

Science Notes

BY WILLIAM G. HAYNES.

Is Goiter Curable?

(By Edwin F. Bowers, M. D.)

There is a wide diversity of opinion as to the cause of goiter. Many locate the seat of the disease in the heart itself, in the blood-vessels, and in the blood; others, who favor the so-called "mechanical theory," ascribe the symptoms to compression by an enlarged thyroid gland of the nerves and vessels in the neck, although they neglect to tell us how the gland became enlarged.

Other competent medical authorities believe that goiter is essentially nervous, originating in some disturbance of the rambling pneumogastric nerve (or vagus), or of either the sympathetic or central nervous system. In fact, the whole question is very hazy and indefinite.

We know, however, for a certainty that the pathological basis or actual origin of goiter is a disturbance of the function of the thyroid gland. But whether this is due to water deficient in inorganic salts (as many claim), to nervous shock, injury to the thyroid gland, constitutional diseases, defective metabolism, or what not, is not known.

We know only that the rapid heart action and palpitation, the distressing tremor, the unsightly swelling in the lower part of the neck, the protrusion of the eyeballs, and the nervous excitement accompanying goiter—particularly that form known as exophthalmic goiter—are extremely difficult to cure. Sometimes the surgeon removes a large portion of the goiter—not all, for it has been found that complete removal is usually attended with grave changes in the mental or the physical equilibrium.

The cure of goiter is—or was—equally uncertain. I say "was" advisedly; for if the recently discovered "pressure-therapy" of Dr. William FitzGerald of Hartford, Conn., is found to be all its discoverers claim for it, "zone-therapy" bids fair to supersede all other methods.

Briefly, Dr. FitzGerald's method consists in stimulating the nerve centers—or "push-buttons"—in the zone in which the trouble is located. This is accomplished by passing a blunt steel probe, the point of which has been still further blunted by being wrapped in cotton, through the nostril, and causing pressure at a point on the vault of the pharynx—that portion of the cavity of the head where the nose ends and the mouth begins—which pressure is reflected as a metallic sensation in the region in which the goiter is located.

This pressure is maintained for several minutes at a time, night and morning. To assist in the treatment, the patient, several times daily, compresses firmly the second joint of the thumb, which is located in the zone running up the center of the body, including, of course, the goiter region, pressing on each thumb alternately. This seems to stimulate the normal functional activity of the first zone.

In the past fifteen months Dr. FitzGerald has treated in this manner twenty-one cases, many of which were of pronounced exophthalmic type, with protruding eyeballs, unsightly enlargement of the thyroid gland, rapid heart action, and all the manifold nervous symptoms that accompany goiter. Twelve of these have been discharged as cured, and nine

are well on the highway toward recovery.

I met and talked with a number of Dr. FitzGerald's patients. It is too early, of course, to say what the ultimate effects will be; but from the present indications the results of this method bid fair to be permanent. At any rate, the principle is so simple and so easy of application that it would seem well worth a trial before risking the dangers and the possible nervous developments which follow a radical operation, or sometimes even the use of organic extracts or powerful alteratives.

Wolf or Ox?

Evidence that there are two distinct human types—the carnivorous and the herbivorous—is offered by Dr. J. E. Goldthwait in his Shattuck lecture, published in full in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, and reviewed in the London Lancet. The interest of physicians in Dr. Goldthwait's theory is that, according to his view, the wolf and ox types of man, as perhaps they may be called, have each its peculiar diseases. In some cases the peculiarities of the type may induce disease; in others they simply react more easily to special conditions. Normal man is half-way between these two types. Dr. Goldthwait tells us; he is part ox and part wolf; but just what proportion of each represents normality best, he lecturer does not say. He thinks that the carnivorous, or wolf, type is gaining the ascendancy somewhat. We read in the Lancet, in substance:

