

do would be done to impress the wavering minds of the discomfited army with the certainty of invisible help. It raised the drooping spirits, for "they shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again." Numbers iv, 5, 6, therefore, makes it clear that when the Ark appeared in public it carried its trappings, and especially in such a case as the present, "when the camp setteth forward" to battle.

Bearing on the hypnotic influence of such sacred emblems, I may cite the example of the Labarum in the armies of Constantine, the image of Christ carried by the troops of Justinian, and the Holy Lance with the Crusaders at Antioch. The Mohammedans had their sacred standard, and the Sassanian monarchs of Persia the blacksmith's apron on a flagstaff, etc.

Dr. Stansfield has a doubt that the Hebrew word *'akhbar* covered both rat and mouse. Well, there is in Biblical Hebrew only one word for both these animals, just as in the Egyptian language there was the common word *Pennu*, in the Greek *μῦς*, and in the Latin *mus*, for mouse and rat. If the "reverend gentleman who understands Hebrew" will give me the special word for rat, I shall be obliged. The fact is these words cover several species of rodents, and not mice, and rats, and field mice only, and could equally well be translated otherwise.

The bearings of my original letter were:

1. That it has been proved by actual experiment that the flea transmits plague from rat to rat.
2. If only one were permitted to make a criminal more useful in his death than in his life, then it could also be proved, by direct test, that the flea carries plague from the rat to man.
3. Failing No. 2, which, owing to the frailties of some of the weaker brethren, is impossible at the present time, I suggest the incidents following on the capture of the Ark as a natural verification of the transmission of the pestilence by fleas, and, in the instance of Beth-shemesh, without any human contact whatever.

I do not wish to play upon or cavil with words, but simply to direct thoughtful minds to *what has been*, for I hold, with Chrysostom, that "it is not names which give confidence in things, but things which give confidence in names."—I am, etc.,

London, W., Jan. 19th.

R. HAVELOCK CHARLES.

P.S.—Some people may say that the rat was unknown to the Egyptians, Greeks, Hebrews, and Romans. The reply to this is: (1) That fossil remains of both rats and mice have been found in the pleistocene deposits of Europe and Asia. (2) Amongst Egyptian papyri there is one, of a satirical nature, in which is a picture of a "Battle between the Cats and the Rats." I am indebted to one of the first authorities of the day on these matters for the following note:

There is another word, to which some of the earlier scholars attached the meaning "rat," in Isaiah ii, 20, but it is now generally rendered "mole." This word occurs *here only*, and alike its spelling and meaning are doubtful. In the late Hebrew there were two other words, *yaqméi* and *sór*, used in addition to *'akhbar* to signify "mouse." If the rat was known to the Hebrews, they had apparently no other word but *'akhbar* to designate it. The last word was used also in Western Aramaic. In Syriac there were at least two words for "rat," but there is no root in Hebrew corresponding to these words.

R. H. C.

THE HOME TREATMENT OF SCARLET FEVER.

SIR,—I was interested to see Dr. Robert Milne's letter in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of January 16th on the above subject, and also a former communication from him (vol. ii, 1908, p. 1333), in which he referred to my father, Mr. J. Brendon Curgenven, in connexion with this treatment.

Over twenty years ago my father first suggested the inunction of eucalyptus oil in scarlatina; he wrote to the medical papers, read a paper before the Epidemiological Society, and also, I think, before the Society of Medical Officers of Health. A certain number of medical men took up the matter, but our profession is conservative, and the fear of infection in a serious illness like scarlet fever is so great in the public mind, that there was always difficulty in fighting against the wet sheet and the six weeks' isolation. I was in practice with my father when we first tried this treatment. There can be no doubt

that it mitigates the symptoms and lessens the chance of, even if it does not prevent, complications, besides preventing the spread of infection.

With Dr. Milne I shall be glad to see the treatment thoroughly tried, for if it be found, as both he and I contend, to do away with the long infectious stage during desquamation, it will save the country large sums of money in connexion with the isolation hospitals.

Although Dr. Milne mentioned my father in his first communication, I notice that throughout his last he refers to the treatment as if it were his own, which I think is hardly right. The credit of having introduced it certainly belongs to my father.

I agree with Dr. Milne with regard to measles. I have tried eucalyptus in a good many cases without benefit, and never found it prevent the spread of the disease.—I am, etc.,

London, W., Jan. 17th.

J. SADLER CURGENVEN.

VINCENT'S ANGINA.

SIR,—The evidence originally given by Professor Vincent in favour of the pathogenicity of the fusiform bacillus and spirillum described by him has always seemed to me to be weak. He himself describes one clinical type, in which the fusiform bacillus is found, as being much like diphtheria. Another form, to which he has given the name "ulcerative membranous," is in some cases at least strongly suggestive of scarlatina; indeed, there may be a scarlatinal erythema, a pseudo-rheumatism, and later albuminuria and endocarditis, though Professor Vincent attributes these to a superadded infection, usually streptococcal. The majority of the cases, however, described as ulcerative membranous seems to be indistinguishable clinically from what are usually called septic throats.

Yet another form is described which closely resembles syphilitic ulceration; but though Professor Vincent states that the bacteriological examination will make the diagnosis clear, he adds that it is important to know that secondary syphilitic lesions may be the site of a super-added infection by the spirillum and fusiform bacillus. These points are to be found in a paper by Professor Vincent in the *Lancet* for May 13th, 1905.

Thus such a diversity of effect is attributed to a common cause that it is difficult to accept the reasoning as sound. Strong evidence would be necessary, and this I do not think has been produced.

In the article to which Dr. Nash kindly referred I gave, with my own experience of the examination of films, a brief account of the experimental evidence, so far as I could trace it, as to the pathogenicity of the organisms.

Dr. Wyatt Wingrave's valuable observations show how widely distributed such organisms must be.—I am, etc.,

Blackburn, Jan. 16th.

MILES B. ARNOLD.

THE ST. JOHN AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

SIR,—I quite agree with the remarks of Dr. Edward Jepson concerning his experience and views of the St. John Ambulance Association and the method of distribution of their honours.

Some time ago one of the officials of the Order attended a function for the presentation of prizes, and announced the fact that "H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, Grand Prior of the Order, had expressed his approval and sanctioned distinction for a certain medical man to be made a Knight of Justice," an irregular procedure surely, as it had not appeared in the *Gazette* at that time, but a very proper recognition for a medical man who gives his time and services in the way so very many do; but the point of the whole thing was this, as Dr. Jepson shows, it was a question of "kissing going by favour." There were many medical men who had done a great deal more in the way of lecturing and routine work who had been passed over and had not "caught the eye" of the secretary of the Order, as some would have it.

Quite recently there was a case of a retired army doctor who had put in not more than two or three years' work in the ordinary way for the association, and was made a Knight of Justice.

Consistency seems to be the one thing wanting in the actions of those in authority at St. John's Gate.—I am, etc.,

January 18th.

ANOTHER LECTURER.