The best district in Upper Burma for Woodcock, which I know of is Haka, in the Chin Hills. In February 1927, in company with Capt. R. Cook (B.M.P.) we killed eleven birds shooting during three days, and Major Kenny of the Burma Commission killed nineteen cock around Haka in a few days during the same month.

E. H. COOKE,
Lieutenant.
20th Burma Rifles.

c/o Messrs. Grindlay & Co., Ltd.,
London.
March, 20, 1928.

XVIII.—NOTES ON THE INDIAN PYTHON *(PYTHON MOLURUS)* IN CAPTIVITY.

On the 22nd November 1926 a specimen was received, about 8ft. long, emaciated and hardly more than skin and bone. It was put in an ordinary dealwood case. This case—my serpentarium—is 37 in. long, 20 in. wide, 18 in. deep. Half of the lid lengthwise is a plank, and half is wire netting of ½ in. mesh. The bottom of the box is covered with a layer of clean sand, which is changed from time to time, and there is a vessel of drinking water in a corner of the box.

The following observations have been made :—

A. Frequency of Sloughing.

The Python sloughed on : the December 7, 1926.
March 2, 1927.
April 16, 1927.
May 24, 1927.
August 10, 1927.
September 22, 1927.
November 19, 1927.
January 25, 1928.
March 26, 1928.

B. Diet

1926

November... Six white rats. One palm rat. One guinea pig.

December ... Ten white rats.

1927

January ... Three white rats. One guinea pig.

February ... One guinea pig. One sparrow.

March ... One guinea pig. Three screech owls almost fully fledged. (*Strix flammea*). Two crows. One sparrow.

April ... Two guinea pigs.

September... Onedead sparrow-hawk. Two crows. One guinea pig.

October ... Three crows. One dead crow. Four dead rats. Four dead palm rats. Two palm rats. One guinea pig. One dead sparrow

May	... Two guinea pigs.			One koel.
June	... Three guinea pigs			Five dead rats in one meal.
July	... Two guinea pigs. One crow.		November...	One rat.
				Three guinea pigs
	Two guinea pigs.			One palm rat.
	Three dead parrots			One parrot.
August	... One 7-foot rat		December ...	One wagtail.
	snake ; disgorged later.			One rat.
				One guinea pig.

1928

January	...	One rat One enormous dead bandicoot. One dead roller. One guinea pig. One crow.
February 8	...	One guinea pig.
,, 15	...	One dead crow.
,, 24	...	One dead crow One dead guinea pig. One big rabbit.
,, 27	...	One dead rat.
,, 28	...	One live rat. Two dead rats.
,, 29	...	One dead rat. One pariah kite (*Milvus govinda*).
March 15,	...	One Brahminy kite.
,, 18	...	Two crows.

Remarks on Diet

For the benefit of readers who have not observed the ways of pythons, a few remarks may be made.

Pythons, unlike working men, do not require two good meals a day to keep them fit ; they can do without food for long periods extending over many months, and are none the worse for a prolonged hunger strike. They live on their reserves of fat.

Pythons always kill their prey before eating it. They eat it dead. Under the heading Diet, where the word dead occurs, understand that the prey was already dead before it was thrown to the python. The birds had been shot for museum purposes, but were damaged and useless. The rats and palm rats had been killed in traps. One sparrow was actually stinking.

The five rats mentioned as forming one meal in November were members of a party of nine which the cooks discovered in a cupboard and slew. I picked out the five big ones and dropped them, in a speculative mood, into the box at 8 p.m. The python began to feed at once. By morning all the five had disappeared.

In August 1927 a full grown palm civet was thrown into the box. The python killed it but did not eat it.

In December 1927 the python seemed to have become fastidious in its tastes ; or perhaps its appetite for dead rats was satiated by

the November orgy. It refused two dead rats, a dead bandicoot, and a dead crow. In January 1928 the appetite was normal again.

The rat snake mentioned in August 1927 was not eaten, as sometimes happens, by a miscalculation. The python was the original sole occupant of the box. The rat snake, a gorgeous yellow black-barred specimen which I had destined for the Museum collection, was put into the same box to await execution. I knew by then that the python was a good feeder, but it never dawned on me that it might be cannibalistically inclined. There was no prey of any kind in the box, so the meal was not an accident such as is known to happen when two snakes seize a prey by opposite ends and neither lets go in time. The rat snake was put into the box at 11 a.m. The meal was about over at 1.30 p.m. when my taxidermist came to call me. A few inches of the rat snake's tail projecting from the python's mouth and still wriggling feebly was all that was still visible. At 6 p.m. the rat snake was still inside the python when the Museum workshop was closed. At 6 a.m. the following morning the rat snake was back in the box, discoloured ; and the python was coiled up in a corner—as you were.

In September 1927 I tempted the python with another rat snake. Nothing happened, the two lived on the best of terms till I removed the rat snake a week later.

In January 1928 I put another rat snake with the python ; (the rat snake laid twelve eggs). The two snakes seemed to get on well together. A week later, January 25, the python sloughed. The next day I put a guinea pig into the box ; then a strange thing happened. The python coiled its tail round the guinea pig and held it ; then it fastened its teeth in the rat snake, got it within its folds and killed it like any other prey. It then killed and devoured the guinea pig. I content myself with thus indicating the fact ; I leave it to the animal psychologist, if any such exist, to explain what passed through the python's brain when it saw the guinea pig ; and when it had killed the rat snake. It did not eat the rat snake.

It will be seen that this python is an unusually good feeder. It takes the prey, if alive, the instant it is thrown into the box, and it does not mind a noisy crowd standing round and watching the performance.

The mixed diet has evidently agreed with it. It is as fine a specimen of its size as I have ever seen. It spends the days coiled up in a corner, but at dark begins to wander about the box feeling the wire netting with its tongue.

ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE,
TRICHINOPLY,
March 31, 1928.

C. LEIGH, S.J.,
Curator of the Museum.

XIX.—COMMENT ON 'THE RECORD CUBBANY MAHSEER'

With reference to the Record Cubbany Mahaseer, published on page 613 of the *Bombay Natural History Society's Journal*, volume xxxii, No. 3. I write to inform you that there is a head and skin of a Mahaseer caught by Mr. Saunderson, the particulars of which noted in the label are as follows :—