"In the carnivorous type of individual the whole figure is slither; the skeleton is lighter and more slender. The hair is more abundant; adenoid tissue is apt to be excessive. Structurally the lungs are apparently smaller than normal; the heart is small; the stomach is long and tubular, and its attachments are less firm; the small intestine is shorter than normal. The large intestine is shorter, too. In the skeleton of this type the torso is long; the ribs are longer than normal, and thus downward inclination is very marked. Contrast this general picture with the 'herbivorous' individual. The skeleton is larger in proportion and heavier in structure. The face is broad, the jaw square, the neck thick, the shoulders square. The diaphragm is high, and both small and large intestines are long. The spinal movements are much less free in the herbivorous type; laterally, practically no motion is allowed except at the dorso-lumbar juncture. In the two types the incidence of disease presents differences; in the carnivorous are seen especially tuberculosis and the infections in general, the nervous diseases and acute mental disorders, the hyperglandular disturbances, the progressive anemias; in the heavy, or herbivorous, type, arteriosclerosis, gout, diabetes, chronic renal disease, gall-stones, and degenerative mental disorders are common. The effect of posture is held to be significant in its influence upon the physiology; the way the body is used is of quite as much importance as the structure of the body itself. The harmful effects of posture are evidenced much earlier in life in the carnivorous."—Literary Digest.

Dyeing Silk Before It Is Silk.

Silk is the secretion of two glands of the silkworm lying alongside the digestive canal. These glands, which consist of numerous coiled tubes, terminate in a spinning wart. From a common orifice in the spinning wart the secretion, of the consistency of honey, issues forth, promptly hardening into a thread on exposure to the

air. Usually the silk is colorless on leaving the body of the silkworm, but sometimes it is straw yellow or greenish. Why? The answer has been a matter of long dispute.

Some claim that the larva itself produces the color; others ascribe it to impurities acquired upon secretion; still others are of the opinion that the green color of the leaves of the mulberry tree is the cause. Two French scientists, Levrat and Conte, determined to settle the dispute. They fed silkworms on mulberry leaves which had been saturated with non-poisonous aniline red and aniline blue. With what result? Not only were the silkworms turned red or blue, but their secreted silk assumed the respective colors. Who knows but some day we may be dyeing silk in the leaf instead of in the vat. —Popular Science Magazine.

SUFFRAGE.

The cause of woman's suffrage received an enthusiastic impetus in Pittsburgh last Sunday at the special Symposium held at Loendi Club, where Mrs. Paul Lawrence Dunbar spoke to a crowded house.

Any man or woman in attendance who, prior to hearing Mrs. Dunbar, entertained any ideas antagonistic to the cause of women, surely must have experienced a change of heart ere Mrs. Dunbar closed her argument, so enthusiastic and convincing was the speaker in her remarks. She left no loophole through which the cause may receive any condemnatory action. Nor was her talk made up of uninteresting statistics, but rather replete with apt references and facts which could not fail to convert her hearers to a warm support.

The race should be proud of Mrs. Dunbar; should be proud that one of its members has so thoroughly absorbed the details anent racial advancement, and can so conclusively and conscientiously present them to an audience. The cause, when presented in such a manner, cannot fail to work to the advantage of the race, or to any people; and the men who are real men will perform their duty to humanity when they vote "yes" on November 2nd.

In spite of the New Jersey results, which are unfavorable as campaign material for the women, Pennsylvania will vote for itself and not for another; and the grand old Keystone state will certainly reward these noble women for their labors in the interest of clean government and a square deal to all alike.—The Pittsburgh Courier.

NEGRO ROMAN CATHOLICS DISLIKE JIM CROWING

Washington, D. C., Oct. 22.—Some dissatisfaction was caused among colored Roman Catholics of Baltimore and this city by the "Jim Crowing" of colored marchers in the parade of the Holy Name Societies of Baltimore, Washington and vicinity on Sunday, October 10.

The colored delegation from Baltimore, where there are four colored Roman Catholic churches, was much less than in former years. One church St. Francis Xavier of Baltimore, refused to send any members, appropriating the money for a club house.

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