

are not present in the Calmuck communities, though regularly infecting and "immunising" the Russian town-dwellers in childhood?

THE death is announced of Dr. A. J. M. Bentley, distinguished by his knowledge of tropical diseases and as the author of "Berl Beri, its Etiology, Symptoms, Pathology, and Treatment."

THE death is announced, at sixty-six years of age, of Dr. B. S. Ringer, formerly medical officer to H.B.M. Consulate-General and the Chinese I.M. Customs, Canton, China, and the discoverer in Formosa of a parasitic worm known as *Distoma ringeri*.

THE Astronomical Society of France has just elected the following officers:—President, M. P. Puiseux, astronomer to the Paris Observatory; vice-president, Prince Roland Bonaparte; general secretary, M. Camille Flammarion; secretary, M. Jean Mascart; and treasurer, M. Maurice Ballot.

THE Christiania correspondent of *The Times* states that on April 20 a Bill was brought forward providing for the necessary grant for wireless telegraphy stations at Hammerfest and Spitsbergen. The Spitsbergen station will be kept open all the year round, and will be in charge of three or four men. The distance from the Hammerfest station is 750 miles.

A FUND has been opened for the purpose of presenting a testimonial to Mr. Henry Keeping, who has been for fifty years curator of the Geological Museum, Cambridge, and is now retiring from active work. There are probably many who will welcome this opportunity for expressing their appreciation of Mr. Keeping's long service in the cause of geology. Subscriptions should be sent to Mr. F. R. Cowper Reed, Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge.

A NEW system of wireless inductive telephony was inaugurated at Stratford-on-Avon on Thursday last, when Mr. H. von Kramer's "railophone" was tested on a train belonging to the Stratford-on-Avon and Midland Junction Railway. Two large frames—or coils—of wires are attached to the carriages, one being used for despatching messages and the other for receiving same. By means of induction between these coils and a wire running along by the side of the metals, but some distance away, and connected to instruments in the signal-cabins, messages can be received and despatched whilst the trains are in motion or standing. The test was successfully carried out, and a party of journalists and others were conveyed in the train for several miles, receiving or sending messages whilst *en route*. Eventually it is proposed to connect up the signal-cabins with the general telephone and telegraphic systems, thus making it possible to send and receive messages and telegrams to or from places far away from the railway whilst still in the train.

News of Captain Amundsen's Antarctic Expedition has been brought by Captain Nilsen, commanding the *Fram*, which arrived at Buenos Ayres a few days ago. It appears from a Reuter message that Captain Amundsen arrived in Antarctic regions on January 14, and the ship dropped anchor safely close to a comparatively elevated coast. Camp was established on a hill near where the *Fram* was moored, and preparations were begun for a journey to the Pole. The *Fram* sailed on February 14, before Captain Amundsen had started for the south. In a few weeks the vessel will leave Buenos Ayres for scientific work during a voyage between Africa and South America, and will then return to Buenos Ayres to renew her stores. Captain Nilsen expects to be able to leave

Buenos Ayres on October 1 in search of Captain Amundsen and his party.

THE death is announced of M. Edouard Dupont, director of the Royal Museum of Natural History in Brussels, and well known for his researches in many departments of geology. An appreciative notice by M. Cornet appears in *Le Mouvement Géographique* for April 9. M. Dupont was born at Dinant on January 31, 1841, and died at Cannes on March 31 of the present year at the age of seventy. His work in connection with the preparation of a geological map of Belgium is well known in the British Isles, and the complete skeletons of *Iguanodon*, discovered in the clays of Bernissart, were set up in the museum in Brussels under his care. While the palæontological collections were extended through his personal studies, he paid attention also to the stratigraphical conditions under which the rocks of Belgium were laid down. His researches were especially directed to the Carboniferous Limestone, in which he recognised a coral-reef type and also calcareous fragmental deposits of a pelagic character. In 1887 he made an expedition at his own expense to the Congo territory, the results being published in a book entitled "Lettres sur le Congo," in which geological, botanical, and anthropological observations were happily combined.

THE experiments of Mr. Glen Curtiss with his hydro-aéroplane have culminated in the production of a machine capable of running over land and travelling on the water with the same facility with which it rises from either of these elements into the air. His original model was fitted with two floats, a water-shield, and a large pontoon, but in his latest production only a single pontoon is used. This pontoon is rectangular in plan, 12 feet long, 2 feet wide, 1 foot deep, and 50 lb. in weight. Its under surface curves up to meet the upper surface 3 feet from the front edge; similarly, its upper surface curves down to meet the under surface 3 feet from its rear edge. The aéroplane itself is of the usual type of Curtiss biplane, and carries under each extremity of the lower plane a skid, 4 feet long, to prevent the plane tips touching the water when turning upon it. Wheels are fitted in front and behind the pontoon. The aéroplane has made many successful flights at San Diego Bay (Cal.), rising easily into the air, and after flights gliding down to water, upon which it alighted without a splash. The diminution of speed caused by the head-resistance of the pontoon, which, as will be understood, does not possess the stream-line form, is said to be about five miles an hour.

DR. PETRIE'S discovery, which is reported in *The Times* of April 15, that the marmot is the host of fleas of very large size, may prove of considerable importance in connection with the study of the epidemiology of plague in Manchuria. Although it appears highly improbable that an epizootic has played any part in the outbreak in Manchuria proper, there is ample confirmation for the hypothesis that, in regions further west, the epidemic is derived from marmots. These animals, locally known as "tarbagans," are hunted for their skins. The occurrence of plague epizootics among them has been recognised for some years, but it is not known what form the disease takes, nor how it may be transmitted to the hunters. This demonstration of the existence of the marmot flea indicates a possible link in the chain of infection, and it is not improbable that future investigations will show that, in Manchuria, the marmot flea may to some extent play the same part as the rat flea in India. In the meantime, it cannot be said that this discovery brings us much nearer