

bodies visited G. H. No. 11, and from whatever viewpoint they sought medical information, during their visits at Cape May, they lingered longer and studied more intently the work that was being carried on in the Section of Defects of Hearing and Speech. I do not know whether this was due to something new to them being accomplished with apparent success, or whether the results attained through the scientific methods employed appealed to them.

We believe the work accomplished by this section marks an advance in the teaching of speech-reading to the deaf.

It also demonstrated that a high-grade of intelligence is not necessary to acquire facility in speech-reading.

We had all types of minds, all grades of education, and all forms of temperament, but not one required, nor was it necessary to give to anyone the manual method of training.

These efforts have brought more forcibly to the American medical mind the fact that the deaf can be placed upon a purely independent plane through speech-reading, than through any other method of which I am aware.

In closing, I might suggest that there is a possibility that the method of intensive training instituted in our work might be of some service in the instruction of the lay deaf.

HOW THE DEAFENED REBUILD THEIR LIVES.

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Do the deafened actually rebuild their lives? The otologist, speaking from his enormous experience, declares, "They don't!" The social worker says, "Come with me and I will show you that they do!" Yet both doctor and social worker are right. The former knows, as no other can, the determination of the deafened man to be wretched, his insistence upon being left alone in a misery which he considers hopeless, his deep hostility towards any efforts to help him. The social worker, on the contrary, is in contact with deafened persons whose rebuilding is a patent fact. She sees before her the daily wonder of additions to this brave company of people who are

conquering the imposed limitations of a handicap whose cruelty is refined to a high degree.

The victims of acquired deafness constitute a very considerable number of each community, and of these the ones who have surrendered body and soul to the enemy are in an overwhelming majority. Yet practically every one of them may be reached and inspired to turn on that enemy and conquer gloriously. The impulse to rise and win, it must be admitted, almost invariably is applied from without, and it is in the administration of this external force that the deafened find their own greatest spiritual opportunity. Proceeding upon the general principle that no one can understand a condition like him who lives under it, the deafened social worker seeks to attract the despondent and all but demoralized victim of adventitious deafness by appealing to certain universal needs—the need of economic independence, the need of easier communication, the need of wholesome play, the need to be of service.

An endless army of the partially deafened passes through the ear clinics; yet in this comparatively enlightened day an enormous number never receive the doctor's ministrations and neglect their ear diseases until they become incurable. In practically every one of these instances, as well as in the cases of well-to-do private patients, deafness blights the life. The effect, whether economic or spiritual, or both, varies according to the individual and often assumes the proportions of tragedy. The down-and-outs may be from Norfolk Street or from Park Avenue, but in wretchedness they are one. In this blighted state the deafened person out of a job reads an inconspicuous ad in the want column of his newspaper: "Jobs for the hard of hearing. Apply at the free employment bureau of the N. Y. League for the Hard of Hearing." Another may read that the city is conducting a free class in lip-reading at the League's rooms still another chances upon a letter to the editor telling about one of the League's recreation clubs and the good times enjoyed in it. At all events, hope is born—a tiny hope that pierces hopelessness; and that hope will draw until some time, it may not be for months, courage is plucked up to call at the League's office. Sometimes it takes more than one attempt to get as far as the elevator and through the doorway. In every instance, except those few who expect deafness to be miraculously healed or exorcised, the man or woman gets what he or she came for, and gets it abundantly. It is not too much to say that he gets much more; for in that moment when he opens his heart and his life to receive what he sorely needs, his reconstruction begins.

He is in contact with the external force, and under its pressure he turns at once to the rebuilding of his life. He becomes a self-supporting, contented, hopeful, happy man; unconsciously he then proceeds to build another story on his tower—the pinnacle of service.

As the greatest regeneration of all visits him who gives his heart to God and his life to humanity, so when the impulse to serve takes possession of the deafened man he is in a degree reborn. In helping others to rebuild their lives, he is completing the rebuilding of his own. Let a young fellow who is a leading worker in one of our recreational clubs speak to you himself. Three years ago, at the age of twenty-one, he wrote to us, being then downhearted and out of a job. He closed his letter in this way: "Praying that what you have to offer me in the way of help and advice will make life more enduring, I am, hopefully yours ———." Contrast this with a letter recently received: "In the metamorphosis from morbidity, moroseness and shrinking self-pity to happiness and usefulness the major credit, in my case, goes to the Thursday night club. In service I found happiness. I was as a blind man groping in a darkened world. The word *service* has a vast significance to me, and it is because the Thursday night club is my opportunity that the club means much to me. The power I found I had to make others happy, I have learned to use with all my might. We are getting the greatest amount of lasting good from the club."

Different, yet with the same general idea of finding one's outlet through service, is the life of a lady whose serious deafness antedates the organized work which has done so much for our young man. Hers is the ripened mind and heart of the deeply spiritual type which has had all the world's cultural riches at its command. The handicap can hardly exist for such a woman; yet one thing was needed, the opportunity for self-expression afforded her by the leadership of our Friday Study Club. To pass on the fruits of her rich experience, to draw within the circle of her graciousness a hundred other women, to radiate the light of her serene spirit—these were her gifts, and in blessing others with them she crowned her own life. She now lives in another city, and is helping a younger organization which has not yet discovered the jewel in its hand; but the jewel's brilliance will never remain hidden.

