1) letters & works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu vol II. p. 464.

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"Here at my window, I at once survey,
The crowded city & resounding sea;
In distant views the Asian mountains rise,
And lo! their snowy summits in the skies.
Above these mountains proud Olympian towers
The varnished seat of heavenly powers.
How to the right, my ravished eyes admire
Each gilded crescent reach antique Myre.
The marble mosques, beneath whose ample domes,
Fierce warlike sultans sleep in peaceful tombs".

When one realizes the beauty of the scene she
viewed, it is amazing, she could convey so
little of it by her verses.

These poems circulated among her friends
in manuscript form, were much praised
by admirers, and ruthlessly criticized by
enemies. Not seldom did her satires get
her into trouble. "Verses to the Imitator of
Horace," levelled at Pope caused a great
stir. Lady Mary denied having written them,
but it is nearly certain that, though perhaps
she was not the ^{sole} ~~real~~ author, she and her
brother collaborated in composing them.
Her poems, on the whole, are the least
interesting of her works. I doubt very
much whether any of them would have
been preserved had she not become
famous through her letters.

As a writer of letters her position is
established. During a long life time, her
chief expression lay in letter writing &
it cannot be doubted that she put the
best part of herself into her correspondence.
The letters written during the
Embassy to Constantinople 1716-1718 were
the first to be printed & the only ones which
the author wrote, with a conscious view
to their ultimate publication. These
letters, fifty-seven in number, have lost
a little in spontaneity from the very

fact - that she wrote them so obviously for the public. They give a series of impressions of the cities + countries, through which she + her husband passed on their way to Constantinople.

While she was in Turkey, as also during her life - in London she kept a voluminous diary, into which she put a truthful record of her life from day to day. It is quite certain that many of her "Turkish" letters, were in a large part, copies from the diary. It is interesting to speculate on the complete contents of this document. But, though Lady Mary often read extracts from it, to her friends, she left it with her daughter, only on condition that this latter destroy it shortly after her death. Lady Bute dutifully carried out her mother's wish. Lady Mary felt that this intimate account of herself + her times would not bear publicity. In consequence, we have lost perhaps many side lights on the history of the times to say nothing of the personality of this singular woman.

Lady Mary was one of the first English-women to live in the East for any length of time, + the first traveller to give an authentic, honest, clear sighted account of the customs and manners of Turkey. Former travellers had filled their books with false + exaggerated statements. She brided herself on her honesty. She was enabled through her position to learn much of the life of Turkish women, her records are always to be trusted. Even today, many of the customs, which she writes of, so accurately, are still in evidence in Turkey, that land of few changes. These letters soon gained an exceptional popularity + were trans-

enemies & recorded her journals with a kind of spiteful complacency. Occasionally she was unnecessarily coarse, though we must take into some account the fier expression of a hundred & fifty years ago.

The last group of letters are, after the "Turkish" letters, the most interesting. They were written with no thought of publication, & their manner is unaffected. In these letters we have besides her accounts of the places of her sojourning in Italy and France, her reflections on life in general; on education, politics; criticisms of people, books, manners; her thoughts on religion & her philosophy of life. Most of these letters are addressed to her daughter, for whom she had a sincere affection, & to whom she wrote in her freest, happiest manner. It is pleasant to attempt to picture the darling beauty of London, spending her last years, in quiet Italian towns, using her time in the pursuits of outdoor life, & as always reading assiduously; writing home to her daughter, the reflections of her mature judgment, still enjoying the tail ends of gossip that filter through from the gay London world, always alert, & always interested in progress and in learning.

Though Lady Mary's letters are singularly fascinating to read, she has none of the orthodox attributes of a memoir-writer. She has no imagination & little tenderness. She often is loose in her construction, & careless in grammar & spelling. But her letters are alive & full of interest. She tells a story well, & her

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wrote in a spirit of raillery. At all times it is evident that she was a facile writer. Her understanding is almost masculine in its strength and clearness. She will always live as a clever writer of letters, & through these last a truthful interpreter of the life of her times.

