

Studies Schooling of Mousers

Animal Psychology

Watching baby kittens in order to learn how they come to join in the cat's age-old warfare on the rat tribe is one of the latest tasks that psychologists have set themselves. Five kittens from birth to five months of age have been closely observed by Dr. W. W. Rogers, of New York University, who presented a theory on the subject before psychologists assembled at the International Congress of Psychology in New Haven.

Young white rats and wild gray mice were placed in the cages with the kittens, sometimes for as long as ten hours at a time.

"During the five months only one kitten killed and ate a white rat that was more than eight days old," Dr. Rogers said. "In this case when a white rat with a bloody ear was placed in the cage with the kitten it was killed and eaten after considerable

manipulation. The same kitten, however, never killed or ate a white rat again."

Three kittens learned to kill and eat wild gray mice and three kittens learned to kill and eat baby white rats, after the kittens were five months of age. One kitten never learned the cat's favorite sport during the entire period of observation.

The psychologist's theory is that the moving rat attracts the interest of the kitten, and this soon develops into an impulse to manipulate and then to chase rats. If the kitten seizes a rat and the rat struggles, the kitten bites harder and breaks the skin and so tastes rat blood. Thus, the kitten learns to kill and eat rats as a matter of course after it learns to associate the moving rat with food.

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Why Children Jeer at Strangers

Psychology

How the school boy learns to jibe at "wops," "frogs," "Chinks," "coons," "Heinies," and other nick-named types has been probed by an educator in Wales. Dr. George H. Green, of University College of Wales, speaking before the International Congress of Psychology, said that he found indisputable evidence that Welsh children do display racial prejudices.

Books are of greater importance in forming the opinions of children regarding alien races than either school or religious instruction, he found. The roles played by the

negro and Chinese in moving picture dramas has strongly influenced childish opinion regarding these races. But the movies do not seem to have affected the attitude of Welsh children toward Americans.

Facts collected regarding the influence of books, movies, newspapers, religious institutions and other agencies that shape children's opinions toward the races of the world can be used to make these agencies more effective in a constructive way, the educator pointed out.

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What Boys Like at Church

Psychology

The wriggling youngster who gets nothing out of attendance at a dull church service has at last gained the sympathetic attention of science. An attempt to find out how to make church services effective for boys has been started by Prof. Goodwin Watson, of Teachers' College, Columbia University and his investigation was described before the International Congress of Psychology at New Haven.

Following the experimental method, Prof. Watson prepared seven services of worship each containing some distinctive feature, such as an organ selection, a story, a long heroic poem. One service included a talk stressing the intellectual and scientific interpretation of the universe.

Five hundred boys from fourteen to twenty years of age were then called upon to attend the services. At the close of each service, the boys filled in rating cards, showing seven degrees of interest and approval. The possible verdicts ranged from intense experience of worship to the low point of boredom and wishing they were somewhere else.

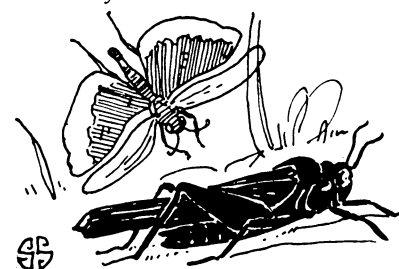
Judging from the facts so far gathered, boys prefer emotional appeal to intellectual appeal in church. They like to be familiar with the procedure and they do not care for a great deal of reading or printed matter. Further experiments will be conducted, Prof. Watson said.

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NATURE RAMBLINGS

Natural History

By FRANK THONE



Locusts

The days are shortening now, and the noon heats are not so ardent as they were a month ago; yet the grasshopper sings as though he had never heard of Aesop and his industrious but offensively priggish ant. So long as there is an hour of bright sunshine, and no numbing frost at night, Tettix will tune his shrill lyre regardless of the future. He eats and is merry, for tomorrow he is sure to die anyway.

It is a pity that in this country the title "locust" should have been taken from the winged grasshopper and given to the cicada. It makes for all sorts of confusion, both in nature study proper and in folklore, the elder but irresponsible sister of that amiable science. The real locusts are grasshoppers, and by proper definition one group of long-winged grasshoppers only. The devastation credited to locusts in Genesis and elsewhere in ancient literature could never have been done by cicadas, which do not have chewing mouthparts. But it could be done, and was done, by hordes of flying grasshoppers. Ask any inhabitant of Kansas about grasshopper years, and you will learn what Pharaoh saw from the banks of ancient Nile.

We hear less of grasshopper years nowadays, though the locust pests do make themselves troublesome at times. Their abatement must be credited largely to the destruction of their breeding grounds by the plow. When Kansas suffered under the scourge of locusts back in the old days, the western part of the state and eastern Colorado were still largely unplowed. Grasshoppers lay their eggs in the ground, but the plow, making the land ready for winter wheat, overturns the shallow burrows and lays the eggs open to drought and cold. Hence the more complete the cultivation the scarcer become the locusts.

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