

at five points, though not *in situ*, in the Glastonbury Lake Village. From the range of finds in the area of excavation of the present season, it is evident that this quarter of the village was a centre for weaving. Weaving combs, bobbings, needles of bone and no less than twenty-four spindle whorls were found. Among other objects were an iron dagger with bronze fittings, bronze finger rings, yellow paste beads, three spurs of fighting cocks, linked bronze wire and two 'cheek-pieces' of horses' bridle bits. Among the finds from the excavations of this and previous seasons, to be exhibited in the new Wyndham Galleries of the Somerset County Museum at Taunton, is a mounted set of the spikelets and grains of *Triticum dicoccum* found at Meare, with a set of its modern counterpart by its side. These have been prepared by Sir Rowland Biffen.

Spanish Influence on Progress of Medicine

ON the occasion of the International Congress of the History of Medicine, to be held at Madrid on September 23-29, the Wellcome Research Institution has issued a booklet illustrating Spain's contribution to medical science from the earliest times down to the discovery of cinchona in the seventeenth century. After alluding to Spanish contacts with former civilisations such as those of the Phœnicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans and Visigoths, the work deals with the Hispano-Moresque Renaissance, which was remarkable for the foundation of schools of medicine and pharmacy and the establishment of hospitals, some of which were equipped with large libraries, as well as for the appearance of eminent medical men, including Albucasis, the author of a great medico-surgical treatise which remained the leading textbook until the time of William of Saliceto (1275), Avenzoar, the greatest of the Hispano-Moresque physicians, and Maimonides, the Hispano-Jewish philosopher and physician, the octocentenary of whose birth has recently been celebrated. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a large number of hospitals were founded in different parts of Spain, especially at Barcelona, Granada, Malaga and Madrid. The outstanding medical personalities of the sixteenth century in Spain were Nicolás Monardes, of Seville, whose private museum of natural objects was one of the earliest, if not the first, in Spain; Francisco Hernandez, physician to Philip II and author of a monumental work on the natural history of Mexico; and Andres Laguna, physician to Charles V and Pope Julian III and professor at the University of Alcalá de Henares, where Cardinal Ximenes the founder had endowed six professorships of medicine and two of anatomy and surgery. The booklet is illustrated by facsimiles of pages from Spanish medical works, portraits of Spanish doctors and views of the old hospitals.

Snake Bite in the United States of America

IN 1908, Prentiss Willson gathered reports of 740 bites by poisonous snakes covering a period of almost a century. That result gave an entirely false idea

of the prevalence of snake-bite in the United States, for Dr. T. S. Githens now records 2,376 cases which have come to his notice during the past eight years, and estimates that there may be 1,500-2,000 cases each year (*Scientific Monthly*, August 1935, p. 163). It may be, also, that the number of snakes is increasing, for when wilderness is converted into farm land, small rodents increase greatly in number, and these form the mainstay of the snakes' diet. The danger to health varies most with the amount of venom injected, and this is closely related to the size of the snake involved, so that the most dangerous species are the large Florida and Texan diamond-backs. The only local measure having any real value is the application of a moderately tight tourniquet, associated with free incision of the site of the bite and the swollen area and persistent use of suction. But the mainstay of treatment is the use of adequate doses of antivenum, a specific serum effective against the bites of North American vipers, which has reduced the mortality rate from 14.3 to 3.7 per cent. Of the 72 persons who died in spite of serum treatment, 25 were near death when the serum was first given, and in 6 other cases death was due to gangrene resulting from too tight tourniquets; more than half were children less than fourteen years of age.

The Voyage of Peter Mundy

IN the *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of London*, Session 1934-35, Part 2, Mr. N. B. Kinnear and Mr. F. C. Fraser direct attention to the remarkable journals and zoological notes from the voyage of Peter Mundy, 1855-56. Some very clever sketches are reproduced showing a remarkable vivacity, and his notes show that he was a careful observer. Three volumes of his travels have already been published by the Hakluyt Society; the fourth and final volume is being edited by Miss Anstey, who assisted the late Sir Richard Temple with the earlier volumes. The running bird from Ascension Island illustrated which "can neither fly nor swimme" is identified as a rail, now extinct, and the strange seal-like creature from St. Helena is thought to be a sea elephant, which, although never recorded from so far north, is a very strong swimmer, and it is apparently just possible that one could have reached this island. The third picture represents a whale, identified by Mr. Fraser as an adult Atlantic right whale. Mundy's description of the feeding mechanism is stated to be quite correct, and he is probably one of the first to have given a true account of this.

Zoological Gardens of Travancore

IT is not easy to realise what great efforts are being made in all parts of the Empire for the interest and instruction of the people in matters of natural history. The Zoological Section of the Public Gardens at Trivandrum contained last year ("the year 1109 M.E.") 149 mammals, 225 birds, 26 reptiles and 20 fishes; and the growing popularity of the institution was indicated by an increase in the number of visitors to 462,566 from the 302,425 of the preceding year.