

less under our control, which handicap to a greater or less extent, and perhaps quite incapacitate the individual throughout life. Amongst these are blindness and deaf mutism. While, according to Eulenberg's figures, we in Canada are singularly free from blindness, making, next to Holland, the best showing of all countries studied, we would be remiss indeed if we did not strive to better conditions when possible. The last census recorded 3279 blind people in the Dominion. I will not weary you with full statistics upon this condition, but feel that a brief reference is demanded. I find that the report of the committee on ophthalmia of the new-born, presented at the last meeting of the American Public Health Association, covered the examination of ten schools for the blind (representing ten States and the Province of Ontario), and showed that 25 per cent of those admitted to these schools were needlessly blind. The studies of James L. Minor show that among the non-accidental causes of acquired blindness, 26.5 per cent are to be classed as easily preventable, while perhaps another 10 per cent might with more or less difficulty be prevented. Dr. Fraser tells me that fully 30% of the blindness which brings pupils to his school is due to preventable causes. The annual economic loss to the United States because of blindness, based on the census of 1890, is computed as nearly \$24,000,000. If one third of this could be prevented, the money saving alone would thus amount to \$8,000,000 a year.

As in the case of blindness, so also in the case of deaf mutism, the statistics of various countries differ widely. The condition is seemingly most common in Switzerland, where it affects 2402 out of every million inhabitants, while it is least prevalent in Australia, where but 648 per million are afflicted. In Canada, according to the last census, some 6174 were stated to be afflicted in this way. A recent analysis of 17833 pupils in the schools for deaf mutes in the United States gave 41.5 per cent as congenitally deaf, 50.5 per cent as adventitiously deaf, while in 8 per cent it could not be ascertained whether the condition was congenital or not. Another analysis of 16769 cases of adventitious deaf mutism indicates that in 66% the cause was some infectious disease—and consequently preventable. Scarlet fever stands