

before he undertook to set up his cubicles for actual use with babies, Prof. Reyniers "tried it out on the pig." He set up one of his units in the laboratory at Notre Dame, put some of his germless young guinea-pigs in the crib, and then tried in every way his ingenuity could suggest, to get germs enough past the barriers to make the little animals sick. Only when he had thus given his bacteriological fortifications a thorough-going practical test did he approve the construction of a row of cubicles for infant human occupancy.

### Satisfactory Operation

The cubicles have now been in use at The Cradle long enough to give a good idea of how they work. Results are described as very good. Germ-caused illness has been greatly reduced among the babies, and if one of them does develop any trouble it keeps it to itself. No more tossing of illnesses all around the place, like a ball on a playground.

A second and incidental, but none the less highly valuable, effect of cubicle isolation is that the babies can't hear each other cry. Squalling in an infants' ward is as epidemic as a cold, and spreads even more rapidly. By making crying a strictly individual and private affair, the cubicle system contributes greatly to the comfort of the babies—not to mention the wear and tear spared the ears of the nursing staff. This greater quiet and comfort is reflected in the improved sleeping habits of the infants, as well as in the more rapid gain in weight.

Babies are not kept in the cubicles all the time, like little prisoners. They are permitted visits with their mothers. When a baby goes a-visiting, he is put into a special carrying case, equipped with an air filter, and so carried to his waiting mother. The only exclusiveness enforced is towards other babies, and that kind of neighboring has no social value during the first few days of a baby's life.

Babies raised in the Reyniers cubicles are not kept in them for very long periods. It is considered better, always, to get them out of the hospital atmosphere and into their own homes as soon as possible. At home, there is not the high concentration of germs that is practically universal in hospitals and similar institutions.

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California has discovered that it can produce most of the plants which yield essential oils for perfumes, drugs, and flavorings.



### PRACTICAL ISOLATIONISTS

*Nurses at The Cradle, Evanston, Ill., in Prof. Reyniers' germ-excluding cubicles for keeping babies safe. Even within these, the baby is separated from the nurse by still another glass barrier.*

ETHNOLOGY—HERPETOLOGY

## Snake-Handling Cultists Resemble Other Groups

**S**NAKE-handling religious cultists of Georgia are "all of a piece" with followers of other cults who go to unusual lengths to show their faith or their access to supernatural powers. The same thing, with or without snake-handling, has been seen in various cultures and various times, according to Dr. Winfred Overholser, superintendent of St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, D. C. The activities of the Georgia group would not be "news" in Haiti, Dr. Overholser pointed out. Such goings-on only surprise us when they appear in the midst of our own culture.

The development of these strange cults rests on the credulity that characterizes groups of people living at a low cultural level. Such people are ready to believe what a leader tells them because they lack the knowledge or means of learning whether or not he is right.

Copperhead snakes are less deadly than rattlesnakes, water moccasins and coral snakes. This may explain why followers of the cult have been able to handle copperheads in their church rites with apparently few fatalities.

The bite of the coral snake is very dangerous because the venom of this reptile attacks the nerve centers. The venom of rattlesnakes, moccasins and copperheads, on the other hand, destroys red blood cells and breaks down the walls of the blood vessels. Serious as this condition is, it takes a little longer period before it becomes fatal, giving a chance for the victim's recuperative powers and medical aid to overcome the effect of the snake venom.

Copperheads are very dangerous and there are records of deaths from the bite of this snake, but such deaths are not common. The reasons why the copperhead is less dangerous than the rattler are that the copperhead has shorter fangs, less virulent venom, and, because of its smaller size, injects a smaller amount of poison into a bite.

The habits of the copperhead may also have helped to protect those who handled it in religious rites. This snake is very quiet, seldom striking unless very definitely annoyed or attacked.

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