

PSYCHOLOGY

Cat Phobia Treatment

► IF YOU ARE "scared to death" of cats, it may help to wear velvet gloves.

Dr. H. L. Freeman of Littlemore Hospital, Oxford, and Dr. D. C. Kendrick, lecturer in psychology at the University of London's Institute of Psychiatry, report a case in which a patient was cured of cat phobia by forcing herself to handle velvet until she got used to it.

The patient, a 37-year-old married woman with two children, had had a fear of cats as long as she could remember. It had intensified in the two years before she consulted a psychologist. The interview revealed that the situations that produced fear were, in order of importance: the sight of a real live cat; the thought of a cat that might attack her as she walked down the street; the thought of meeting a cat in the dark; cats in pictures and on television; cat-like toys and cat-like fur.

She was not afraid of a cat's meowing and could easily touch the hair of a dog.

On two occasions as a child she had been very disturbed in situations involving cats. One was when her father drowned a kitten in her presence and the second was when her parents put a fur in her bed.

The patient was eager to overcome her fear and agreed to undergo learning and behavior therapy, more specifically "reciprocal inhibition," a technique derived from experimental psychology.

The therapist began by trying to teach the patient to accept what she felt was the least objectionable idea associated with cats—their fur. To do this, a number of materials were prepared. The first was velvet, which has some of the texture of cat fur. Gradually the patient progressed until she could be comfortable with a rabbit-fur glove, a toy kitten and pictures of cats.

The psychologist then picked out a live kitten with a mild disposition and gave it to the patient, who laughed and cried as she accepted it. She explained later that she wept because of the relief of having done something she thought impossible for her. Acceptance of the kitten occurred one month after therapy began.

The patient took the kitten home to keep and as it grew she became less and less afraid of full grown cats. Eventually the patient was able to pet her mother's black cat, which had seemed particularly frightening to her.

"Whereas previously all cats had an almost uniformly sinister aspect," the psychologists report in the *British Medical Journal*, Aug. 13, 1960, "she could now see individual differences."

Dr. Freeman was at Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospital, London, while conducting the investigation.

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MEDICINE

Leprosy Patients Helped

► THE WORLD is suddenly faced with millions of leprosy patients who want to earn a living. Leprosy can often be cured by new techniques and many patients can be rehabilitated, according to Dr. Paul W. Brand, member of the World Health Organization expert panel on leprosy.

Dr. Brand says attitudes toward this formerly incurable disease have changed. Not only can leprosy be cured, reconstructive operations are now possible for the mutilations and paralysis caused by it.

There are only some 2,000 leprosy patients in all of the United States. Few physicians in this country are trained to care for them. Throughout the world there are about 12,000,000 sufferers.

Writing in *Rehabilitation Literature* 21:239, 1960, Dr. Brand says:

"In Vellore, India, one of the most effective methods of altering public opinion has been the integration of treatment of leprosy with that of other diseases in the Medical College and its outclinics, along with the establishment of a leprosy rehabilitation center in the town, where it can be seen and visited by the public."

Dr. Brand describes the results of leprosy—lack of sensation in hands and feet, collapse of the nose, deformities of the external ear, paralysis of eyelids and other muscles. But he adds:

"The disease does not affect the heart or lungs, the digestion, central nervous system, the urinary system, or any of the nerves, muscles, bones, or joints supporting the pelvis, abdomen, thorax, neck, upper arm, hip or thigh."

A plastic surgeon—who can make post-nasal inlays, followed by cartilage grafts, face-lifting operations and eyebrow grafts—may restore a victim's face to normal.

Eyelid slings or muscle transplants are needed for paralyzed eyelids to prevent blindness from exposure of the cornea.

"Whereas in poliomyelitis," Dr. Brand explains, "a limb may be totally paralyzed and beyond the reach of surgical help, in leprosy a whole group of forearm muscles remains unparalyzed and can be redeployed to transform a useless hand into a strong and active member."

Up to now, Dr. Brand says, leprosy has not been thought of as a disease but as a curse to be turned over to missionaries or dedicated physicians who devote their lives to lepers.

If international agencies will initiate a program to establish training units in medical colleges and to provide rehabilitation teams in a few antileprosy areas, Dr. Brand predicts, the governments of the countries concerned will quickly see their value and shoulder their responsibilities.

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SACRED IMAGE—Copy of deity-image found near Vernon, Ariz., by a Chicago Natural History Museum archaeologist.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Rare Sacred Image Of Pueblos Unearthed

► A RARE SACRED IMAGE of key importance in the Pueblo Indians' religious ceremonies in Arizona between 1250 and 1350 A.D. has been discovered. The deity-image, in a pose like that of a dog begging for a bone, is the first of its kind to be unearthed.

Although it has remained buried for six or seven centuries, the image may be related to underworld ceremonies that are still part of the religion of today's Hopi Indians.

Nine inches high, carved in sandstone and painted black, orange, green and blue, the image was found in a secret crypt by Dr. Paul S. Martin, chief curator of anthropology at the Chicago Natural History Museum. The crypt was at a site near Vernon, Ariz.

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NAVIGATION

Lighthouses Offshore To Replace Lightships

► LIGHTSHIPS will soon be replaced by fixed offshore lighthouses, the U.S. Coast Guard has announced. A long-range program will eliminate 22 of the remaining 24 picturesque lightship sites.

Completion of the first new navigation aid, to be at the southern approach to the Cape Cod Canal off the Massachusetts coast, is anticipated by the end of 1961 or early in 1962. Lighthouses are cheaper and will provide a greater luminous range than lightships.

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