

Bruce and the Microbe

(1)

David found a little Germ –

Its name, of course, you know:

For everywhere that David goes

That name is sure to go.

He found it in a Spleen one day,

And raised a cultured stock;

“With you,” he said “I’ll demonstrate

The postulates of Koch.”

(2)

David fed a hundred Apes

On germ-infected diet,

And said, “They’ve got the fever, sure.”

(For monkeys can’t deny it.)

“What makes the *men* get fever so?”

The doctors wondering cried.

“They must have got my germ inside,”

The scientist replied.

(3)

David knew a little Boat

That was for New York bound,

With five-and-sixty little goats

That yielded milk all round.

And in the milk that microbe lurked.

(Hence David would forbid it),

And when the men got sick and ill,

“’Twas germs,” he said, “that did it.”

(4)

David had a little Fad;

His object was to show

That where the goat of Malta went,

The fever too would go.

“Fever must be with goats at sea,”

Said Koch’s devout believer;

“All of that crew, I swear to you,

Were down with Malta Fever.”

(5)

At Antwerp goats were quarantined,

And milk was drunk galore,

But no one seemed a bit the worse

For drinking it on shore.

In course of time *another* boat

Took every “Nan” and “Bill,”

And steamed across the “herring –pond” –

Yet nobody was ill!

(6)

David knew a thing or two:

He wrote a little Tract,

Telling how passengers and crew

With fever were attacked.

No one went free of twenty-three

(At least so David thundered),

And how the crew got the cargo through –

Well, everybody wondered!

(7)

David had a Bright Idea,

None thought of it but he:

He took no note of the second boat,

Which carried sixty-three.

But he cursed the goats of Maltese breed

(Some said he lost his senses):

Behold him knighted for his deed –

Sir David Melitensis.

B. E. K.

(Originally published in Malta in: 'Risorgimento' 4 August 1910, p2)