

NOTES

TREATMENT OF TORTOISES

In the Spring of 1958 a small tortoise (*Testudo graeca*) with a carapace length of just over 3 inches, was bought in an exhausted and dying condition. There was a running sore on the left side of the head, obliterating the eye, the left leg was damaged and the carapace was covered in mildew above the nuchal shield. The head and feet hung out of the shell and did not respond to touch.

The body temperature was gradually raised by placing the reptile on a moderately warm hot water bottle screened with blanket, and after a short time the side of the head was irrigated by means of an eye dropper containing a weak solution of boracic. The beak was wiped with warm glucose solution. The reptile was apparently unable to feed or drink. This treatment was continued hourly for eight hours and gradually the tortoise began to move freely. During the night it opened its beak and sucked the applicator. The whole jaw was then lowered into a milk bottle top of the glucose solution containing one minim of brandy. It drank this. From then on the tortoise was fed every hour and one minim of orange juice was added to the solution. The boracic irrigations were alternated with normal saline. After forty-eight hours the tortoise was moving about feebly and accepting drinks of warm water between feeds.

The mildew on the carapace was treated with saline and olive oil. Soon it was possible to see the outline of the eye, and one drop of castor oil was inserted each night. The leg which appeared not to be broken, was massaged with olive oil. The reptile was accepting dandelion petals, but was not able to pull them off for itself. When placed in its box, the tortoise immediately hid under a woollen cloth.

At the end of a week the eye was open and almost clean and the sight was apparently unimpaired. The tortoise was eating a normal diet for a small reptile and weighed 2 oz. Cod liver oil (Super Solvitax), (minim) was added to the food once a day, also orange juice and glucose. During the summer, while the tortoise lived a normal (captive) life in the garden with other tortoises, the limp disappeared entirely.

By September 1st it had apparently recovered and weighed 7 ozs., with a carapace length of 3½ inches. Another small tortoise of the same species was placed with it.

As it was thought that these small tortoises might not survive normal hibernation, a controlled type of hibernation was adopted. A vivarium was made by removing the sides of an orange box and replacing them with acetate, and continuing this over the roof at either end to cut down draughts. A warm temperature was maintained by hot water bottles, moderately hot and wrapped in blanket. The floor of the box was covered in newspaper.

The reptiles apparently adjusted themselves to this life. Their activity was controlled by covering the box with a cloth for about 16 hours out of 24. When awake they ate and moved about, basking in any sun there was. The diet consisted mainly of greens, water cress, mustard and cress, cauliflower leaves, cabbage, carrot and turnip peelings, sprouts and chicory.

The lack of garden grit which they used to eat was compensated for by giving a cuttle fish "bone" which was sometimes chewed. The cod liver oil was increased to three minims a day. Once a week olive oil was sprinkled on the food; later this was changed to liquid paraffin.

Exercise was taken regularly on the floor, under supervision, and the reptiles appeared to be healthy and maintained a steady increase in growth and weight. The weight of the original tortoise on September 1st, 1959, was 12 ozs., and the carapace length 6 inches; the second weighed 9 ozs., and measured 5¼ inches.

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LIZARD KILLED BY BEETLE

In the summer of 1954 some Common Lizards (*Lacerta vivipara*) were placed in an outdoor vivarium in which the remains of a carcass of a newly-born calf had been left during the previous winter. There were a number of beetles in the vivarium. D. Owen observed a beetle climb on to the tail of a fully-grown common lizard and dig its mandibles into the lizard.

Within a few minutes the lizard became sluggish and was removed with the beetle still adhering. After a further few minutes the lizard died. A dark sunken patch was evident at the point of injury.

The beetle was identified by the British Museum (Natural History) as *Pterostichus madidus* Fabricius.

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All Saints' Natural History Museum,
Colchester, Essex.

REVIEWS

KLINGELHOFFER, Terriarienkunde, 2nd ed., 1959.

A. Kernen, Stuttgart, publ.

In 1931 a German eye specialist, Dr. W. Klingelhöffer, published a book of 590 pages with the title "Terrarienkunde", a word which one might translate "Information on the Terrarium". But this book, while giving detailed instruction on how to arrange suitable cages for amphibians and reptiles, was a mine of information on the animals themselves and remained, until it became unobtainable, the only comprehensive text on this subject suitable for the amateur. The author died in 1953 and the book remained out of print until 1955, when a new publisher started to re-edit the book in instalments, the fourth and last of which has now reached us. The ancient gothic print has disappeared and better paper has been used throughout. The text has been revised and enlarged by Ch. Scherpner so as to run to 1,048 pages instead of the original 590. The arrangement of the book is now as follows:—

Part I. General remarks and technical detail. pp. 168; 1 colour plate.

DM (German Mark) 13.40.

Part II. Amphibians. pp. 236; 5 colour plates. DM (German Mark) 25.70.

Part III. Reptilians. pp. 264; 4 colour plates. DM (German Mark) 24.50.

Part IV. Snakes, Crocodiles, Breeding, Index. pp. 380; 6 colour plates.
DM (German Mark) 32.00