

MEDICINE

Work Cures

Rest Cures for the Tired Business Man Went Out With The Depression, Now Opposite Method Aids Unemployed

By JANE STAFFORD

REST cures for the overworked business man or his wife who got tired out trying to find new ways to amuse herself went out with the depression.

Work-cures may be the order of the new day. They are seriously recommended as a remedy for unemployability by Dr. Bernard Fantus, professor of therapeutics at the University of Illinois College of Medicine and director of therapeutics at Cook County Hospital, Chicago. In fact, Dr. Fantus has already given prescriptions for work-cures to a number of patients and some of them have been sufficiently "cured" to join the ranks of the employed.

Unemployment is a problem for statesmen and economists who must find jobs for healthy men and women willing to work. Unemployability is a medical problem, Dr. Fantus contends, and it is up to the physicians of the country to treat the condition just as they would mend a broken arm or treat pneumonia, he says.

Unemployability may arise from injury or illness or from unemployment. In any case, the remedy, in Dr. Fantus' opinion, is work. For those who have suffered handicapping illness or injury, for the disabled veterans, patients suffering from heart disease or tuberculosis, the blind, deaf or crippled there are already in some localities special shops where they may learn to work and at least partially support themselves. But there are other unemployables who do not have these opportunities. Dr. Fantus is concerned about them.

Unemployment a Cause

Unemployment itself is the cause of some patients' illnesses, he points out, calling attention to the evil effects of unemployment "with all its grisly consequences of anxiety, sleeplessness, pessimism, and the exaggerated appreciation of the minor maladjustments of the bodily machine."

Even when it does not cause outright physical or mental disease, unemploy-

ment leads rapidly to unemployability. There is the case of the young engineer, college trained, who had been out of work so long that when a place was finally offered him he was almost afraid to take it.

"It is so long since I have done this kind of work, I don't believe I know how to do it now," he told one of his classmates.

You probably know of similar cases among your own friends or relatives, and they are multiplied many times in the experience of social workers. On this point Dr. Fantus observes:

"The gospel of the curative power of work is all the more necessary in these days when the deteriorating effect of unemployment on millions of our fellow citizens is daily becoming more evident: for there is as inevitable a tendency for the unemployed to become unemployable as there is for the unemployable to become unemployed."

Many Unemployable

Recently in a great city many persons applying for work relief were given a medical examination. As a result of this examination, it was found that over 18 per cent. of the applicants were unemployable.

"This means," says Dr. Fantus, "that unless some method be found of taking care of this army of unemployables, these persons will have to remain on a dole for an indefinite length of time, possibly for the rest of their natural existence, a burden to themselves, their families and the state."

He points out that these persons found unemployable had actually applied for work and that the percentage of the destitute who could be rescued by work-cures would be much greater if it also included those who consider themselves unemployable.

Dr. Fantus advises work-cures to keep the unemployed from becoming unemployable and he also advises them for all sick persons. He thinks work should be part of medical treatment, just as much as diet and rest and medicine.

"It is a fundamental axiom that human health and happiness require a harmonious balance of work and rest, of food and of fun; and this is just as true of the sick as of the well," he states.

Except in completely prostrating conditions, every sick person is able to work and is the better for work, providing the work is suitable for this individual, Dr. Fantus advises.

A Good Remedy

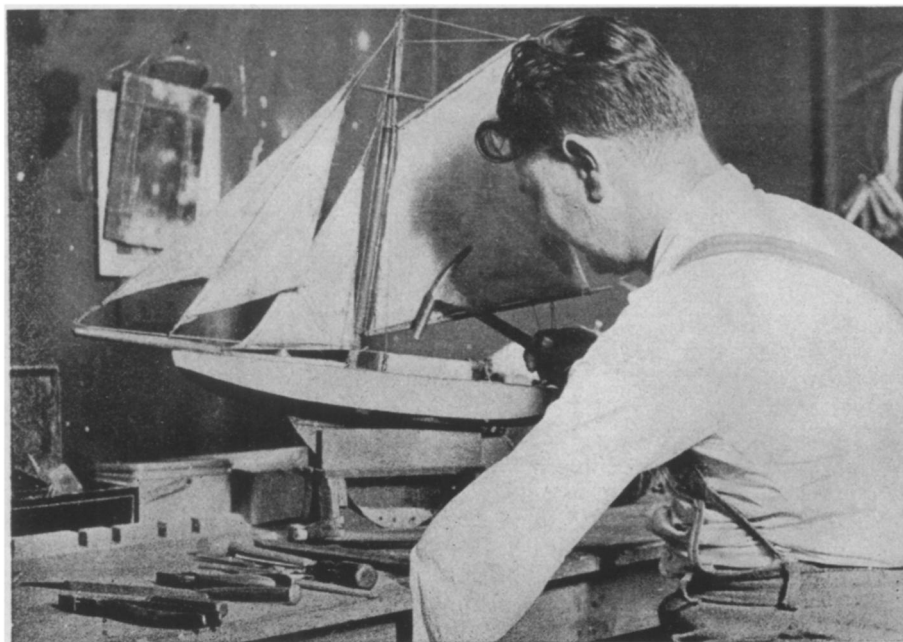
"There can be no doubt that work, properly prescribed and fitted to the disabled individual, is an even greater remedy than rest. For rest, unduly continued, weakens; work, properly graded, strengthens. Rest soon becomes intolerably boresome; and because of this is often abandoned prematurely. Work, properly prescribed, is an essential corrective to the evil tendencies and effects of rest. Rest treatment should be merely a preliminary to the more important portion of therapy: the refitting of the individual for work and for life.

