

## Science Notes

BY WILLIAM G. HAYNES.

### THE FREE-AND-EASY CURE.

What is the best way to cure an invalid—putting him under strict discipline, taking away his little comforts, refusing him his favorite bits of food; or, on the contrary, humoring him, letting him do as he likes, and treating him with easy comradeship? Apparently the conduct of the field-hospitals in France gives us experimental data toward answering these questions. In an article in The Interstate Medical Journal (St. Louis, November), Dr. Ralph L. Thompson, of that city, under the heading "Somewhere in France," tells us how the adage, "They do these things better in France," applies today as of old. If we could take the patients out of our own hospitals here in peaceful America and send them over to the battle-fields of shell-swept Gaul, it would apparently be a beneficial change for them. The reason is, Dr. Thompson tells, us, that "in the French war-zone we gave a man what he wanted"—a simple therapeutic measure, and one eminently satisfactory to the patient; which, after all is doubtless the reason that it succeeds so well. Says the writer:

"The most surprising thing to me was the quickness with which we got patients well in these hospitals; and this was in a great measure due to their simplicity and to the fact that they were practically open-air institutions. Moreover, there is the matter of what you might call the esthetics of war, or of hospitals, to be considered here. We not only attempted to treat the wounds in these hospitals, but to treat the men. Here were these poor devils who had been in the trenches for months—we had many of them who had been at the front for eleven months—and they came in tremendously fatigued. I have seen men sleep for forty-eight hours at a stretch. You can operate on them without using anesthetics. I have seen these men come in in their dirty, stained, mud-caked uniforms. The uniform is taken off and burned; that is the end of that. The men are put into porcelain bath-tubs, given a hot bath, and then they are given a complete, new uniform of hospital clothes.

"Here begins what you might call the esthetics of hospital treatment. The men are given a hospital-suit of very brilliant blue, with a white shirt and a big, flaming red necktie, so that they may have a color-scheme to amuse them when they wake up. Moreover, the nurses do not dress merely in white, as they do with us. They all have some color to their uniforms. The British nurses wear a gray uniform trimmed with bright red. The Canadian nurses wear a very handsome shade of blue—I am not up on colors, but it is very pretty—with brass buttons, shoulder-straps and all. Our nurses wore a pleasing variation in brown as the chief background of the color scheme. The Harvard Unit nurses wore dark blue.

"Then everything possible is done for the men's comfort. In our own country, when we go to the hospital we are treated in the most inhuman manner one can imagine. You say 'hospital' to a person and it makes him sick, if he is not sick already. Any little pleasure or comfort that one has ever been accustomed to in his life immediately ceases on his entering the hospital. If he has been

accustomed to smoking a little now and then, that pleasure is denied him the minute he comes into the hospital. If there is some little particular delicacy that he is fond of, the physician immediately finds out what that is and suppresses it. In the French war zone we gave a man what he wanted. I have seen a man with one side of his face shot away, paralyzed on one side, smoking a cigaret on the intact side and enjoying it; and, strange to say, you would see that man recover and leave the hospital. It is a very curious fact that, notwithstanding these comforts, the men get well.

"If we would apply the treatment to our patients in our hospitals here that is applied in the war zone, we would save all of the hospital days that have been lost by the people who are involved in this great war. We could get back all of this loss that we have been experiencing in the war as far as people in hospitals are concerned.

"And if you could walk through the smells of the little fishing village of Etaples, as we did every day, you would say that if France would apply to her towns the sanitation that is compulsory in camp and hospital she would save in the next generation as many lives as this war has cost."—Literary digest.

### THE BENEFICENT TOAD

The toad has always been looked upon as loathsome, even poisonous. Yet modern medical research is extracting from toadskins remedies of the greatest value and the beneficent possibilities of these secretions have by no means been exhausted.

