THE REPORT OF AN EXAMINATION OF THE EARS OF 400 SCHOOL-CHILDREN.¹

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ABOUT a year ago I made an examination of 400 children belonging to one of the parochial schools at Greenwich, with a view to finding out how many of them were deaf, what was the cause of the deafness, and what was being done for them.

Of the 400 children I examined, 194 of them were boys and 206 of them were girls, their ages ranging from six to fourteen, with an average age of nine and a half.

Of the 194 boys, 50 had had measles, 15 scarlet fever, 1 diphtheria, 2 meningitis, 1 was the subject of congenital syphilis, 5 had had severe attacks of influenza, deafness following in 1 case, and 1 was subject to epileptic fits.

Of the 206 girls I examined, 80 had had measles, 6 scarlet fever, 5 diphtheria, 1 mumps, 2 typhoid fever, 11 influenza, and 1 had a cleft palate.

Of the 400 children I examined, I found 43 of them were deaf: 18 boys and 25 girls.

I may mention here that I examined the children with a watch, taking 36 inches as the standard at which it should be distinctly heard. I examined the children singly and alone. I began by talking to them about their age, previous history, and so forth; and then, taking the watch out of a side-pocket, I held it at right angles to the patient, holding it in my hand half closed, so that they never saw it. I then asked them what they heard.

All those that could not hear the watch distinctly at 36 inches I had put on one side, and when I had completed the general testing I examined these cases again thoroughly.

Of the 18 boys who were deaf, 7 of them were suffering from chronic suppurative catarrh, 5 of them had a perforation on both sides, 1 a perforation in the right tympanic membrane and a scar on the left, and 1 a perforation in the right membrane only; one of these cases was directly attributable to scarlet fever. Three of these cases of chronic suppurative catarrh had adenoids and large tonsils.

Three boys were suffering from chronic non-suppurative catarrh, one of which was a direct result of influenza.

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Four boys had adenoids, and 3 adenoids and large tonsils, causing varying degrees of deafness, and 1 was a case of cerumen only.

Of the 25 girls who were deaf, 5 were suffering from chronic suppurative catarrh, 4 had a perforation in the right tympanic membrane, and 1 a perforation on the left side, with a scar on the right membrane, this last child being very strumous.

Three of these cases of chronic suppurative catarrh, including the strumous child, had adenoids. One of the 5 cases was directly attributable to scarlet fever and 1 to influenza.

Three girls had chronic non-suppurative catarrh. In one of these cases the tonsils had been removed. There were no adenoids, and I could not trace the original cause of the mischief. In the second case there was a large perforation in the left membrana tympani, and in the third a history of scarlet fever.

Sixteen of the girls had adenoids, and in 7 of these 16 cases the tonsils were enlarged. One girl had eczema spreading into the meatus, so that of the 43 children who were deaf no less than 30 of them had adenoids (20 boys and 10 girls), and in 13 of these cases there were large tonsils as well. In no case did I find any internal ear trouble.

I examined all these children carefully, and I feel sure that I found out all those who were appreciably deaf. To the best of my ability I determined the cause, but I experienced great difficulty in getting a good illumination. Where necessary, I used the tuning-fork and Politzer's bag. With the latter I got considerable improvement at the time, and this is recorded in my notes, but I have not thought it necessary to bring it forward in this account.

No treatment was being adopted in a single case, and many of them, no doubt, are steadily getting worse.

I would have examined a great many more cases, but it was impossible to obtain the permission of the Board of Guardians.

Forty-three cases of deafness in 400 is at the rate of $107\frac{1}{2}$ in 1,000. Mr. Cheatle in his report states that Dr. Röhrer gives the number of deaf children in Switzerland as 117 in a 1,000, with which my statistics (although on a very small scale in comparison) tally fairly well.