

Curing Soldiers' Ills with Electricity

By PAULINE BERGINS

ELECTRICITY is playing no mean rôle in the vast reconstruction work now being carried on in the great Red Cross as well as Army and Navy hospitals throuout the country. Not only has the electric current been cleverly employed in many diversified ways to treat the many ill and maladies with which the soldiers and sailors have been afflicted in this country, but thousands of these appliances have been and are being used every day in the field hospitals in France, and in other lands which were not many months ago raging battlefields. Portable yet powerful X-ray ambulances sped over the battlefields but a few miles behind the front line trenches, ever ready to loan a helping hand in the merciful work of the medical corps. And not only do we find in these shell-torn regions the invaluable

nervous cases caused by excessive fatigue, and for over-strained muscles and cords.

There are more shell-shock victims from this great World War than there have been in any other. And therefore, the fact that the Bergonié electric chair will help to alleviate and cure these cases, is indeed a great blessing.

It might be said that the majority of

of shell-shock are cured suddenly and instantly by the most peculiar incident or happening. In a large French hospital just



Three Interesting Views Showing Electricity's Role In the Reconstruction Work of the Army Hospitals. Above: Fig. 2, Soldier Patient Receiving Electric Arm Bath Treatment For Rheumatism, at the American Red Cross War Hospital at Paignton, Devon, France. Fig. 1, Below, Shows American Soldier Being Treated in the Bergonié Electric Chair, Extensively Used for Shell Shock Treatment, at Fort MacPherson, Ga. Fig. 3, at Left, Illustrates the Electric Light Bath Cabinet in Use. A Wounded Marine Is Enjoying the Glowing Warmth Produced By This Electrotherapeutic Apparatus For Treating Sore and Stiffened Muscles.



Photo © by Underwood & Underwood

X-ray machines, but many other appliances such as electric heating devices for the treatment of "trench feet", electric sterilizers and cauterizers, Faradic outfits for the treatment of lameness and rheumatism, electric light baths, etc.

The accompanying photographs show several very interesting and practical applications of the electric current for the treatment of war ill. The photograph, Fig. 1, showing an American soldier seated in the large reclining chair, was taken at Fort MacPherson, Ga. This curious and complicated looking electric outfit comprises one of the most wonderful electro-medical devices ever invented—the "Bergonié" Electric Chair. The Bergonié invention involves the application of low voltage electric currents of peculiar wave form to the patient's body while seated in the chair here shown, the body being weighted with a number of sand bags. The switch-board in the background contains a number of regulating rheostats and motor-driven interrupters as well as measuring instruments, such as a voltmeter and milli-ampere meter for indicating the strength of the current applied to the patient. The Bergonié chair treatment produces rhythmic pulsations in the nerves and muscles and has been found very efficacious for shell-shock victims as well as for treating severe

shell-shock victims lose a part or all of their mental faculties, and to all appearances cannot use their reason at all. They have all sorts of delusions as to whom their folks are, or where their home is. Practically everyone has heard of, or has been in contact with, one or more cases of shell-shock, and so it is not necessary to expatiate further on this important phase of the problem of reconstruction, except to say that the various hospitals and sanitariums engaged in this work are doing wonders over night, literally as well as metaphorically, for some of these cases

prior to the signing of the armistice there
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CURING SOLDIERS' ILLS WITH ELECTRICITY.

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were 3,000 shell-shock victims; the day the armistice was signed 2,000 of them recovered, showing what a peculiar and baffling mental ailment this is.

The photograph, Fig. 2, was taken at the American Red Cross War Hospital, located at Paignton, Devon, France, which is one of the finest and best equip in the Red Cross service. This hospital has a staff of 150 nurses under the direction of Army medical officers. The photograph shows a soldier undergoing an electric bath treatment for rheumatism. This treatment is given in the massage room at the hospital, where multifarious other electrical machines and appliances are to be found, including electrical massage vibrators, electric heating pads, etc.

In some of the larger base hospitals, very elaborate electrical equipment has been made available. In some of the American Army hospitals in the United States, where the returning wounded are being carefully attended to, so as to make them as well and strong as they were when they went overseas to fight the Boche, there are some of the very latest instruments and apparatus about which little is known outside of the medical profession. This equipment includes among other things the *Electro-cardiograph*, which comprises an extremely sensitive electrical galvanometer, capable of recording the beats of the heart on a photographic film, so that the exact condition of the heart with regard to its manner of beating and its strength, can be minutely and accurately studied by the physicians.

At one of the large New York debarkation hospitals everything is done by electricity—even to the cooking. This hospital has one of the largest X-ray laboratories in the world, each of the 26 X-ray rooms being equip with a special dark room for rapidly developing and finishing the X-ray plates. The X-ray in itself has undoubtedly saved thousands of lives in the great conflict, in many cases when the victims of bullet and shell wounds would certainly have died, had it not been for this wonderful scientific machine. Owing to the terrific fragmentation (splintering) of the shell now used, which often causes small steel splinters to penetrate parts of the body where they would never be suspected, and which, if they were not quickly discovered by the X-ray, would be quite liable to affect the heart, lungs or blood vessels at some unexpected time and cost the victim his life. For this reason the returning wounded are most minutely examined and X-rayed, especially in the abdomen and chest regions, where many of these shell splinters, and even bullets, are fond of lodging and camouflaging themselves for long periods, only to cause trouble at some later date, with possibly fatal results.

THE UNKNOWN PURPLE.

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last act, in which scene the hero is visible to the eye in flesh and blood but slowly and gradually fades away into nothing, leaving only the purple glow. This was quite impressive and, of course, was done by the usual magician's mirror effect, whereby the hero was not on the stage at all, but below it, thus casting his reflection on a fine screen on the stage; then by manipulating the lights in a certain manner the picture would dissolve into emptiness.

Altogether the stage technique is very cleverly arranged with an absurdly simple effect which in a similar attempt would be very elaborate. Outside of that the plot and theme of the play is quite out of the ordinary and is deserving of mention.

To show just how different this play is from others, reference must be made to a note in the program over which audiences puzzle themselves until the play itself makes the meaning clear. To wit: "The first epi-

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