

THE HOUSEHOLD.

THE PRESERVATION OF HEARING.

Certain diseases of childhood very frequently affect the ears; such are scarlet fever, measles, diphtheria, cerebro-spinal meningitis, whooping-cough, and mumps. During the attacks of these diseases, and even when convalescence has been established, although ear ache may be absent, occasional examinations of the ears should be made, in order that, if affected, they may receive early attention. Deafness is usually an early symptom of most aural affections; but, on the contrary, in some instances very considerable impairment of the drum cavity and its contained mechanism exists without any perceptible impairment of hearing.

It is believed that a very small percentage of the adult population possess normal hearing. Respecting these neglected youths, it is found that their aural defects are usually unheeded until school instruction is commenced; in fact, in many instances even the pupil himself is unaware of his disability.

The school management of these partly deaf people is an important question in their education. Teachers, as a rule, do not classify these pupils when seating them in the school-room—a neglect which it would be greatly to their advantage, as well as the scholar's, to rectify by an examination previous to commencing their instruction. Those hearing badly can be instructed with greater ease if seated near the teacher's desk, while the non-observance of a system of classification places such at a disadvantage, and renders them a hindrance to others.

In this connection it may be remarked that great injustice not unfrequently is practised toward pupils who have, notwithstanding their defect, become well prepared for promotion; their examination being conducted in haste, and perhaps also with impatience, the teacher's questions are frequently not understood, and they therefore fail to receive credit for what they have learned. Children are, I have reason to believe, often put back from this cause. When the teacher himself is afflicted with deafness, as is often the case, the neglect in instruction is still more serious—a fact to which parents and those who appoint teachers should have their attention directed. The discouraging surroundings of these children are many; for, in addition to the disheartenment at school, many of them receive unkind treatment from their companions and at home; it is therefore but natural that such influences should create distrust in the mind of the child, and develop a deceitful and vicious character. They lose confidence, are reluctant to communicate with others, and are therefore classified as "stupid."

From observations extending over a considerable period of time the writer has found that in our public schools many pupils so deaf as to hear shouting only are permitted to continue their attendance indefinitely—an evil that could be easily remedied by a proper examination of the pupils' hearing at the time of their admission. In private educational establishments, however, such preliminary examinations are not always reliable, for the interests of the proprietor may require that the number of scholars be not from any cause lessened. Parents under these circumstances are permitted to send partially deaf children to school, and when it is ascertained that they have made but little or no progress, and that their lives have been rendered unhappy by the jeers and neglect of playmates, the teacher meets the parent's enquiries by the statement that the pupil is dull or defective. It may now be ascertained that the pupil has been deaf—perhaps the deafness has grown on him while under the teacher's eye—but the knowledge is gained too late, in many instances, to be of much avail. Parents should, therefore, attend to so simple a matter as the frequent examination of their children at home.

A pernicious home and school hygiene favors the occurrence of diseases which are liable to be attended with prominent aural complications. Thus the living in overheated apartments during the cold season (the temperature greatly exceeding the healthy limit of 65° to 70° Fahrenheit) develops a sensitiveness of the system, and therefore predisposes to attacks of catarrh. An excess of clothing is no less obnoxious than the foregoing, furs being especially dangerous in our changeable climate, as they are liable to be worn about the chest and neck, in

moderate weather, overheating the body, and thus increasing the liability to colds.

Children who are brought up under such unfavorable circumstances are deprived of their natural powers of endurance, and are unable to resist even slight changes in temperature.

The outings of such children are only of occasional occurrence, owing to their liability to contract colds—a result which may confidently be expected when careless attendants expose such sensitive persons to cold seats or draughts, and one can scarcely fail to meet examples of children so treated in any of our parks or thoroughfares. Adults, it may be remarked, are not exempt from the consequences of exposure when the laws of health are in this manner violated.

Those who live in rural habitations, with open fires and free ventilation, who wear such clothing as an active out-door life requires, and who, in youth, often are barefooted the greater part of the year, can be studied with advantage by the denizen of over-heated city houses of the present day. These hardy people are said to suffer less from colds than those who are considered to be by fortune more favored.

There are many individuals of a sensitive organization who may not with impunity allow a draught of air to blow strongly into their ears; such persons are compelled to exercise unusual care when exposed to the strong air of the sea, especially when they have a very free opening to the ears. Children are often affected by these sea-side exposures, which, when slight, are overlooked; later on, however, their ears may be found sensitive to the touch, and, when examined, the results of the slight inflammation will be found.

