

BOX WHICH RACCOONS MANAGE TO UNFASTEN, BY SLIDING BOLTS AND LIFTING BARS, TO GET FOOD.

A STUDY OF 'COONS.

Professor's Animals Able to Pick Many Locks.

Wilbraham, Mass., Aug. 4.—A visitor is not long in this town before he is asked: "Say, have you seen Davis's 'coons? Well, you ought to see them, for they are trick animals."

Davis is Professor H. B. Davis, of Wesleyan Academy, who will go to Clark University as instructor next fall, and he raises his hands in protest when one demands to see his "trick 'coons." "I am not training 'coons to do stunts," he says. "I am merely a worker along the line of comparative psychology, and I am experimenting with raccoons as other students have experimented with monkeys, cats, dogs, and even rats."

Nevertheless, his 'coons are interesting animals, and under his tutelage are gradually beginning to do things that wild 'coons do not do. He has two, one nervous and excitable and the other phlegmatic and comparatively slow moving. One is a rare "black 'coon"—and by that is meant that its general color effect is black—and the other is the commoner tawny variety. They are about three years old, and Professor Davis has had them two years, but they still have the wild in their nature and pace restlessly back and forth in a longing to run off to the woods. However, they may be domesticated so that they will run about the house like cats, sleeping in cozy nooks in the corners, and even stretched out at full length on the back of a chair.

The star "stunt" which the two little animals perform is to slide bolts and lift bars to get at their food. Professor Davis made a box to hold their food on which he put an ordinary iron bolt. After considerable fussing the animals shot this and made a dash for the bread inside. Then a button was added for a fastening, and the 'coons mastered this also. Next a wooden slide was added in such a way that it had to be pushed in, and this, too, was conquered by the little animals. Two other arrangements, similar to the button, were added, that had to be swung either up or down, and the raccoons got the better of them. Now, to get in to their food they have to wrestle with five different sorts of fastenings, but they accomplish it easily. The different manner in which the two animals go about it is interesting. The nervous one works fast, breathlessly and excitedly, and makes many false moves. The phlegmatic one works deliberately, more surely, and often opens the door before his nervous companion can.

tinue an interesting line of experiments. He will test their idea of color by one of two methods. Either he will put their food behind a board or some obstruction painted a certain color, and then move the board and food about from place to place to see if they recognize that particular color means food, or else he will give

but put it in the middle of the cage, maybe, and if the animal recognizes at once that it holds its food, there is a probability that he recognizes the color red.

The animal's idea of form will also be tested. Food will be given it in a conical shaped box or a cylindrical shaped box, and after a while the position of the box will be changed. If the animal still goes to it for food in spite of its position being changed, there is a probability that he recognizes its form. Then the 'coon will be tested for its sense of sound. As a dog is called, the raccoons will be called, trying it again and again, and if at last the animal responds to that particular call, that they have a sense of sound would be evidenced. Or a little bell will be rung at feeding time, and if the animals run to be fed at sound of the bell the sense is again made evident.

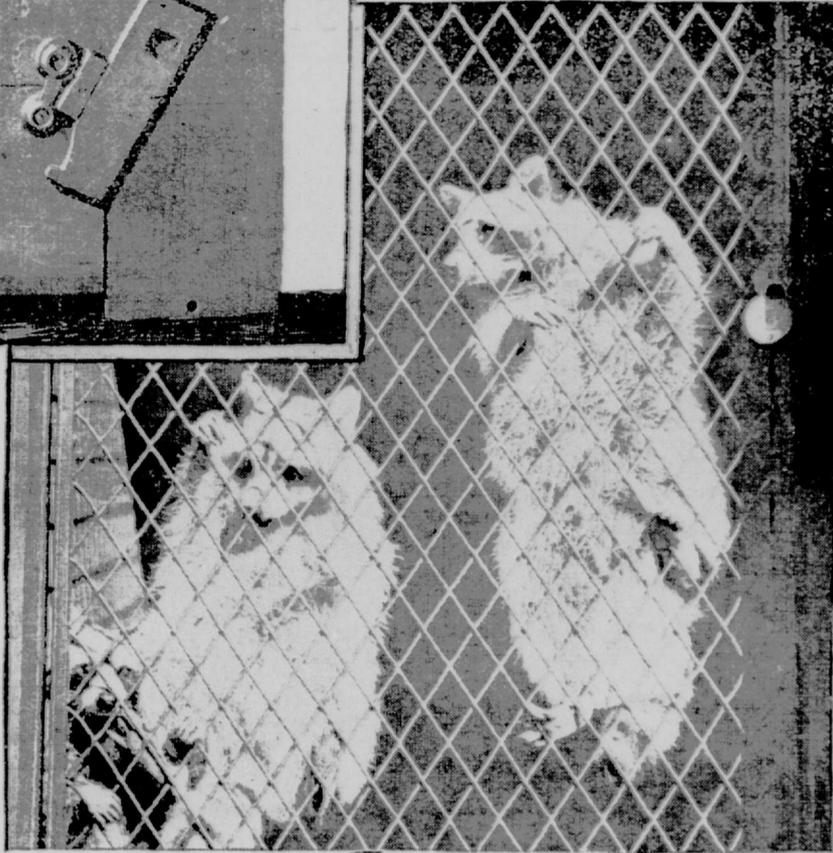
The personality of the two raccoons Professor Davis regards as very strong and very distinctive, and he is constantly studying their temperament. Sometimes they are a trifle cross when they are being coaxed to do tricks, and recently one bit a visitor to the cage, its sharp teeth meeting in the visitor's finger, but for the most part they are good natured and are full of little tricks, such as burrowing in one's pocket or hand for a piece of bread or a morsel of cake, much in the manner of a tame squirrel, although they are of the bear family. The minute they get a piece of food, whether it be meat or bread, they trot over to a pan of water and wash it vigorously before eating it. This is always a part of their dinner etiquette. Sometimes they get bilious and then they must be doctored, just as human beings are for a similar complaint.

