

Two-headed snakes are not uncommon, Dr. Bert Cunningham of Duke University reported. He has been fortunate in having opportunity to watch the behavior of a number of living specimens.

The two heads may play with each other, or compete for the same piece of food, or even engage in desperate battle to the death. In the latter event, it quite literally amounts to biting the other's nose off to spite your own face.

*Science News Letter, January 8, 1938*

## MEDICINE

## Cause of Scarlet Fever Believed To Be Virus

A DISCOVERY which seems to upset current ideas of the cause of scarlet fever and which may go far to bring the disease under control was reported by Prof. Jean Broadhurst of Teachers College, Columbia University, and Miss Gladys Cameron of Washington Square College, New York University, to the Society of American Bacteriologists.

They found in the blood and in the throats and noses of scarlet fever patients, small bodies that appear as black dots under the microscope. These black dots—the black color comes from a stain or dye called nigrosin—are called virus inclusion bodies. They are visible evidence of the presence of otherwise invisible viruses.

Scarlet fever is therefore caused by a virus, the scientists believe as a result of their findings. If these findings are confirmed, they will lead to new and probably more successful methods of treating and preventing this serious childhood plague.

Blame for causing scarlet fever has heretofore generally been placed on a different kind of germ, the streptococcus, although some scientists have held that both a streptococcus and a virus, acting together, were responsible for the disease. At present, the streptococcus theory is so widely held that streptococcus toxin is used to test individuals to see if they are immune to scarlet fever, to vaccinate persons against scarlet fever and to inoculate horses in order to secure from them antiserum (antitoxin) against scarlet fever.

"The results in all such control work," Prof. Broadhurst and Miss Cameron pointed out, "are not so satisfactory as with the use of diphtheria in testing, vaccinating and treating diphtheria patients, and this difference is interpreted by some investigators as indicating that streptococci are not the cause, or at least not the sole cause, of scarlet fever."

Some institutions have found blood serum from patients recovering from scarlet fever more successful in treating the disease than the antitoxin made from the streptococcus. The new findings indicate that this may be because the disease is due to the virus, which would be in the blood but would not be in the streptococcus antitoxin. Further evidence in support of this is the fact that virus inclusion bodies were found in the blood of patients who had been given streptococcus antitoxin as well as in the blood of those who had not been given the antitoxin.

*Science News Letter, January 8, 1938*

## PALEONTOLOGY

## Ball-and-Socket Joint Found in Dinosaur Skull

WHAT use was there for a ball-and-socket jointed bone at the back of a dinosaur's skull?

Charles W. Gilmore, curator of vertebrate paleontology at the U. S. National Museum, would like to know.

At the back of the skull of a hadrosaur, a rooster-crested monster that once lived in Montana, he has found a bone arrangement that has never been found in any other kind of skull. A relatively small, triangular bone bears on its front edge a socket or cup, which fits neatly over a ball-shaped projection on the bone in front of it.

Whatever was the use of this unique skull-joint, it could hardly have been to make room for the hadrosaur's massive brain. For the hadrosaur's brain was anything but massive. It couldn't have weighed more than two or three ounces. It was enough to see, hear, and probably smell with, but that was about all. But then, very likely a dinosaur never bothered to think—except possibly once in a while about another dinosaur.

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