

Indian Snake Bites and Pasteur.

From The Westminster Gazette.

The next field in which M. Pasteur and his disciples hope to achieve great results is that covered by snake bites in India. Prof. Percy Frankland, in his address on Pasteur's work to the British Association yesterday, referred to this subject as follows:

“The possibilities of securing protection by means of the serum of immunized animals extend even beyond the boundaries of infectious disease, for Calmette, in France, and Fraser, in Edinburgh, have been able to gradually accustom animals to larger and larger doses of snake venom, and have found the blood serum of such animals endowed with the power of protecting other animals into which the venom is injected. When we remember, said the lecturer, that 20,000 of our Indian subjects perish annually from snake bites, and that the new method of treatment extends the prospect of saving many, if not all, of these, it is obvious that we are here again face to face with a subject of stupendous importance, and which affects us above all other nations of Europe.”

Let us hope that this dream will be realized. But one would not be surprised if the civil power in India regarded these successive victories of the medical and sanitary authorities with not altogether unmixed feelings. For each fresh decrease in the Indian death rate means a fresh problem for the administrator and the politician. In this case, however, they are likely to have some little time for consideration before M. Pasteur restores, as it were, to life 20,000 persons per annum.

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