Quack remedies have long been made from the skins of toads and the Chinese still use such an extract, called "senso," as a cure for dropsy. A well known remedy among the New England colonists for sprains and rheumatism was a toad ointment made as follows:

Four good-sized live toads; put into boiling water and cook very soft; then take them out and boil the water down to one-half pint, and add fresh churned unsalted butter, one pound, and simmer together; at the last add tincture of arnica two ounces.

In the light of Dr. Abel's brilliant work these old remedies take on a new meaning. Abel studied the giant tropical toad, Bufo agua, found in the Upper Amazon. The natives of that section of Brazil make an arrow poison from the creamy secretion of the skin glands, a poison so powerful that it kills big game in a few moments. From this secretion Abel isolated adrenalin, a blood-pressure-raising medicine invaluable to the specialist and the surgeon. Previously this substance had been extracted from suprarenal glands of the ox or sheep and later had been synthesized in the laboratory from coal tar as it was found to be nothing more than dihydroxymethyl-aminoethylol benzene.

But the most valuable and startling part of Dr. Abel's work with this toad secretion was the isolation of a beautiful crystalline substance to which toadskin owes its surative powers for dropsy. This he named "bufagin," and the most active investigation of its properties is now in progress. It seems strange that after a century's ridicule of a toad treatment for dropsy as a mere grandmother's remedy we should now find a genuinely scientific confirmation of the practice. It may be objected that all varieties of toads do not give the same secretion as the giant toad from the Amazon, but it has only recently been found that another crystalline sub-

stance, bufotalin, of very similar properties to the bufagin, is found in the skin of the common European toad.—Scientific American.

### CHOSEN AS SUCCESSOR OF DOCTOR WASHINGTON

(Continued from first page.)

was not, for he had labored all his life. He was assigned to the sawmill, where he learned to fire the huge boilers and to run a Corliss engine under the direction of an ex-confederate officer who was as strict as he was kind.

During his work year he was constantly learning by doing. It was a period of initiation into an entirely new life—new people, new duties, different races, new standards, new ideas, new ideals.

"When I entered Hampton," says Major Morton, "I had no particular plan as to what I should do when I should have completed the course. As the time went on I was more and more inclined to the legal profession. Most of my teachers advised against it, however—that is, they raised the question whether I thought I could render my people the greatest service as a lawyer, and whether legal advice was the greatest need of an ignorant, struggling people.

"General Armstrong thought I could be of more use to my people by remaining at Hampton and helping to prepare teachers. The result was that at the close of the school in June, 1890, I accepted the position of drill-master and assistant to the commandant of the school cadets."

Before his graduation from Hampton in 1890 Major Moton spent one year as a school teacher in Cumberland county, Virginia, where he taught the boys to drill and the girls to take gymnastics; where he taught his people to love and appreciate the plantation songs, and parents how to make life more worth while.

Promptness, alertness, self-control, endurance, respect for authority, initiative, good will—these were Hampton's gifts to this useful and safe race leader.

Major Moton holds a most delicate position at Hampton. In the school community there are pure Negroes, mulattoes, Indians, northern white people, southern white people—all working for the same great cause—the elevation of the race. It is no easy matter to harmonize all these types, and yet so rare is his tact and so true is his judgment that each group gives him enthusiastic support.

Major Morton visited Omaha about ten months ago with the Hampton quartette. His splendid address delivered at the Y. W. C. A. made a profound and most favorable impression.

### BISHOP A. WALTERS SEES THE PRESIDENT

Washington, D. C., Dec. 24.—Bishop Alexander Walters was here Monday conferring with prominent democrats December 13. He was at the White house a short time, presumably to urge that a colored man be appointed recorder of deeds in order to try to stem the tide of seceding Negro democrats.

While the prelate has urged at all times the claims of Negro democrats for political preferment, the only presidential appointments they have secured were the naming of Dr. George W. Buckner as Minister to Liberia and the recent appointment of James L. Curtis as the latter's successor.

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