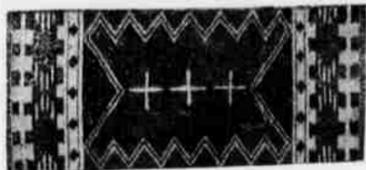


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HEALING ART OF BEASTS

Remarkable in Many Ways and Not Without its Adaptability.



ATTENTION has been attracted to the methods of healing employed by dumb animals, which study at John Hopkins University has recently shown to be remarkable and not without its adaptability to humankind as well.

It is believed that the dog has a valuable secret for man in the treatment of wounds with its saliva. It is stated that the saliva of the dog has a perfect bactericidal and healing power, and there is little doubt in the minds of those who are now delving into the subject that this same agency is a good antiseptic. Proof is apparent in the prompt use of saliva upon his wounds by the dog and its speedy recovery through this treatment. It was a matter of comment when this matter was first undertaken at the Hopkins medical school that no bacteriologist had taken the hint from the dog's lesson and engaged in experiment along this line.

That the dog possesses a marked surgical instinct is verified by many instances out of the commonplace. A Mr. Young, who was engaged for a long time in missionary work in northwestern Canada, had among his dogs, of which a large number were necessary for drawing his sleds, one Rover. This dog not only attended its own wounds but actually performed the duties of surgeon to all of its fellows. Galls, wounds, frozen feet and other like injuries consequent upon the peculiar toil they had to perform were systematically and successfully treated by Dr. Rover. The dog had one remedy, the anointing of the afflicted part with saliva. Wherever it applied the remedy the cure was speedy. It was noticed that parts of the toes of the dog doctor's patients which could not be reached by the dog doctor's tongue went unhealed. The Rev. Mr. Young says that the Indians in admiration of the dog's wonderful learning called it Muskeke Atim, meaning the surgeon.

The dog is not alone in the possession of this means for curing the various ills to which its tribe is heir. Cats, cattle, rats, mice and monkeys are all known to lick their wounds when they can get at them, and when they cannot do so they endeavor to get their companions to perform this office for them.

If the queer little worlds which they know were possessed of newspapers intelligible to them it would doubtless be true that they would be frequent contributors to those columns devoted to home remedies and they would tell in glowing and convincing language how they had tried this method with such success that they would have no other. The John Hopkins men who are inquiring into this subject now call attention to an incident narrated by Dr. James Weir in which a large monkey figured.

The monkey scratched his shoulder badly on a nail which projected from the side of its cage. Immediately upon sustaining the injury the queer creature went to a corner and selected a handful of clean sawdust, which it pressed firmly on the profusely bleeding scratch. The monkey held the sawdust in place until the bleeding stopped, which was in but a few minutes. The sawdust was saturated with blood, which had dried and formed an excellent coating for the wound, protecting it until entirely well.

It should be mentioned that the dog's medical instinct does not halt at the saliva treatment. It is a physician as well as a surgeon. The dog that goes searching around in a field with apparent aimlessness and finally settles down to chew up some unattractive and unpalatable greens is taking a prescription taught it by nature. The blades it eats are those of the couch grass—which your physician would probably designate on his prescription blank as *Triticum repens*, and it performs the offices of a purgative.

Instances could be recited at length of animal display of the medical instinct. Horses, and even the less intelligent mules, eat clay when they are afflicted with a stomach disorder commonly designated by the veterinary as sour. Cattle suffering from eczema have frequently been known to plaster an affected hoof and joint with mud. Dr. Weir tells of a cow which deliberately broke the ice on a pond in the winter and treated an itching joint to a bath of mud.

The fondness of the domestic cat for catnip is not a condition of the mind attendant upon the enjoyment of absolute health, for it is only when the cat is somewhat under the weather that it will seek the solace of the soothing properties of this vegetation. Under such circumstances cats have been known to travel miles to get the catnip.

Not the least remarkable of all the achievements of dumb creatures in the line of surgery and medicine are those of the birds. Dr. George M. Gould cites instances of woodcock killed which when examined were found to be recovering from previous wounds inflicted by hunters. Such wounds made by small shot in the body of the bird were neatly dressed with down plucked from the stems of feathers and deftly arranged about the injured place. This work was evidently done with the beak of the bird. The skill of members of the feathered tribe in building their dainty nests is testimony to their ability in accomplishing work of this character with neatness and despatch. Of the success of this work Dr. Gould bears witness in the statement that the woodcock were found to be convalescent from the old wounds.

The same authority tells of cases of bone setting by birds which would be beyond belief if man was not already familiar with the marvellous intelligence

(Concluded on Page 6)

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