

TRAINED SNAIL COMES TO TRAGIC END

The snail, proverbially the slowest of all creatures at getting anywhere in the world, has at last bestirred himself enough to make scientific history.

A number of land snails, found roaming about the University of Denver campus, have been captured by psychologists at the university and put through tests designed to show whether or not such creatures can be taught anything, and if so, why.

Results of the experiment which was conducted by Dr. Thomas R. Garth and Miss Mary P. Mitchell of the psychology department, are reported in a recent issue of the Journal of Comparative Psychology. The captive snails were put one by one in a runway shaped like a T and made of plate glass. The snail was started at the bottom of the stem of the T. When he crawled to the cross piece he would have to decide whether to turn right or left. If he chose the left turn, he received a slight electric shock, whereas if he turned to the right he was rewarded by a period of peaceful rest in a dark box. The patient experimenters timed each snail with a stop watch and counted the errors when a wrong turn was made at the crossroad.

The most promising snail of the collection was trained over 43 days, making two to six "runs" a day and resting on Saturday and Sunday. This snail sometimes took over an hour to cover the distance but after the thirteenth day he never gave up once and after the fifty-sixth trip made only one error. Gradually he even acquired speed - relatively speaking. At this point an unfortunate accident occurred, but not before the prize snail had made a name for himself in the annals of comparative psychology.

EARTH MADE OF METEOR MATERIAL

The earth is largely just the same as meteorites, our only importations from outer space. In experiments at the Geophysical Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington that simulate the conditions of extremely high temperature and pressure of the earth's interior, Dr. Leason H. Adams and Dr. Ralph E. Gibson have found that rocks have much more elasticity than was formerly supposed.

In a report to the National Academy of Sciences Dr. Adams said that they had found that the least silicious of the silicate rocks, known in geological parlance as Dunite, when subjected to very high pressures was three fourths as rigid as steel. The calculations of the two experimenters have been found to tally with seismological data which definitely establishes that the main part of the earth consists of peridotitic rock or the stuff that meteors are made of.

The saying that if a case of shingles encircles the body of a patient he is sure to die is without foundation, since the disease follows the course of a nerve, and no nerve completely circles the body.
