

MEDICINE

Malady of Our Times

High blood pressure personalities are characteristic of the era in which we live. Such persons need to find their individuality and adjust in the best way to demands.

► THE HIGH blood pressure personality is "characteristic of our times," Dr. Robert Sterling Palmer of Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, declares in a report to the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Sept. 23).

"Practicality, objectivity and adaptability" are the chief characteristics of high blood pressure personalities, he finds from a study of 50 patients. The study, he points out, was made by a physician specializing in internal medicine, not by a psychiatrist.

"Originality, special skills and even special interests are conspicuous by their absence," he reports.

The personality pattern he found in the 50 high blood pressure patients is not specific for high blood pressure. It is the "personality's protective coloring induced by the prevailing normal climate."

"Tension results when this outer coat does not fit the patient's inner disposition," he states.

This tension is not specific for high blood pressure, either, but "contributes importantly to the development of other diseases of civilization.

"The task is first to assist the patient in finding his own inner individuality and second, to adjust it as best he can to current demands. This cultural factor in the causation of the disease presents a problem, doubtless insurmountable in one or several generations. This is not a reason for failure either to state the problem or to attempt to do something about it."

Dr. Palmer worked out a technique for inducing strain in patients with high blood pressure. It consisted in having the patient leaf through a 45-page loose-leaf notebook. On the first pages of the notebook are given simple statements about heart disease, high blood pressure and the outlook for patients with this condition. On each of 20 pages is printed the statement of a painful life situation or event from the history of an actual patient with high blood pressure. Outlines of 11 brief case histories of patients, especially in their psychosomatic aspects, are then given.

The patient reads, comments and asks questions. The blood pressure is taken at one or two minute intervals. When a rise in blood pressure, a telltale change in ex-

pression or position or some comment shows that something in the booklet has struck home, the doctor and patient can discuss it. In this way the doctor and patient both learn what emotional disturbance may be causing the high blood pressure in this particular patient. From this, methods of relieving the stress and the anxiety about the high blood pressure may be worked out.

Science News Letter, September 30, 1950

ENGINEERING

Develop New Type Conveyor Belt for Industry

► U. S. STEEL rolled out a new type of industrial conveyor on which loads move automatically to dead center and stay there.

Invented by E. T. Lorig, chief engineer of Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corp., a U.S. Steel subsidiary, the conveyor is a pathway of steel rollers. On each axle are twin rolls, each tapered slightly from the center out, but tilted so their working surfaces form a straight line.

The net effect is a "toe-in" force toward the center of the conveyor. As an object moves along the rolls, friction centers it exactly. The engineers dubbed the principle "planar action." Conveyors based upon this principle are already at work in several U.S. Steel plants. The rolls are being manufactured by Carnegie-Illinois in Johnstown, Pa.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

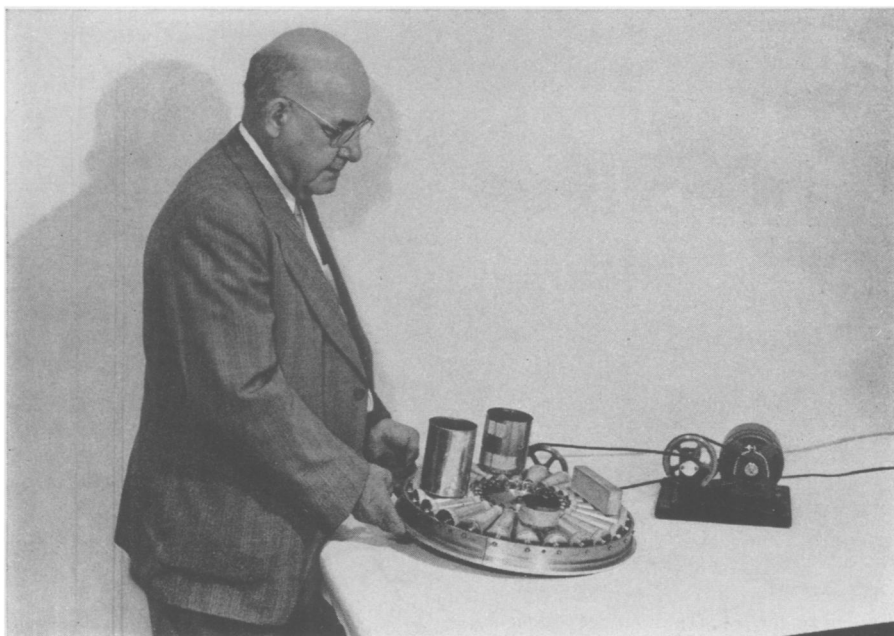
Monks Slowly Rebuild Destroyed Monastery

► THE SOUND of the pick and shovel are familiar to any archaeologist. Those who have dug up ancient cities know the task of trying to assemble broken pots, cuneiform tablets, stone inscriptions, life-size marble statues or mosaics.

At Monte Cassino, of World War II fame, emerges a new romance to archaeology. On top of this mountain overlooking the plains across which American troops fought for merciless weeks, the sound of the stone hammers beats a tattoo. The monks are rebuilding their monastery according to ancient plan. Here lie thousands of fragments made by recent steel shells and explosives—all being restored like a giant mosaic.

In one corner of a courtyard a black-robed monk is assembling carved marble blocks according to his pen and ink sketch of the way they were before the bombs came.

The chapel was demolished by shell-fire, but the tomb containing the bones of the monks' patron, Saint Benoit, was unharmed. A dud landed three feet away; this has been left where it fell, its nose buried in the ground. A passer-by might



DEFIES GRAVITY—By a 20-degree uptilt of his circular conveyor model, E. T. Lorig defies the laws of gravity. Inventor of the self-centering roll, he demonstrates the strong centering action on objects of various sizes, shapes and weights. The conveyor consists of a nest of split conical rolls individually driven.