

childhood ear trouble could be cured permanently if discovered in their earliest stages and treated promptly. In order to be on the safe side let us say that a *majority* of cases can be cured, and what a wonderful prospect we have before us!

This then is my second premise, and let me repeat it, viz., that in the **majority of cases deafness starts in childhood and, if treated promptly by specialists, can to a very large extent be cured, but if neglected will become a handicap for life.**

"But," someone will say, "Are you not making altogether too much of this ailment?" "Surely there are not a great number of deaf people in Montreal?" That I believe to be a very general opinion outside of the medical profession, due probably to the fact that deafened people keep to themselves and live so unobtrusively as to leave very little impression of their existence upon the minds of the public. I am not in a position to quote reliable figures of the number of deafened, either in Canada or elsewhere, for, while elaborate censuses and figures of all kinds have been tabulated regarding those born deaf, I know of no country in which any serious attempt has been made to collect data regarding the number of those suffering from acquired deafness. Of late years there has been greater activity in these matters in the United States than in any other country. In a booklet entitled "What of the Deafened" published recently by the American Otological Society, of which General Birkett of Montreal is a Director of the Board of Trustees of the Research Fund, the following passage occurs:—"a conservative estimate of defective hearing, based upon group tests of school children and of drafted men, places the number of persons now suffering from impaired hearing in the United States at 10,000,000. Of these 3,000,000 are school children."

In an address over the radio in April 1929 Professor John Norris of the New York University said:—"The most conservative estimates show that at least eight or nine per cent, or ten millions of American people, are deafened. Eight out of every hundred facing life with one of the most serious handicaps imaginable. How serious is the problem! What cause there is for battle against deafness! Why tuberculosis, that much dreaded scourge, affects only one tenth as many people as deafness."

How correct these figures are I do not know. On the other hand I do know that at the Cleveland Convention last June I heard Otologists who have spent the best part of their lives during the past ten years on this problem say that in their opinion the estimate of 3,000,000 children of school age suffering from incipient ear trouble in the United States was *under* rather than *over* the mark.

Now, if these figures are correct, viz., that one person out of every twelve in the United States is suffering from impaired hearing of some nature, then we in Canada must have an even higher percentage similarly afflicted. I say "a higher percentage" because our climatic extremes of heat and cold are more trying upon the throat and ears, because of their tendency to cause chronic catarrh, than is the case in the warmer zones of the United States.

Now, if we take our population in Montreal at 1,000,000 and apply the above estimate, we shall have to figure upon no less than 110,000 as suffering from ear trouble in some form, of which 30,000 would be children. These figures are so alarming that I cannot bring myself to regard them as correct. On the other hand there are no data extant to prove the reverse to be the case, and because of the high professional standing of the men who compose the