"Up to the present, the medical profession has not measured up to the responsibility of returning to employability those who, for physical or psychic



TREATMENT

This convalescent patient is having physical therapy for an injured arm and a work-cure to remedy present unemployability.



REHABILITATION

The work-cure often starts in the toy department. Putting broken toys in order is the stimulus that revives the interest of many despondent unemployables, puts them back on the road to recovered health, morale and jobs.

reasons, have become unemployable," he declares. "The physician generally considers his work done and discharges his patients or is discharged by them as soon as or soon after they get out of bed, out of a splint, or no longer require other rest-compelling form of treatment."

This is all wrong, Dr. Fantus maintains. The doctor should be on the job, prescribing for and watching the patient until the latter is not only out of bed but back at work.

But even when the doctor recognizes that his patient needs work what can he do? In these days, when so many healthy and willing persons cannot find work, it is "hollow advice" to tell a sick person he needs work to make him well.

"Work Stores"

Work-cure establishments are the answer, as Dr. Fantus sees it. There are more than enough drug stores where prescriptions for medicine to treat disease can be filled, he points out, but at present we have no "work stores" where the physician can send his patient when work is the remedy to relieve the patient's illness.

Occupational therapy has been installed in some hospitals, to revive the patient's interest in life, to train injured muscles, joints and nerves back to useful activity. Occupational therapy, excellent as it may be, does not go far

enough, in Dr. Fantus' opinion. At best, it gives diversion and exercise; it does not give a real work-cure. And unfortunately the curative help even of the diversion and exercise is denied many who most need it because occupational therapy is an expensive form of treatment.

Sheltered Work

In Chicago there is now one place where patients can be sent for work-cures. It probably is the only such place in the country. It is run by the Chicago branch of the Goodwill Industries, under the supervision of Dr. Fantus and four other Chicago physicians.

For a long time, of course, the Goodwill Industries, both in Chicago and elsewhere, have provided what is known as "sheltered work." Persons handicapped by physical defect or in some other way not able to find a place in the strenuous world of industry have been put to work by this organization, which collects old clothing, discarded toys and household equipment and repairs and sells them at minimum prices to those who cannot afford new things.

The Chicago branch, however, has lately been doing more than provide "sheltered work." It has actually been giving work-cures on a scientific basis. During 1934, 311 men and women were referred by eleven medical and social agencies for curative work treatment.

There are 150 different kinds of jobs at which such patients can be put to work and to "cure." The jobs vary from various kinds of clerical work to porter work, millinery, cabinet work, pottery, weaving, repair of mechanical appliances and cooking and dishwashing.

Each Job Analyzed

Each job has been analyzed by a physician as to its curative possibilities and liabilities. The kinds of movements and degree of effort involved have been tabulated. The chart shows whether the job is done standing, sitting or stooping; which muscles are used; whether joints are held stiff or bent, and if bent, at what angle; if it is a lifting job, the number of pounds to be raised is given and how often. The analysis shows the amount of vision needed to perform each job, and whether it can be done with a missing or useless finger, toe, arm or leg, and so on. The patients are examined and their work prescribed by a physician, who also checks their progress toward recovery and employability.

In this way the patient can be assigned to the kind of work that will do him most good. Heart disease patients, for instance, need work where there is little physical exertion. The man who did heavy manual labor and now cannot because he has lost the use of his legs must learn to use his hands for delicate operations. Stiffened fingers that were once used to grasp a shovel must be given dexterity to fit them for another task. Weaving has been found a good preliminary treatment in such a case.

The psychology of the patient and of the job are also taken into consideration. Many of the patients have lost all hope of ever working again, have become so discouraged they do not even want to work. For this reason they generally start their work-cure in the toy department.

