

Colonel Wood's appointment as Military Governor of Cuba, to succeed Colonel Brooke, is announced. He is an army surgeon, and was President McKinley's physician. He went into the Cuban war as Colonel of the Rough Riders, of whom Mr. Teddy Roosevelt was second in command.

There is no distinction so much coveted in the British Army and Navy as the "Victoria Cross, instituted in 1856 as a reward for conspicuous valour in the presence of the enemy." This distinction is so seldom given that in 1898 there were but 171 names of men on the rolls of the Order, and these include not only officers in the army and navy, but enlisted men. The Cross is a prize for which all can contend. Twelve of those who have the Cross are medical officers, or more than one in ten of the total number of officers.

How Dr. Whitechurch won this coveted cross is still fresh in the public mind. Dr. Whitechurch was surgeon with Robertson's gallant corps in Chitral in 1895. In a reconnaissance he and Dr. Baird were defeated by a greatly superior force. Dr. Baird was shot through the body. Dr. Whitechurch put him on a litter and rallied the men to make their way back to the fort. From time to time the litter was set down and all hands halted to beat back the enemy. Finally the four litter bearers were killed. Then Whitechurch drew Baird's right arm over his own shoulder, put his left arm around his waist, and so dragged and carried him back through a steady fire to the fort. Baird was again shot in the face, but Whitechurch passed through the fire unharmed. For this act of heroism Dr. Whitechurch received the Victoria Cross.

But there is no Victoria Cross for the thousands of still braver deeds which are shown, not perhaps on the battlefield, but in the quiet of everyday life, with no one to applaud and with no reward except the consciousness of duty well performed. Cowardice is incompatible with high principles. When something more than animal courage is required the nobler qualities of the nature dominate over the purely selfish, and the highest illustrations of pure courage are seen in almost every walk in life.

A discovery just made at the Beaujon Hospital is causing a grave scandal in the Parisian medical world. The examination papers just completed by the students had been transferred to the hospital and placed in special boxes to await a conference of the examiners. Yesterday morning it was discovered that two large holes had been bored, through which the papers had been saturated with sulphuric acid and utterly destroyed. The police declare that the guilty person or persons must be medical students. By this occurrence the candidates for diplomas will be delayed until February, 1900.

In the annual report of the Strangers' Hospital, Rio de Janeiro, for the present year, we notice with satisfaction that the percentage of deaths from yellow fever, as well as from other diseases, was considerably less than that for the previous year. This report includes that of the President, the Building Committee, the Physician in Charge, and the Matron, so that in each department the official responsible reports directly to the Director and Subscribers—a most excellent custom.

## The Notification of Measles.

Mr. W. C. Collier, Medical Officer of Health for Hammersmith, writes, as follows, in his annual report, on the subject of the Notification of Measles: "The Public Health Committee had during last year under consideration the question of declaring Measles a 'dangerous infectious disease,' under the provisions of the Public Health (London) Act, 1891, and a recommendation was sent up to your Vestry advising that you should pass a resolution so as to bring the disease under the Act, in order that it might be dealt with in the same manner as the other notifiable infectious diseases. Your Vestry, I much regret, refused to adopt the advice of the Committee. I beg to point out to you that of the whole 10 diseases that are by law declared to be dangerous infectious diseases there were in the parish last year 57 deaths, whereas the deaths from measles alone were 128, or more than twice as many deaths from measles as from all the other 10 notifiable infectious diseases put together.

"Judging from the total number of deaths, measles was, as compared with the population, by far the most fatal infectious disease. I had the opportunity of seeing many cases of measles last year, and I have no hesitation in stating that some of the illnesses were as serious as ordinary cases of smallpox. I saw patients with the whole surfaces of their bodies swollen. I sent one case into a General Hospital, and I am informed that consultations were held by members of the staff, and that for several days they were of opinion that the patient was suffering from smallpox. It appears to me that it is in the highest degree desirable that something should be done with the object of preventing so large a sacrifice of human life, and affliction that is caused to so many families.

"From what I have observed of the great progress of sanitation during the last twenty-two years, I have not the slightest doubt that the notification of measles will be eventually enforced.

"In London last year there were 3,069 deaths registered from this disease. Is it likely that society will continue to be satisfied with so great a sacrifice of human life, with practically no efficient means being adopted by the public health authorities to prevent it? I think not. I remember in the year 1877, when there were 2,544 deaths from small-pox in London, when there was no notification of the disease and comparatively nothing being done to prevent the disease spreading, I got Sir Charles Dilke to bring the questions before the House of Commons, and to ask Her Majesty's Government to bring in a Bill for the notification of the disease. Everyone in the present day approves of and realizes the great advantage of the action which was subsequently taken, but society did not then seem to be roused at the state of affairs. In the present day with such a mortality from small-pox, every newspaper in the kingdom would be calling attention to the matter. I remember a medical man making a formal complaint against me to the magistrate at the Hammersmith Police Court because I had removed a patient to an isolation hospital when suffering from small-pox, and had disinfected the infected room. No medical man could be found in the present day to disapprove of such a course. During last year there was only one death from small-pox in London."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)