ZOOLOGY

NATURE RAMBLINGS

by Frank Thone

Raccoon

MOST fathers of modern families think of raccoons in the winter time, when Son's bills come in, swollen unnaturally by the accession of the bulky coat affected by collegiate youth. To such a parent, the raccoon must loom as large and ravenous as a wolf; and any hint that 'coonie is a small, mostly harmless, really attractive animal would bring forth snorts and gnashings.

But it is during the summer that the raccoon makes most of his first-hand acquaintance with the works of man. He prowls about at night, wearing his own coat, seeking what he may devour. When he finds it, in cornfield or truck patch, he seizes upon as much as seems good to him. And in the morning, when the farmer comes forth, there are again snorts and gnashings.

But on the whole, in regions where he has not been allowed to maintain too numerous a progeny, the raccoon does little enough mischief. And the specimens that are captured young enough repay with entertainment as pets whatever damage their parents may have done before them. They have many of the "cute" human-like tricks that make monkeys entertaining, and unlike monkeys they do not have the drawback of looking like malicious caricatures of human beings. And unless they are teased beyond endurance they are docile and affectionate.

In another respect raccoons are quite unlike monkeys. The average monkey would rather go through fire than touch water, but all raccoons are water-lovers. They wash everything they eat, every toy given them to play with—even old Tabby's kittens, if they can lay paws on them. They are apt to be damp at times, but no one can accuse them of being uncleanly.

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MEDICINE

Leprosy Germs Grown in Laboratory for First Time

IMPORTANT progress in the fight science is making to conquer leprosy appeared in reports of two studies on the disease made to the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists at their meeting in Philadelphia.

Dr. Earl B. McKinley, dean of the George Washington University Medical School, reported that he and his associate, Dr. Malcolm H. Soule of the University of Michigan, had succeeded in growing 12 generations of the germ of leprosy outside of the human body. Although leprosy has been a disease of world-wide importance for centuries, this is the first time its germ has ever been grown on artificial culture media in the laboratory.

When earlier generations of these germs were injected into monkeys, they produced nodules similar to those seen in early leprosy and to those produced when human leprous material is injected in the monkeys. The germs were cultivated on a special medium having a certain concentration of oxygen and carbon dioxide gases. Germs from the ninth, tenth and eleventh generations, however, did not produce the nodules when injected into older monkeys. This might have been because the monkeys were resistant to the infection or because later generations of the germs had lost their ability to produce the disease, Dr. McKinley commented. He also reported that it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep the germs growing on the artificial medium.

Resemble Tuberculosis Changes

At the same session Dr. H. W. Wade, medical director of the Leonard Wood Memorial at Culion, the leper station in the Philippine Islands, described leprous sores which differ markedly in their cell structure from the ordinary changes of the disease and resemble certain of the changes seen in tuberculosis. These spots are of interest because they may be mistaken for actual tuberculosis changes, especially since leprosy germs are rarely found in them, Dr. Wade pointed out. He suggested that this "tuberculoid" reaction of the tissues to the presence of the leprosy bacillus might be due to a peculiar condition of the tissues in which they had become unusually sensitive to the leprosy germ.

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