

and the competition lasted three hours and was well attended by many spectators interested in the Ambulance Service. The shield and first badges were won by the squad of a Glasgow corps, the 1st V.B. Highland Light Infantry. Surg. Col. Baines in presenting the shield expressed satisfaction at its being won by a Scottish corps for the first time.

The Duke of Devonshire, in presiding at a meeting held at Devonshire House in aid of the extension of the West London Hospital, Hammersmith, said, "It had never been clear to his mind why the provision of necessary Hospital accommodation should be assumed as a matter of course to be a matter for voluntary exertion. He had never been able to understand why the State or municipality should not have to recognise fuller responsibility for the provision of treatment of sickness and disease. The State recognised responsibility for the health of the minds of the people by making ample provision for education of all kinds, and why should it not provide for the health of the people against attacks of disease or sickness?"

The Committee of the Charing Cross Hospital are anxious to correct the impression that the building is to be removed to Camberwell. At a recent meeting the following resolution was unanimously passed:—"That the Council emphatically declares that the removal of the Charing Cross Hospital from its present site is unnecessary, inexpedient and impracticable."

A large measure of success appears to be attending the experiment of the Colony for Epileptics at Chalfont St. Peter. It is stated that the association of the epileptics in a common life is beneficial to them, and reduces their tendency to morbid melancholy, unhealthy introspection and irritability. The patients are kept busy in gardens and workshops, and they enter also with spirit into outdoor pastimes such as football and cricket, the latter, however, proving most popular.

The Annual Festival of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem will be held on the 24th of June, which is the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. The Commemoration Service will begin at 10.15 a.m. at St. John's Church, Clerkenwell. The members and associates will lunch together at 1 p.m. at the Albion Hotel, Aldersgate, and the General Assembly will be held at the Charterhouse at 2.15 p.m., after which an inspection of the Metropolitan Corps of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, and a demonstration, will be given in the Charterhouse grounds. In the evening the dinner will take place at the Imperial Institute, at which the lady members of the Order are to be present.

By permission of the Earl and Countess of Ellesmere a concert will be given by the English Ladies' Orchestral Society in the Picture Gallery, Bridgewater House, at 3.15 p.m. on Thursday, June 27th, in aid of the funds of the British Ophthalmic Hospital at Jerusalem.

The new Cottage Hospital at Wood Green has just been opened by Mrs. Passmore Edwards, whose husband has contributed so generously to the scheme.

Some difference of opinion arose between the Executive Committee of the Walsall Hospital and the surgical staff with regard to the plans for the restoration and extension of the building. The staff naturally thought they should have been allowed to express their views on the proposed construction. A meeting which was expected to be somewhat heated was held, but the tact of the authorities prevented this. Hands were shaken all round, and the surgical staff are to have their recommendations carried into effect.

## Science Notes.

### SNAKES.

SOME interesting observations on inoculation for snake poison are sent from South Africa by Dr. Cartwright Reed. Two years ago a pointer dog was severely bitten by a cobra, but recovered after being treated with ammonia. A second dog was also bitten, but suffered somewhat less. Both dogs now "go for" snakes of all kinds with perfect impunity as regards poison, although they are frequently bitten on the lips and elsewhere.

In the case of a native also who had been once bitten by a cobra with serious consequences, a second wound was followed by no bad symptoms beyond a little local sore.

Dr. Cartwright Reed announces his intention of pursuing a series of experiments with the view of discovering whether it is possible to cultivate and attenuate a virus capable of inoculation. The matter is one of great practical importance as well as of scientific interest. In India, over ten thousand persons are killed every year by snakes. The victims are chiefly natives; this is due, of course, to their habit of going about barefooted. The cow-boys of North America, on the other hand, find in their boots not only protection for the feet, but effectual weapons wherewith to kill the rattle-snakes. The boot is removed from the foot and held by the upper end, while the snake is hit by the heavy heel or sole.

The rattle-snake is said to be most dangerous during the "blind" season, when it is not so ready as usual to keep out of the way of the passer-by, either on account of its blindness or its sluggishness; so it is disturbed and retaliates by striking at the intruder. This "blind" season is probably the period at which the snake changes its skin.

Readers of Rudyard Kipling's "Jungle Book" will remember the prowess of Rikki Tikki in snake-killing. The tribe of mongooses to which this small hero of fiction belonged, has long been distinguished for the destruction of reptiles, rats, small birds and eggs. So wonderfully accomplished is the mongoose in his work, that a legend arose of his having recourse to some plant as an antidote for snake poison. Now his immunity might be attributed to inoculation, if naturalists were not already satisfied that it could be sufficiently accounted for by his wonderful watchfulness and agility. These qualities are, of course, the very essence of a beast of prey, but none perhaps possesses them in a higher degree than does the mongoose.

In the Island of Jamaica the value of the work of mongooses has been estimated at over £150,000 a year. Not much more than twenty years ago the sugar-planting industry of Jamaica was threatened with annihilation by the ravages of swarms of rats. Nine mongooses were introduced, and they increased rapidly, while the rats correspondingly decreased. The mongooses are now protected by law, since they were so much in demand that the natives set traps on the land of the planter who introduced them, in order to procure a supply for other plantations.

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