

**A PECULIAR LILY.**

BY HERBERT I. PRIESTLEY.

Two American teachers in the Philippines, while walking some time since in the fields in the vicinity of Nueva Cáceres, in Southern Luzon, came across a peculiar specimen of the lily family of plants which has not yet apparently been noticed by scientists.

It was while passing through a dense cluster of underbrush that the gentlemen noticed a remarkably strong odor of decaying flesh which seemed to emanate from the ground close by. Suspecting the presence of some gruesome thing concealed in the bushes, they commenced to search. They were assisted in this by the presence of numerous "blue-bottle" flies, which seemed to be buzzing about some object half concealed under the dense vegetation. This object proved to be the plant shown in the accompanying illustration. The strong smell of rotteness given off by the plant attracted all manner of insects, which was not surprising, as the odor was so strong as almost to repel all investigation.

The plant is called by the native Bicolos "borac sa Mayo," that is, May flower. It blooms only during the month of May. It is no doubt a member of the order *Lilacei*, better commonly known as the lily or tulip family. It has the large bulb, the inconspicuous calyx, the pronounced stigma, and the characteristic structure of lilies in general. The remarkable features of this particular variety of lilies are that it has such a pungent odor and that it has absolutely no leaves at the time of blossoming. These appear later, when the flower has died. The blossom rests immediately on the ground, and is not more than eight or nine inches high. The calyx often measures a foot in diameter.

After the blossom has disappeared the leaves begin to sprout from the bulb. These often grow to the height of three or four feet. Their general shape is similar to that of the leaves of the calla lily, but they are divided into an irregular number of lobes or fronds.

The corolla and the remarkably exaggerated stigma exude a clear viscous fluid which seems to be the cause of the offensive odor. This fluid attracts the flies, thus insuring the transmission of the pollen from plant to plant.

The large bulb, in fact all parts of the plant, have the peculiar acrid juice which is so poisonous, a trait common to the lilaceous order. The acrid taste and the poisonous effect of the juice are lost upon cooking for several hours. During the period of frondescence there is no odor present. This plant is not used for food by the natives where it is found, though there are several other species of the same order which are highly esteemed by them as food.

**AN ANIMAL NEW TO SCIENCE AT THE NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL PARK.**

Among a collection of some twenty living animals received some time since by the New York Zoological Society from Capt. Thomas Golding, of the ship "Alfrida," was a small, white creature that proved to be a puzzle to all natural history experts who saw it. It is 21 inches long—a little more than 27, counting in the tail—and stands rather more than 10 inches high at the shoulders.

It rather resembles a small Spitz dog, but it is not a dog any more than it is a raccoon, although the shape of the head and the face marking that seem to belong so peculiarly to the family of *Procyonidae*, are marvelously imitated in this little beast. Perhaps it resembles a white Arctic fox more than it does any other creature. It had been called a white fox in the country, northern Japan, from which Capt. Golding obtained it, but it is evidently no more a fox than it is a dog or a raccoon.

"An examination of its external characters," says the director of the New York Zoological Park, Mr. W. T. Hornaday, "reveals an unmistakable resemblance to *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, the so-called raccoon dog of Japan and of north China. Inasmuch as the animal seemed to be immature, and it appeared possible that its pelage might undergo seasonal changes of some importance, it was decided to defer bringing it into notice, and keep it under observation for at least a year.

"During the fifteen months which this strange animal has passed at the Zoological Park it has not undergone any noteworthy change in pelage, nor has it perceptibly increased in size. It therefore seems fairly conclusive that the creature is adult and that its colors are constant throughout the year. As it is certainly not an albino individual of the well-known rac-

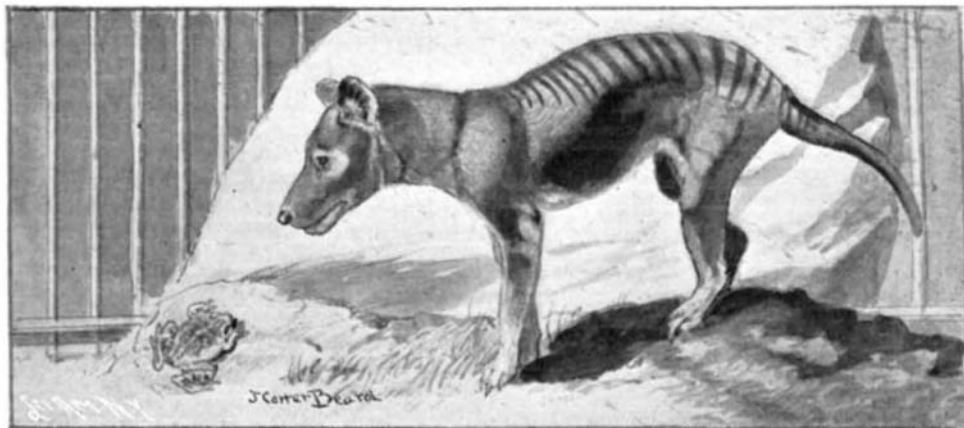


BLACK LILY.

coon dog, referred to above, with living specimens of which it has lived in constant comparison, there appears to be no escape from the conclusion that we have here the living representative of a species of animals hitherto unknown."