With the majority of our friends the work of reconstruction has included more or less of character building. In other words, they should have made contact with the external force sooner, for in this way a gentle readjustment can take place in which the individual is spared the despondency and the self-distrust that paralyze

the spirits of the deafened. In a word, their deafness is no economic handicap whatever. Let us compare the experiences of four types, each of whom became partially deafened in youth and each of whom has arrived at a rebuilt life by a different way. Two were reached early, but two endured many things before they found their full expression and their true place in life. The oldest of these had been for several years in the clutches of an incurable ear disease before that disease was even described; she suffered every form of deprivation and indignity known to the deafened, including the miseries resulting from stupid vocational direction. Years passed, and, already partially reconstructed, she came into touch with lip-reading; her instructor pushed forward that development. Through him she finally reached economic independence and spiritual satisfaction. The second example was much younger when she met with lip-reading, although she, too, has a history of miseries indignantly endured. Trained for professional work which a deafened person could not pursue, she became a teacher of lip-reading, and through this readjustment a reconstructed woman. Yet with all the possibilities of this work her unusual ability demanded a wider field, which she has found in an opportunity to utilize the portion of her former training whose exercise she craved.

The two others of this group stepped across the line of reconstruction almost unconsciously, and they will never bear the scars of the world's ignorance and vulgarity. One came into her work during her senior year in college, through the vocational direction of the League. She went out into the hearing world to fill with success a responsible position. Later the attraction of organization work proved so strong that she left her commercial position for one which gives full scope to her humanitarian interests. The fourth and youngest, a young woman of promise, is able to make her choice of occupations, in any one of which she will be not only happy and useful but which also will offer her chances for a career of progress. These young people have never experienced the unhappiness undergone by the two cases first cited, and their good fortune should not be the exception, but the rule. Indeed, it should be the duty of the teacher and the otologist to see that boys and girls whose hearing is even slightly affected should be instructed in lip-reading while their minds are plastic and then trained for occupations in which a possible increase of deafness will present no barrier to success.

Difficult, indeed, are the cases whose handicap is not deafness, but low morale. The individual is shiftless, lazy, a dependent on the organized charities with all his house; or perhaps he is out

and out crooked. These people will wail loudly and long about the miseries of deafness and the world's hardness towards the deafened man. Again, there are the pitiful aged, who will not recognize that the handicap is their years, not their lack of hearing, and who refuse all efforts to place them in comfortable institutional homes. We have also an occasional backslider, who, having received all, deliberately settles down to self-satisfied deterioration. Lastly, we have the rare cases of persons determined to have their hearing back—the irreconcilables. Here is one which concentrates all the elements of rebellion and its dangerous tendencies in one woman, young, not unattractive, and with as fair a chance for happiness as any human being. She was sent to us by one of our Consulting Board of Otologists, who asked us to help her to accept the fact of her deafness. She was in an indescribable condition of tears and fury and the entire staff of workers hoped, at the close of the first afternoon, that a start towards a better viewpoint had been made. She attended one session of a lip-reading class, where she created a disturbance by shouting out her horror of deafened people. A month after her first visit she returned in a worse mental state than ever. She had not returned to the doctor who told her the truth, but had sought out another of equal truthfulness, who added that it was just possible that the extraction of her teeth might help. She accordingly had half of her upper teeth extracted, receiving also from the dentist inoculations in one arm, and from a practitioner of another species a series of inoculations in the other arm, besides undergoing violet ray treatment. She has left a good industrial job at \$30 a week and is spending her entire time and her savings in the hopeless quest of regaining hearing. Our workers feel that they can gain control of the case only through co-operation with her family and so far their efforts in this line have not met with success.

It may be asked whether there are any deafened people who cannot be brought into contact with these beneficent impulses towards rehabilitation. It can be answered positively, not among working people or fairly educated people. They respond in an open-hearted, sensible, normal way to every kindly effort, realizing the existence of fraternal spirit among the deafened. The highly educated and cultivated for the most part share this spirit of brotherhood, but it is amongst them only that there exist a few individuals, who, knowing fully what riches are within their grasp, refuse them. These will not study lip-reading, even though they see its marvels before their eyes; they will not make life easier for their

friends by using a hearing device; and almost universally, they will support every philanthropic project under the sun, but will ignore or refuse what is their first duty—to finance reclamation work among those laboring under the same handicap as themselves. The reason doubtless lies deeply hidden in the uninvestigated psychology of acquired deafness. However, the social worker has merely to look about the world and note its recent sociological progress to be assured that the solution of this problem is the simple matter of finding a way. Perhaps the way lies in the direction of prevention of work leading to the elimination of deafness.

In fighting for the realization of this great hope the deafened man of riches may well join his weapons to those of the social worker. These two must be the faithful and tireless coadjutors of the doctor's experience, while the doctor should join heartily with them in the active co-operation which alone can make the dream come true. By means of aural examination of school children, of school clinics for prompt treatment of conditions which arise most often during the school years; by teaching hard of hearing children the art of lip-reading and giving them small recitation groups in the regular subjects without segregating them from hearing children; by elimination of hereditary disease and infectious diseases; by making the researches which these activities demand—by all these means the end may be attained. Surely there can be no finer object to strive for than the liberation of the race from such a handicap, but it is an object which calls for organized effort. Such effort should spread the work now done locally by the New York League for the Hard of Hearing. The machinery is already organized, incorporated and ready to function, in the form of the American Association for the Hard of Hearing. We call upon all who are here tonight to enter freely and spontaneously into this national movement; to give to it their moral support and their financial support; to procure this support from others, especially from that numerous company of the deafened people who do not as yet realize their obligation to their fellow-handicapped. Membership in this national association will consolidate for victory these three strong factors—the social worker, the physician and the man of wealth.