

PSYCHOLOGY

Preventing Breakdown

► THE OLD saying, "Time heals," is true, declares Dr. W. Edgar Gregory, associate professor of psychology at the College of the Pacific, Stockton, Calif.

In fact, he says that life situations, long blamed for precipitating mental breakdowns in neurotic persons, can actually play a healing part and help to prevent such breakdowns. He gives as one example a soldier on his way to an overseas theater. His company commander asked Dr. Gregory to speak to him because he had been brooding about something.

Dr. Gregory found this soldier thoroughly discouraged. He was worried about his wife and three children, did not see how they could live on the government allotment and what he could spare from his own pay, which was about one-half of what he had been earning before coming into the Army.

He also felt he was being unfairly treated because he was being sent overseas after less than three months in the Army whereas

many others who had been on duty for several years were permitted to remain behind. He was thoroughly convinced he would not return home alive.

He said nothing about suicide but several things led Dr. Gregory to believe he was thinking of it as a way of furnishing his family with some extra money. So Dr. Gregory told the company commander to watch him lest he do something drastic.

The company commander agreed but next day made him acting squad leader.

"Within a few days one could almost see his shoulders lift and a new light come into his eyes," reports Dr. Gregory. "He took his responsibilities seriously and soon his worries had left him almost completely. A new life situation had ended a very dangerous trend."

"Time does heal," he states in *Mental Hygiene* (April), "but we have to give time the best circumstances under which to work."

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Danger of Power Lines

► KITE SEASON is here and with it comes a warning on the danger of flying kites near electric lines. The warning is from the U. S. Rural Electrification Administration. It is prompted by records of children being killed through direct or indirect contact with electric power lines.

Children, warns the REA, should be taught the danger of flying kites near electric lines, trying to pull down anything from these lines, or touching lines that have broken and are on the ground or hanging loose from poles.

If kites or their strings tangle with power lines, the result may be fatal to the child flying the kite. It is a good idea for both farm and city children to understand this danger, because even the youngster who lives in town often does some backyard kite-flying, especially in spring.

A wet or damp kite string, or the wire sometimes used on kites, is an excellent conductor of electricity. Thus, if the kite hits a power line, the child holding the cord may be on the receiving end of a fatal charge of electricity. Children should be warned against trying to rescue a kite that gets away and blows onto power lines. They should leave it and parents should report it promptly to the power company or rural electric cooperative so a lineman can remove it.

Parents also should caution young folks against trying to remove anything in contact with electric lines. Never, under any circumstances, should they touch broken lines on the ground or hanging from poles.

These spell danger. Many children are killed every year from this one cause.

A broken line should be reported immediately to the nearest electric company. If possible, some adult should stand guard over fallen lines until the power can be shut off—in order to warn off anyone who may come near.

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TECHNOLOGY

Oven-Drying Tobacco Cuts Down Nicotine

► TOBACCO LOSES about six percent of its nicotine when it is dried in an oven, experiments at the Eastern Regional Research Laboratory of the Department of Agriculture indicate.

Air-dried tobacco, on the other hand, showed no significant loss of nicotine after 13 to 17 weeks of drying.

Nicotine loss was not great in the oven-dried tobacco when 12% to 15% of the moisture remained. But when moisture was reduced to three to five percent and the temperature was held high, nicotine reduction was marked. Chemical destruction of nicotine accounted for most of the loss; the rest passed off as vapor.

This investigation was reported by E. G. Beinhart, C. F. Woodward, C. O. Willits, C. Ricciuti, C. O. Badgett and J. J. Willaman.

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INVENTION

Patented Chemical Regulates Plant Growth

► A CHEMICAL compound which will either stimulate or impede the growth rate of a large variety of plants has now been patented.

The compound is one containing haloaryl sulfinic or thiosulfinic acids or their salts. The compounds containing under one percent of these acids work as growth stimulants or retardants. Higher concentrations than that so alter the growth characteristics of the plant that it dies. Such a compound thus can find use as a herbicide.

The inventor is William D. Stewart, Brecksville, Ohio, and he assigned his patent, number 2,632,698, to the B. F. Goodrich Co., New York.

The inventor says the compounds may be applied to seeds and tubers to stimulate germination and plant emergence or to inhibit sprouting or to stimulate development of roots. They may be applied to cuttings and transplants to stimulate root formation and root growth. The compounds can reduce the number of set fruit or delay or prevent premature drop of buds, leaves and fruit or fruit trees.

Another use contemplated in the patent is the fortifying of fertilizers and plant food. Leaf structure can be modified. The compounds will, it is claimed, induce parthenogenesis and thus aid in the development of seedless berries and fruit.

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