

ing was occupied, but recently a second one and part of a third have been leased by the trustees.

One feature of the work done is a matter of great interest to the medical profession, and is worthy of special commendation by this journal. The tendency toward "hospital abuse," which has attracted the attention of medical men so largely in the great centres, and of which we have several times written in no uncertain manner, has been clearly recognized by both trustees and staff, and, regardless of its possible effect in limiting the number of patients applying for treatment, those interested have determined that while the poor shall have at their disposal every advantage of the hospital, a consistent effort will be made to limit its charitable work strictly to those who are unable to pay for hospital maintenance and medical care.

The history of the first year's work of the Toronto Orthopedic Hospital, as evinced at this first annual meeting, and as set forth in the annual report, certainly justifies us in joining the trustees in predicting for it a large field of usefulness and rapidly growing patronage.

W. A. Y.

### THE ROLE OF RATS IN PLAGUE.

IN his introductory lecture at the London School of Tropical Medicine, Dr. Manson devoted a good deal of time to show that plague is a rat-borne disease. He elaborated the fact that the rat is attacked by plague before that disease appears in epidemic form among men, and contended that the infection spread from rat to rat and from rat to man, so that, except in sporadic form, plague could not exist in any place where rats had been exterminated. With him the prevention of plague in a town would begin with the destruction of the local rats before they had been attacked with the disease. As he says: "When rats are tumbling about the floors drunk with plague, it is too late for general prophylaxis, and the remedy would then be Haffkine's injections." Dr. Manson explains that if an infected rat dies, it is eaten by other rats, or the fleas infesting it would transfer themselves to other rats and with them plague bacilli. This explanation offers a reasonable theory of the infectiousness of plague among rats, but leaves a hiatus as to the communication of the disease from rat to man. It may be, however, that Dr. Manson considerably allowed his hearers to fill in the etiological chain for themselves. Needless to say, in famine