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THE TARBAGAN (ARCTOMYS BOBAC) AND PLAGUE.

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There seems to be considerable evidence that the tarbagan, *Arctomys bobac*, has been for many years associated with outbreaks of plague in Siberia, Mongolia, and Manchuria. This association has been mentioned in the writings of numerous Russian and other investigators and many hypotheses have been set forth. But, so far as the writer has been able to determine, no authentic proof has been forthcoming that the disease from which the tarbagan suffers and which is apparently transmissible to man, is true plague. Most of the statements concerning the disease heretofore have been quoted from the natives of the localities where this marmot lives, and until quite recently no writer has seen or described, after personal investigation, the disease in the tarbagan. And further there seem to be no positive or authoritative statements which fix the status of the tarbagan disease on a bacteriological or pathological basis.

THE TARBAGAN (ARCTOMYS BOBAC).

The tarbagan has been called by various authors sarbagan, sara-bagan, tarabagan, phutiya, and han ta. The spelling, tarbagan, is that given by the Russian writers, who believe it to be of Transbaikalian origin, and who have observed on the spot the disease to which this animal is subject.

The tarbagan is said to be indigenous to Thibet and common in Mongolia. At least six species of Arctomyinæ, the subfamily to which the tarbagan is said to belong, are reported to be found in various parts of Central Asia, but the so-called tarbagan appears to be the most widely spread. In Europe it is found as far west as Russia and eastern Germany. In Asia its habitat is given as Siberia, Mongolia, Thibet, and Manchuria.

According to Tchaouchoff this animal is a hibernating rodent of the genus *Marmota* (synonym, *Arctomys*; subfamily, Arctomyinæ) and is classified as *Arctomys bobac*. There are many species of Arctomyinæ and Blue (1) notes 12 varieties for California. The American ground hog, woodchuck, and ground squirrel belong to this same family.

In the new National Museum there are specimens of an animal classed as *Marmota bobac*. This animal has rather long, coarse, yellow,