Boxing the ears would be considered among the obsolete customs of the past, were we not occasionally reminded of the continuance of the practice by meeting with injuries of the tympanic membrane from this cause. Sometimes the shock given to the ear is the cause of permanent deafness to a greater or less degree, and sometimes vertigo is liable to be established. There are a few well authenticated instances of death having occurred from this barbarous custom.

Discharges from the ears indicate the continuance of an unhealthy process, which is nearly always situated in the drum cavity; and, owing in part to the thinness of the partition that separates this cavity from deeper and more vital parts, it is not an infrequent result to meet with a fatal termination from neglect in arresting the disease. Under no circumstances, therefore, should a discharge be neglected, for, in addition to the danger incurred by neglect, it is well known that when permitted to become chronic, greater difficulty is experienced in its cure.

Intemperance in the use of beverages into which alcohol enters as a constituent disturbs the normal balance of the nervous and circulatory systems, and observations plainly show that this state favors the occurrence of aural disease.

The frequency of attacks of aural inflammation from bathing demands more than a mere mention, for complete deafness may result from the injuries to the ear from this cause, and partial impairment is frequent.

These injuries from bathing are mainly due to the fact that man is not afforded the protection to the ear which amphibious animals possess, and hence the water may act injuriously in various ways. In surf bathing the mere force of contact, when the water flows into the ear, may injure the tympanic membrane, and when an incoming wave dashes against the face, water may freely enter the mouth or nose, and thus be driven into the ears through the Eustachian tubes. The presence of cold water for a long time in the canal leading to the ear, as when much diving is done, may set up inflammation in the canal or in the tympanic membrane, which may extend to the drum cavity itself. Ill effects may be produced by allowing the ears, head, and body to dry in a current of air after coming out of the water. Sea water is probably more obnoxious than fresh, on account of its comparatively low temperature, and the large quantity of salt it holds in solution. A long continuance in the water should be avoided. The Russian bath should not be taken without protecting the ears when the cold plunge is used. Diving is, however, the most dangerous practice connected with bathing, for it is difficult to keep water from entering the ears, or nose and mouth. In diving, the

pressure of water on the tympanic membrane from without may cause vertigo. Even syringing the ears gently is known in some instances to occasion decided dizziness. Should vertigo come on while the diver is beyond the reach of those who could render succor, there would be danger of his drowning.

Diseases of the teeth, through their nervous relationship with the ears, frequently cause disturbances that lead to deafness.

The permanent teeth are subject to decay at a much earlier period than is generally supposed; sometimes they decay as early as the sixth year, and this process is liable to recur while any teeth remain in the jaws. The neuralgia that arises from inflamed teeth is often felt in the ears, and indeed it seldom fails to do some harm in that direction.

In the endeavor to preserve the teeth it must be borne in mind that unskilful dentistry may not relieve the patient, but, on the contrary, harm may arise from incompetent work; thus cavities may not be properly prepared before they are filled, or deleterious substances may be inserted into them, such as amalgam. Unhealthful dental plates, especially those made of vulcanite, which contains vermilion—a form of mercury—are to be avoided. If plates fit the mouth badly, they are harmful.

Throat troubles act much in the same way as diseased teeth, and affections of the mouth and throat are usually urged into greater activity by catarrhal attacks. When the wisdom teeth, which are cut about the seventeenth year, are delayed in their appearance, they very often give rise to irritation of the ears.

The ear is liable to injury from loud sounds, such as discharges of artillery, blowing of high-pitched steam-whistles, and the like.

The nasal douche, of late almost adopted as an article of domestic furniture, has been the means of injuring a great many ears from the entrance into the drum, per the Eustachian tube, of the fluids used.

Noises in the head are pretty constantly experienced in all affections of the ear. The lives of old people are often made wretched by these strange and alarming phenomena; in some instances the sufferer is even demoralized. This is not strange, for the simple-minded have no conception of the origin of these noises, and regard them as forebodings of evil. In some instances persons in the prime of life can not endure the wearing distress which deprives them of rest at night, and occupies all their thoughts by day; such individuals have sought relief in suicide, or have become insane. In instances where, in addition to noises in the head, the patient experiences the autophony before alluded to, the distress is increased. Those who are competent to explain these phenomena can often convince the sufferer of their harmless nature, and teach him to endure what would otherwise be intolerable.