The introduction of inoculation into England was one of lady Mary's most important contributions to her times. Small pox, in the eighteenth century, was a very true danger to all classes of society. Lady Mary had lost her only brother in 1713, by it, & had been attacked herself, according to her grand daughter, lady Louisa Stuart about 1715 (sometime between the death of Anne, & the Embassy to Turkey.) One of the Town Eclogues, "Flavia", describes the terrors of a lady, recovering from the disease, who fears that her beauty has been impaired & dares not look into the mirror, which she holds reversed in her hand. According to several authorities (lady Louisa Stuart and lady Hertford) the sentiments expressed ⁱⁿ this eclogue were lady Mary's own, when she was convalescing. Be that as it may, it was quite certain that lady Mary shared, with the rest of the 18 century world, a horror of small pox.

During her journey to Constantinople,

① Introductory Anecdotes p. q. lady Louisa Stuart
letters & works of lady Mary Wortley Montagu
vol. I. p. vii.

(11) From the habits on the vicinity of these seeking to take events out of the hand of Providence" — a remark so often used by reactionaries ~~of all kinds~~, that it has come to have a special flavor of humor all its own. She was called an unnatural mother, ~~for~~ having risked the lives of her own children. ~~But~~ Anyone (and there were many) who wished to give a vengeful "dig" at Lady Mary, for past injuries, found now an admirable opportunity.

She triumphed in the end however. Queen Caroline (then Princess of Wales) championed her + by 1724 the practice was fairly common. In the Blau dealer, an article, very probably written by Mary Astell, spoke very high praises of the learned lady, who introduced inoculation into the country. It certainly needed courage, but of that virtue Lady Mary had her full share.

A centotable ~~to~~ high field Cathedral commemorates this service to her countrymen. The monument represents the figure of Beauty weeping over the ashes of her preserver, supposed to be enclosed in the urn, inscribed with the initials M. W. M.

It reads as follows:

(12) Introductory Anecdotes by Lady Louisa Stuart.
 Letters & Hours of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.
 vol I. p. cvii

Sacred to the memory of
The Right Honourable
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
who happily introduced from Turkey
into this country,

The salutary art
of inoculating the small pox.
Convinced of its efficacy
she first tried it with success,
on her own children
& then recommended the practice of it
to her fellow-citizens.

Thus by her example & advice
we have softened the violence
weaved the danger of this malignant disease.
To perpetuate the memory of such benevolence
& to express her gratitude,
for the benefit she herself received
from this alleviating art,
this monument is erected by
Henrietta Duge,

relict of Theodore William Duge Esq.
& daughter of Sir John Wortlesley Bart.
in the year of our Lord MDCCCLXXXIX.

Carlyle, in his essay on Lady Mary, in
the Edinburgh Encyclopedia, states
that she brought the knowledge of
inoculation from the peasants of Bel-
grade, a small village on the shores of
the Bosphorus, about ten miles from
the city of Constantinople. It is possible
that at Belgrade the natives also used
inoculation, but it is quite certain that
Lady Mary first became aware of the
practice in Adrianople, several
months before she arrived in Constanti-
nople.

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Lady Harriet's literary achievements & her introduction of novelation into England, were both very valuable contributions to her times, but her opinions on questions of universal interest were as valuable. The their influence is most difficult to trace. Still I would be a witness to believe that a woman, who held advanced views on liberty, education & the position of women, could move in London society for a number of years, without leaving a very marked impression upon her contemporaries. Certainly, though her ideas had little tangible effect during her lifetime, they helped to mould the thoughts of the succeeding generation.

Education for women in the middle of the eighteenth century, had fallen to its lowest level. There were few schools for girls & in these only the rudiments of learning were taught. Girls of quality, were educated at home by tutors & governesses, in a rather desultory & by no means thorough manner. Learning for women was not considered either necessary or appropriate. Her hours were lent to turn to the satires of the day, to the letters of men of politics & fashion, to the pages of the Spectator & Tatler, to see, in what contempt, the powers of the weaker sex were held. The idea, that education might be useful to women, if only to while away the many leisure hours of the day, was just beginning to present itself to the eighteenth century mind.

Lady Harriet was one of the pioneers in voicing the need of her country women. Having acquired most of her own education by painstaking & unaided efforts, & having a passion for learning, which

only increased with the years, we are not surprised that she could speak with warmth & vigor on the subject of education for women.

As early as 1710 when she wrote to Bishop Burnet she already recognized the obstacles in the way of a woman's pursuit of learning. Later she wrote:

- ① "I think it the highest injustice to be debarred the entertainment of my closet, & that the same studies which raise the character of a man, should hurt that of a woman."
- ② "We are educated in the greatest ignorance & are not permitted to stifle of our natural reason."