It has now been admitted to the great assembly of classified animals under the name of *Nyctereutes albus* or the white raccoon dog.

It is a pretty little creature, gentle in disposition, and is well worth a visit to the park to see. It is not often one gets an opportunity of gazing upon a brand-new animal never before known to scientific zoologists.



DOG-LIKE DASURE, AN ANIMAL WITH A POUCH, RELATED TO THE KANGAROO.



THE WHITE RACCOON DOG—AN ANIMAL NEW TO SCIENCE.

The allied species *Nyctereutes procyon* or *Canis procyonoides*, according to Mivart, who makes only one genus of dogs, wolves, foxes, and raccoon dogs, is said to hibernate in the winter. If this is true it forms a most remarkable exception to any other known animal of the dog kind. We are told that those of the tribe that do this (for according to all accounts some of the raccoon dogs hibernate while others do not) look up old, deserted fox burrows or those of some other animal if they can, for their bedrooms, but are quite capable, should they not be able to save themselves work in this way, of digging their own burrows. As for the little animal at the park, she certainly evinced no disposition, severe as was the weather at times last winter, of remaining asleep in the comfortable sleeping quarters assigned her, when feeding time came around. Nor are the feet of the creature—short, small, and weak, with claws of little strength—well calculated for digging burrows. As Mr. Hornaday says: "As a whole the animal is not physically robust, nor is it at all vicious in temper. On the contrary it has taken kindly to its keepers and to captivity. Its teeth are small and weak, and taken altogether it is poorly equipped for self-preservation. It requires a home not overrun by bears, wolves, foxes, or the larger members of the family *Mustelidae*. It very probably inhabits moist lowlands rather than dry and rugged highlands."

Another very rare animal—so far as the writer knows, the first animal of its kind ever seen on this side of the Atlantic—the so-called Tasmanian wolf, zebra wolf, or pouched dog, *Thylacinus cynocephalus* is to be seen at the New York Zoological Park. Although not new to science it is in some respects a more interesting animal than the white raccoon dog. The "Tasmanian wolf," so far from being a wolf, does not belong to the dog family. It is, in fact, a marsupial, and is more nearly akin to certain of the kangaroos than it is to the *Canidae*. The female, indeed, has a well developed pouch, though the marsupial bones are wanting, being replaced by cartilages. The animal walks upon its toes and partly upon half its soles or palms, as may be seen more evidently in the hind feet; this causes the body to be brought much nearer the ground in running than is the case with a wolf or dog, and constitutes the Tasmanian wolf a semi-plantigrade. The lower canine teeth in dogs pass on the outer sides of the upper ones when the mouth is closed, while the larger recurved canines of the Tasmanian wolf in the upper jaw are separated from the incisors by a space into which the points of the lower canines fit when the jaw is shut. The animal has the peculiar lower jaw of the marsupials—the angle is inflected; it is, in fact, a marsupial with structural parts foreshadowing those of the more highly developed dog. Such an animal as this transports us back to those primeval times when animals far more generalized than those that now exist united in themselves diverse characteristics and specific features never, in our day (save in a few such instances as the Tasmanian wolf), found in any one individual or any one species.—J. C. Beard.

**The Supply of Ivory.**

During a recent visit to the London Docks, says Knowledge and Scientific News, Her Majesty the Queen was informed that the stock of ivory then shown represented, on an average, the annual slaughter of some 20,000 African elephants. This statement has been contradicted in two letters in the daily papers. In one of these Messrs. Hale, of 10 Fenchurch Avenue, state that at least 85 per cent of the supply is "dead ivory," mainly obtained from hoarded stores of African chiefs, who are shrewd enough to put their commodities on the market only in dribbles. The most interesting part of the letter is, however, the statement that the great bulk of this hoarded ivory is obtained from "elephant cemeteries"—spots met with here and there in the jungle, where elephants have resorted for centuries to die. Much of the ivory that comes to the market may, therefore, according to this letter, be several hundred years old. The marvel is why it is not devoured in the jungles by porcupines, as certainly happens with tusks of the Indian elephant which are left in the jungle.