

OPHTHALMOLOGY AND OTOTOLOGY

IN CHARGE OF J. T. DUNCAN.

Examination of School Children's Eyes

Before the Chicago Ophthalmological Society, Dr. A. E. Bulson read an excellent paper on the above subject. In part he says:

The importance of systematic examination of the eyes of school children is now appreciated by medical men and many educators, and in a number of States the Boards of Health and Education have endorsed and recommended the general adoption of the tests proposed. In Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Colorado the tests are made in compliance with laws requiring their use. In many localities teachers are testing the vision of school children of their own volition, without suggestion or recommendation of their superiors. But there is still much work to be done before eye tests are generally adopted in our schools.

In those schools where the tests have received practical application the revelations are astonishing in showing to what an extent the so-called mental defectives and incorrigibles are due to remediable eye defects. In Philadelphia, for instance, it was found that 60 per cent. of the school children had eye strain or defective vision, and in many of these instances children were thought to be backward or mentally deficient, whereas the correction of the defects by properly adjusted glasses was followed by remarkable improvement in the work and conduct of these pupils. The Director of the Department of Public Health, in making his report concerning this work, says that the tests have demonstrated that many so-called mental defectives and incorrigibles do not really belong to that category, and he emphasizes the fact that the expense incurred in making the tests and supplying glasses to those too poor to pay for them has been more than counterbalanced by the increased worth of an educated citizen over an illiterate one who may become a public charge, or whose earning capacity is so curtailed that he can contribute but a small amount to the support of the State. He further believes that in many cases such children would have joined the criminal class or in some way would have become a burden on the community.

The subject should be discussed in all its details before