This she considered wrong. Yet, one is awed at the moderation of her suggestions to her daughter, in regard to the education of her grand children. These suggestions were given in letters, written from the continent to Lady Bute. She often admitted her fondness for writing in this vein, for she ends up a long letter by saying: "This subject is apt to run away with me; I will trouble you with no more of it."

She advised the Countess of Bute to encourage her daughters in reading. "as

- ③ "it is as necessary for the amusement of women, as the reputation of men." They should be permitted to learn languages, though erudition does not consist in being a linguist.
- ④ "True knowledge," Lady Mary remarked, "consists in knowing things, not words." She advised the Countess to talk over the books her daughters read, & thus help to form their taste. They must not be merely bookworms.
- ① Letter to the Countess of Bute Oct. 60, 1753.
 Letter & works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
 vol II p. 253.

2. Letter to the Countess of Bute Oct 10. 1753
Letters and works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
vol II. p. 254

3. Letter to the Countess of Bute
Letters and works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
vol II p. 239

4. Letter to the Countess of Bute
Letters and works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
vol II 238

however, for a knowledge of domestic arts was necessary in the education of every girl. She said in her probable way:

- ① "I think it is as scandalous for a woman not to know how to use a needle, as for a man not to know how to use a sword." She told her daughter never to rule by deceit, but to be straight forward & honest in all her dealings. Children should be trained free from prejudices. They should be allowed to think out their own philosophy & not have it ready made for them.

- ② In marriage she spoke cautiously. She admitted that "In a lottery, where there are (at the lowest computation) ten thousand blanks to a prize, it is, ^{the} most prudent choice not to venture."

Notwithstanding the wise advice to her daughter, Lady Mary's views on education might be considered somewhat radical. A letter followed which began in this vein:

- ③ "I am afraid that Bute will be extremely shocked at the proposal of a learned education for daughters, which the generality of men, believe as great a profanation as the clergy would do, if the laity should presume to exercise the functions of the priesthood." She finished up her letter by saying:

"I could add a great deal on this subject but I am not now endeavouring to remove the prejudices of mankind.

That at times she did have the desire to remove the prejudices of mankind, seems quite evident though she never set out

- ① Letter to ~~her~~ the Countess of Bute Jan. 1753. Letters & works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu vol II. p. 238.
- ② Ibid. p. 238
- ③ Letter to the Countess of Bute Mar. 6. 1753. Letters & works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu vol II. p. 239.

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systematically to do so. If she had not been so well born, or so well to do, or of such a commanding position, she might have been more drastic in her appeals for liberty as were other women, in the eighteenth century, like Hannah More & Mary Astell.

Lady Mary showed a great deal of good sense in her advice. She was never sentimental, for she was thoroughly disillusioned. She had a reverence for the austere virtues. Yet with all the strength of her convictions, she realized keenly the prejudices of the day & had no quixotic ideas of breaching them down at one blow. Her clear understanding helped her to be temperate. It is surprising to find how much she was the victim of prevailing opinions, notwithstanding her advanced views. She ended her ^{as to the education of her daughters} admonitions to the Countess of Bute by the following:

- (1) "----- a second caution to be given her (& which is most absolutely necessary) is to conceal whatever learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness; the parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy & consequently the most inveterate hatred of all the & she fools."

Lady Mary has been accused of a certain vanity in her own learning. Local well-wishers to make her out a conceited bene-dicting & Pope calls her a sabbler, with utter scorn & sarcasm. But though she may have used her sharp wit to the discomfort of her companions, she was essentially modest. She showed in her

- (1) Letter to Lady Bute. Jan. 1753.
Letters & Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
vol. II. p. 237.

letters, true humility, an absence of vanity which is remarkable in a self-conscious eighteenth century memoir writer. He noted Thucydides as saying, that "Ignorance is bold, knowledge is reserved." On all occasions he condemned the self-opinionated, impressed her daughter with a sense of reverence for truth & modesty.

In politics, Lady Maria's attitude should not be overlooked. Bagot says in his essay on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "a lightening element of female influence is to be found through much of the politics of the eighteenth century."