Emergencies will arise when competent aid can not be obtained for the relief of painful affections of the ear, or the removal of foreign bodies; and *ad interim* treatment then becomes necessary, and the advice of sympathizers abounds, one recommending that spirits of camphor be dropped into the ear, another urging the advantages of coal oil or chloroform, while still another brings his experience to bear on the case with a vial of carbolic acid solution or camphorated oil; should the neighboring druggist be consulted, even more vigorous measures may be advised. These, and the other substances usually put into the ear when it aches, are inadvisable. Generally speaking, ear ache is ameliorated by the application of warmth to the region of the ear, used either as dry heat in the shape of heated woollens, cotton-wool, bags of hops, bran, or meal, &c., or as wet applications, when the same articles recommended for use in the dry state are heated by immersion in hot water, and afterward wrung partially dry. In certain instances the suffering is relieved by pouring water, hot as can be borne, into the ear. Heated air or steam, where such conveniences are at hand, conveyed into the meatus, is found to be serviceable.

Should living insects gain admission to the ear, the organ is to be turned upward in a good light, the ear (auricle) gently pulled upward and backward until the opening is free, when the canal is to be filled with warm water poured from a spoon. The intruder will now either escape or be drowned. Foreign bodies, such as beads, cherry-pits, and other objects, when lodged in the ear,

should never be touched by incompetent hands. Where such objects give rise to pain, and can not be extracted by the fingers alone, they may be compelled to change their position, or even be driven out of the ear, by turning the ear downward, and gently but firmly shaking or jarring the head. It is certainly wiser and safer to permit these bodies to remain indefinitely than to run the risk of injury to the ear by unskilful efforts at removal. Instances are well authenticated where fatal results have ensued from injuries to the ear by attempts to remove simple objects, whose presence was not attended with danger or even pain. An examination, after death from the inflammation such violent attempts have induced, in more than one instance has demonstrated the fact that the ear contained no foreign body whatever.

Syringing the ears is not advisable, unless done by a person well trained, or by a competent surgeon, as much harm can be done by careless efforts in this direction. Water or soap for cleansing had best be entirely excluded from the ear, and the use of scoops and aurilanes, &c., is likewise inadvisable.

In certain anomalous conditions of the Eustachian tubes air is admitted too freely to the drum cavity. This is observable when blowing the nose, or even during the act of swallowing.

The forcible entrance of air into the drum cavity is liable to do injury to the ear, especially by unduly stretching the tympanic membrane. The inflation of the ear, therefore, should be avoided, unless practised under the direct supervision of one competent to determine the necessity for its use. The temporary stretching of the membrane is attended with temporary improvement in hearing, but a continuance of the practice in some diseased conditions of the membrane results in a permanent relaxation, which is irremediable.

When it becomes desirable to test the hearing power of an individual, it will sometimes be ascertained that one ear is much more defective than the other—a fact tending to show that deafness had been advancing longer than suspected, but that nevertheless one may get on fairly well with one good ear. It is when the better ear begins to fail that the deafness in a considerable number is ascertained.

Allusion has been made to testing the hearing. The best method for this purpose is the use of the human voice. Place the person to be examined at a distance of fifteen or twenty feet from the one who speaks, testing one ear while the other is closed by pressure of the finger. Words should be plainly spoken, while the patient is required to look away from the speaker. Five tones will be found to be a convenient number for use in testing; they are whispered words, and low, ordinary, loud, and shouted words. The deaf person should repeat the words heard.—*Harper's Monthly*.

CHICKENS A SOURCE OF WEALTH.—One of the secrets of the prosperity of the French people, and their ability to bear even the heaviest burdens without giving way under them, is the extraordinary thoroughness with which they cultivate their farms, vineyards and orchards, and the profits which they contrive to obtain from the smallest and seemingly insignificant products. We find a fresh exemplification of this in figures lately published in an exchange exhibiting the extent and profits of chicken-raising. There are in France about 40,000,000 hens, valued at \$20,000,000. One-fifth are marketed yearly for the table, bringing about \$4,000,000. The annual production of chickens is 80,000,000, worth in the city markets \$24,000,000, and \$2,000,000 are added for the extra value of capons and fatted hens. The production of eggs is estimated at 40,000,000, making the total value of eggs and chickens \$80,000,000, \$2.21 to every man, woman and child in France. The power to make much out of little, and to live frugally on small means, and with limited resources to fall back on, is the distinguishing trait of the French people, and one well worth emulating.—*Dutchess Farmer*.

LEMON-BUTTER TARTS.—One pound white sugar, whites of six eggs and yolks of two, grated rind and juice of three lemons; cook twenty minutes over a slow fire, stirring all the time. Line pans with puff paste, fill and bake.