

EDUCATED SNAIL LEARNS TO SPEED

A snail may be a bit slow, but he can be made to learn by experience. At least that was the experience of Mary Pinkey Mitchell's trained snail, a story told in Science. Miss Mitchell is a student in the department of education psychology at the University of Denver, and her success in educating the humble snail is reported by Prof. Thomas R. Garth of that institution.

The snail was taught to find his way out of a maze. The impulse which compelled him to do this was a powerful light, from which he sought to escape, as snails prefer darkness. Also, they like to hibernate in the winter, but this little pet of science was kept on the job by warming him in a improvised incubator.

He rewarded the trust imposed upon him. The average time of his exit from the maze in his first five trials was 857 seconds, while for five recent trials he averaged only 316 seconds. It only took him 102 trials to accomplish this. In the first five trials he made four errors; now he makes no errors at all and is getting speedier and speedier every day with the prospect that he will soon attain the maximum speed of which snails are capable.

His performance indicates, his preceptors say, "learning of a more or less permanent character". At least he has learned something from his own mistakes, and his speed is considerable when one considers the weight of his name. It is "Goniobasis pleuristriata Say". No doubt he prefers to be addressed by it for he is an educated snail.

READING REFERENCE - Kellogg, Vernon L. Mind and Heredity, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1923.

GRADUATED AMPLIFIERS FOR HARD OF HEARING

Three stage amplifiers, with means for delivering voice currents of several different volumes, is the latest method of helping the partially deaf to hear. Prediction of the eventual equipment of all places of public assembly with such devices was made by Dr. Harvey Fletcher in an address to a convention of the American Federation of Associations for the Hard of Hearing at Washington. Many of his audience were using such a system.

Loudness alone is not the open sesame for the hard of hearing, according to Dr. Fletcher. Studies made under his direction in the research laboratories of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and the Western Electric Company show that people whose hearing has been reduced by more than 60 per cent. can possibly be benefited by an amplifier, but they will never be able to understand what is said as well as persons whose hearing is better than 60 per cent. Hence the disappointment of many whose desire to reestablish communication with their fellow men has led them to believe extravagant claims of certain unscrupulous deaf set manufacturers.

In explaining to his audience how the proper loudness is determined, Dr. Fletcher brought out several interesting points. A person having 30 per cent. hearing than normal will have little difficulty in understanding ordinary conversation at three feet from the speaker. One having 40 per cent. less would miss