Political & court life were very much bound together, & much less complicated than they are today. London was little more than a very large overgrown country town, where all those of any station were well-known to each other. Edward Wortley Montagu was a member for Parliament all his life, for Westminster, Huntingdon, & Peterborough. His wife, though somewhat bored by her husband's personality, was always interested in his political career. She was ready with advice & encouragement & often urged him on, at times, when his cautious nature would have hesitated fatally.

She followed the movements of Parliament with keen enjoyment. She summed up the eccentricities of politicians with her usual quick perception. She never longed for leadership nor participation in politics herself - but she could not help enjoying the pleasures of a spectator. That

women should ever desire a share in the management of the affairs of state, never had occurred to her, in her wildest dreams. She wrote in one of her letters:

① "I do not complain of men for having engrossed the government: in excluding us from all degrees of power, they preserve us from many fatigues, many dangers & perhaps many crimes."

She recorded in a letter to March 1739 to the Countess of Pomfret, an occurrence in Parliament, which shall be quoted at length, for it shows several interesting points. First, it is a good example of ~~the~~ Lady Mary's skill in telling a good story; second, it relates a circumstance, that might easily have taken place within the last few years in England; third, it indicates the interest ^{taken by} a few women in England in parliamentary affairs of the times:

② "At the last warm debate in the House of Lords, it was unanimously resolved that there should be no crowd of unnecessary auditors; consequently the fair sex were excluded, & the gallery designed to the sole use of the House of Commons. Notwithstanding which determination a tribe of dames resolved to show on this occasion, that neither men nor laws could resist them. These heroines were Lady Huntington, the Duchess of Queensberry, the Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Westmoreland, Lady Cobham, Lady Charlotte Edmon, Lady Archibald

③ letter to the Countess of Pomfret.
letters & works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.
vol II p. 39.

④ letter to the Countess of Pomfret. Mar. 1739
letters & works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
Vol II. p. 40.

Hamilton their daughter, Mrs. Salt & Mrs. Pendarves, & Mrs. Frances Sanderson. I am thus particular in their names, since I took upon them to be the boldest assertors, & most resigned sufferers for liberty, I ever read of. They presented themselves at the door at 9 o'clock in the morning, where Sir Wm. Sanderson respectfully informed them; the Chancellor had made an order against their admittance. The Duchess of Newcastle, as head of the squadron, pitched at the ill-breeding, of a mere lawyer, & desired him to let them upstairs privately. After some modest refusals, he swore by Q — he would not let them in. Her case with a noble warmth answered by Q — they would come in, in spite of the Chancellor & the whole House. This being reported, the Peers resolved to turn them out; an order was made that the doors should not be opened till they had raised their siege. These Amazons now showed themselves qualified for the duty even of foot soldiers; they stood there till five in the afternoon, without either sustenance or evacuation, every now & then, blowing volley of thumps, kicks, & traps against the door, with so much violence that the speakers in the House were scarce heard. When the words were not to be conquered by this, the two duchesses (very well apprised in the use of stratagems in war) commanded a dead silence of half an hour; the Chancellor, who thought this a certain proof of their absence, (the Commons also being very impatient to enter) gave order for the opening of the doors, upon which they all rushed in, pushed aside their competitors & placed themselves in the front

row of the gallery.

They stayed there till the house rose, & during applause, & showed us not only by smiles & always been allowed us but by noisy laughs & soft temptations; which is supposed to be why poor low Henry spoke miserably. Beg your pardon, dear madam, for this long relation; but 'tis impossible to be short on so copious a subject; & you must own this action very well worthy of record, & I think not to be paralleled in history ancient or modern.

Among the many interesting personalities of the eighteenth century, few have stood out as a figure, full of originality & force. She has given much delight through her "vignettes" letters, to her own generation, as well as to ours. The country owes her a debt of gratitude for the introduction of circulation, she has shown not forget the plea she made for them, at a time when the subject of woman's education, had none of the popularity it now enjoys.

She was a brave, solitary spirit - whose courage we may admire, while we deplore her eccentricism. She was disappointed in what life had to offer her, & yet if she had lived in another age, ^{in different surroundings} she might have been a Jane Austen, or a George Eliot. As it is, her contributions to her times, were such as to give her, though not a place in the line-light of fame, still, an assured position among the many interesting minor figures of English literature.

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