"How do I know they are bilious?" said Professor Davis, in reply to a question on that point. "Why I look at their tongues, of course. If they are thickly coated, why ten chances to one their livers are out of order. Then I give them for biliousness. If they had a stomach ache I would not hesitate to give them Jamaica ginger."

"YANKEES OF EUROPE."

Belgians Now Learning Scientific Fishery at Government Schools.

The Belgians have always been a practical people, and are to-day more than ever entitled to the nickname of "Yankees of Europe," as American visitors to the forthcoming Liege exhibition will soon have the opportunity to judge



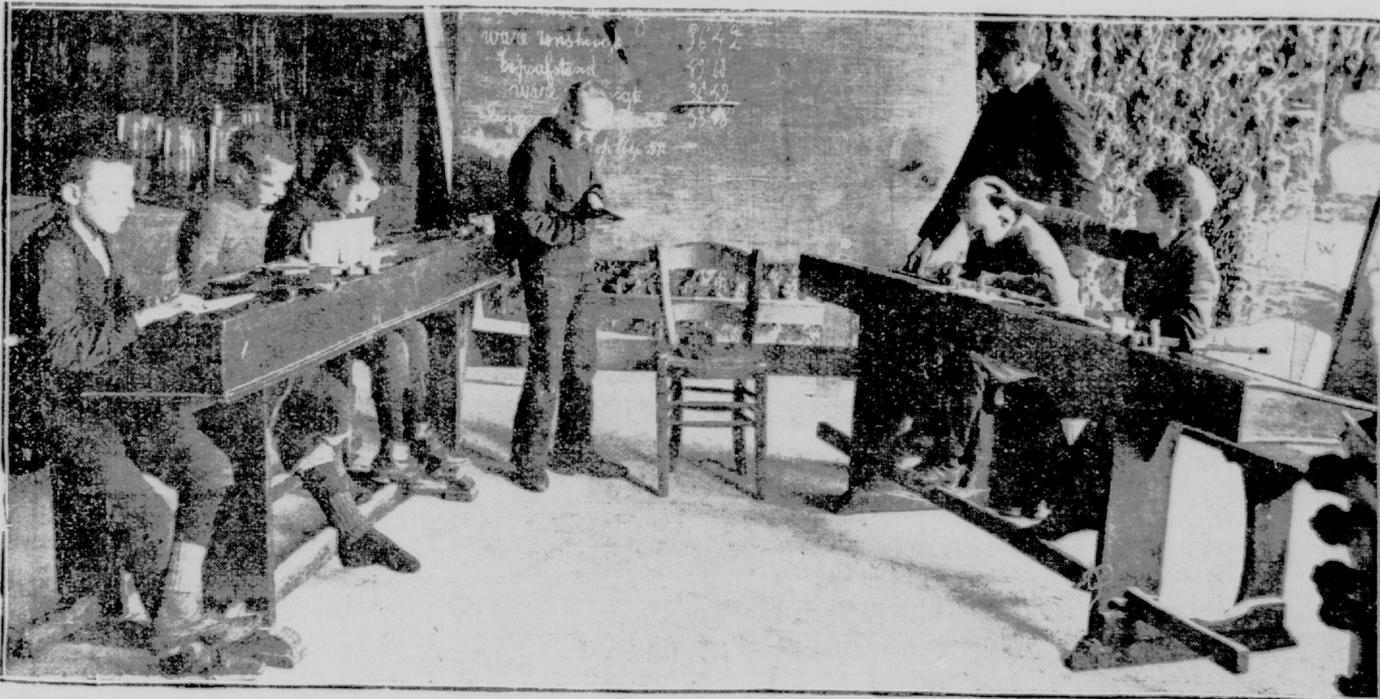
RACCOONS WHICH A MASSACHUSETTS PROFESSOR IS TRAINING.

This is as far as Professor Davis has gone, for he has been handicapped with other work, and the necessity of making cages and all contrivances himself, but this summer he will con-

them food in a box painted a certain color in a similar way. For instance, he will put the food in a box painted red and place the box in the corner. The next day he will use the same box,



MENDING NETS IN OSTEND SCHOOL OF FISHERY.



BOYS CALCULATING LATITUDE IN BELGIAN SCHOOL OF FISHERY.

for themselves. Some time ago a government commissioner was appointed to inquire into causes of the decline of the once flourishing fishing industry along the Belgian coast. After a careful investigation the commissioner reported that foreign competition was responsible for this decline. The Belgian fishermen, the report concluded, owing to their superannated methods were not able to compete with their English, French and Norwegian brethren. As a result of this report the Belgian government decided that the only way out of the difficulty was the establishment of schools of fishery, where young Belgian fisher people could be educated in modern methods of earning their livelihood. Consequently a number of fishing schools have been established on the coast at Ostend, Blankenburghe and Newport.

Of these, the Ostend school is the most important, and is a model establishment of the kind. There every facility is given to boys who have chosen fishing as their trade to acquire all the knowledge they may require and to face the hardships of their vocation. Beautiful mu-

Continued on eighth page.

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