Reviving Interest

Picture a despondent grown man out of a job and leading an invalid's life for months with no idea he will ever work again. He is put at a table covered with broken toys. He starts fussing with them, trying to make a mechanical toy "go" again, gluing heads or guns onto broken soldiers. It seems like play, not work, and he "doesn't mind" it, is even willing to come back the next day and go on with the repair job. Gradually his interest revives and he "graduates" to another job, perhaps repairing an electric toaster instead of a mechanical toy. In time he will have learned to like

work itself again, and if he has developed some skill at his new task, he may be fitted into a real job. He is a work-shop "cure."

An observation work room has been established where most of the incoming patients are put to work in order that definite information may be ascertained concerning the patient's physical ability, physical limitation, aptitudes, skill, attitude toward work and his work habits.

Some of the patients need to be encouraged to work by easy, simple jobs, explained Walter C. Loague, superintendent of the Goodwill Industries in Chicago. Others need the stimulus of a more interesting, exciting kind of work. So the jobs are classified on a psychological basis as easy, quiet, interesting, simple, slow, popular, stimulating rapid, involving repetition, and the like.

Another part of the work-cure is teaching patients to cooperate with their fellow workers and supervisors. Some of them have been ill or handicapped so long that they have never worked. They have been "babied" at home. They never had a chance to learn team play from athletic games. These learn during the work-cure to be punctual, to work whether they feel like it or not, to work willingly with others as part of a team.

The psychological part of the work-cure is very important, both Dr. Fantus and Mr. Loague pointed out. The patient's mental attitude may be far more serious than his physical defect as a handicap that makes him unemployable. On this point Mr. Loague says:

"Stabilizing neurotic persons is another service which the Goodwill Curative Work renders. These people are like a ship which is in danger of sinking because its cargo has listed to one side. If the cargo could only be more

evenly distributed, the ship would regain its normal balance. Worry, fear, emotional stress and other factors are inclined to center a person's whole thinking around certain ideas. An unbalanced state of mind sometimes results. This condition takes the form of an over-excited nature, depression or forms of fear complexes. The assignment of the right kind of work can often bring about a mental balance by providing a needed diversion or thought, a stimulating factor, a sedative occupation, or just a regulated program of living."

This first work-cure shop is a start on the right road, an example of the sort of thing that can be done, under medical supervision, to remedy unemployability. Many more are needed, not only for the present when unemployment has made unemployability so much greater a problem, but for the future as a preventive of the condition.

The Social Security act has inspired Dr. Fantus with the hope that in the near future it may be possible to provide work-cures for all who need them.

This article was edited from manuscript prepared by Science Service for use in illustrated newspaper magazines. Copyright, 1936, by EveryWeek Magazine and Science Service.

Science News Letter, February 15, 1936

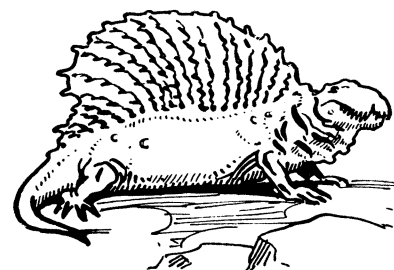
Only in Ethiopia Are Found Gelada Baboons

See Front Cover

THE bizarre looking apes pictured on the front cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER have homes only in the mountainous parts of Ethiopia. They have no counterpart anywhere else in the world.

The cover photograph shows a new group of these rare apes recently placed on exhibition at the Field Museum of Natural History.

Science News Letter, February 15, 1936



The Survival of the Useless

ISN'T it odd, how long useless things survive!

In a world which is supposed to be governed, according to pure Darwinian doctrine, by ruthless competition, where only the fittest survive, there are really astonishing numbers of things that have nothing whatever to do with fitness, that even interfere seriously with fitness so far as human judgment can discern. And they last and last and last, most astoundingly.

Of what earthly use, for instance, are the endless arrays of spines and frills and ridges and other ornaments on reptiles? They don't fool or terrify their enemies: the creatures get eaten regardless. They don't help in catching the eye of a possible mate: males with lesser frills or spines manage to win the favor of females somehow. They don't help in getting food—if anything, they would seem in the way, if food-getting requires any agility, or ability to slip through narrow cracks. They're just there, without reasonably conjecturable use, and there they stay, an offense and a stumbling-block in the path of the curious, because we can't figure out a use for them.

The fashion is old, too. The weird saurians of the world's geologic Middle Ages, the "monstrous dragons of the prime that tare each other in their slime," were similarly decorated with exaggerated and useless appendages. Naturalists have racked their wits over them, and at the end have shaken their baffled heads.

Sometimes attempted explanations have run exactly counter to each other. In the days of the dinosaurs there was a fairly big reptile, not a dinosaur but of a somewhat higher order zoologi-

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER COUPON

To Science News Letter, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C.

Please start renew my subscription to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER for 2 years, \$7 1 year, \$5

Enclosed find check Please send bill

Name.....

Street Address.....

City and State.....

Extra postage charges: 50c a year in Canada; 75c a year in foreign countries.