

Dumb Doctors.

HOW ANIMALS PRACTISE MEDICINE.

It is interesting to note, writes an animal lover in the *Leeds' Mercury Supplement*, that just as inferior human races have never been without remedies for wounds and general ailments, so we learn that the members of the animal kingdom have been no less skilful in practising surgery and medicine. If the latter have used empirical methods, instead of those based on science and theory, they appear to have been no less successful in their mode of treatment. By something more remarkable than instinct, the different orders of the animal creation have displayed amazing resources in time of sickness and disablement.

Taking the question of cleanliness, it is well known that animals of the most diverse types wash themselves and bathe with regularity, not to say delight. Without the "tub," in stream or pond, they are sorely uncomfortable. Animals so various in structure and habitat as elephants, stags, birds, and ants, are notable instances of lovers of the bath.

The harvesting ants, it has been observed, keep their ground in beautiful condition, never allowing a weed to show itself, and keeping guard against any kind of noxious growth. Further than this they remove the dead bodies of their fellow ants most carefully. Had any one a few years ago dared to state that ants not only bury their dead, but pay funeral honours to them, he would have forfeited all claims to credibility. Yet even this peculiar human trait of character has been recorded and amply confirmed.

DUMB NURSES AND DOCTORS.

If again we turn to the question of reproduction, we have remarkable illustrations of foresight. We learn that the animals suckle their young, keep them clean, wean them at the proper time, and educate them, displaying even more maternal instinct than the women of uncivilised lands. Several species of the insect realms, Reaumur notes, are known to love, give birth, and speedily die, yet before making their exit, take care to make provision for their embryo offspring.

When suffering from parasites, they adopt curious methods, such as the use of dust, mud, clay, etc., to get rid of their implacable foes. Similarly, if they suffer from fever, they prudently restrict their diet, keep quiet, seek the shades of darkness, or choose airy places, drink water, and sometimes plunge into it with the utmost eagerness. Most instinctively do they choose the right kind of food according to their changing conditions. When

a dog has lost its appetite, it goes in search of that species of grass known as "dogs' grass," which acts as an emetic and purgative. Cats also relish grass under certain conditions. Correspondingly, sheep and cows, when ill, seek out most persistently certain herbs. It is noticeable, too, that dogs when constipated eat fatty substances such as oil and butter with avidity. The same thing is observed in horses, while an animal suffering from rheumatism always keeps as far as possible in the warmth of the sun.

ANIMAL SURGERY.

In the department of surgery there are equally characteristic examples to hand of animal resources. The "warrior" ants have regularly organised ambulances for their sick comrades. The scientist Latreille cut the antennæ of an ant, and discovered that other ants came and covered the wounded part with a transparent fluid secreted from their mouths. If a chimpanzee be wounded it stops the bleeding by placing its hand on the wound, or dressing it with leaves and grass. More extraordinary, if an animal has a wounded leg or arm hanging on, it completes the amputation by means of its teeth.

Dogs, as may be supposed, evince many traits in relation to surgery. A dog on being stung in the muzzle by a viper, was observed to plunge its head repeatedly for several days into running water, and subsequently it recovered. A sporting dog was run over by a carriage, and for a period of three weeks in winter time it remained lying in a brook, to which its food was taken, and eventually the animal recovered its comparative agility. Another example may be cited in regard to a terrier dog which hurt its right eye, whereupon it remained lying under a counter, avoiding light and heat, although it had habitually kept close to the fire. Its general treatment consisted of rest and abstinence from food, and the local application of licking the upper surface of the paw, which he applied to the wounded eye, again licking the paw on its becoming dry.

THE WATER CURE.

Mention of the feline race indicates something akin to amazing intelligence. When wounded, they treat themselves by this simple method of continuous irrigation. The savant M. Delaunay, in a communication to the Biological Society many years ago, cites the case of a cat which remained for some time lying on the bank of a river, also that of another "tabby" which had the singular fortitude to remain for 48 hours under a jet of cold water.

Animals suffering from what is known as

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