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# CASES

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE TREATMENT OF

## DISEASES OF THE EAR,

BOTH LOCAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL,

WITH

*PRACTICAL REMARKS RELATIVE TO THE*

DEAF AND DUMB.

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BY JOHN HARRISON CURTIS, Esq.,

AURIST TO HIS MAJESTY, AND TO THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES THE  
DUKE AND DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER; SURGEON TO THE  
ROYAL DISPENSARY FOR DISEASES OF THE EAR;  
LECTURER ON THE ANATOMY, PHYSIOLOGY,  
AND PATHOLOGY OF THE EAR; FELLOW  
OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF  
LONDON, &c.

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1822.

1887

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TO THE  
PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS,  
AND GOVERNORS

OF THE  
ROYAL DISPENSARY FOR DISEASES OF THE EAR.

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MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,

PERMIT me, after a period of nearly six years, to congratulate you on the present flourishing state of your useful Establishment.

By your benevolent patronage and support, great numbers of the lower classes of the community have been restored to hearing; who, without such assistance, must have remained incapable of obtaining a livelihood, and been a burden on society.

Through your humane zeal, its gratuitous assistance is now open to every individual, and the ample benefit which has accrued from it, will be seen in the present publication.

In dedicating this work, I do it with those feelings of duty and respect, which I owe to you, and to the Medical Profession; and with every desire to merit a continuance of your good opinion, which it has been my uniform study to deserve by a strict attention to my professional duties at the Charity.

I have the honor to be,

My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

Very respectfully,

Your most obedient humble servant,

JOHN HARRISON CURTIS.

No. 2, Soho-square,

Nov 7, 1821.

## OBSERVATIONS, &c.

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THERE is no class of diseases more troublesome than those of the ear, or which occasion more inconvenience; and yet it is singular to remark, that no diseases, incident to the human frame, have received so little attention, or have been subjected so rarely to the investigation of science, and the correct application of the principles of the healing art in attempting their cure. Many of the ancients, it appears, have set a laudable example on this subject, which has not been followed up of late years with the same success, as these early prospects gave reason to hope. Hippocrates, the father of medicine,

Vesalius, Eustachius, and many other distinguished anatomists and physicians, have paid considerable and minute attention to the structure and organic affections of the ear.

In order to have a correct knowledge of the subject, it is essentially necessary to have a thorough acquaintance with the anatomy and functions of this important and intricate organ. Of the propriety of this, every one must be sufficiently convinced, who gives it a moment's reflection; and the importance which I have endeavoured to attach to it in my Treatise on the Anatomy, Physiology, and Diseases of the Ear, as a foundation of practice, has induced Professor Robbi of Leipsic both to follow up my plan, and also to give a translation of my work into German, enriched with many practical notes, and with par-

particular attention to the construction of the organ, and the use of its different minute parts.

I have the further satisfaction to find, from different foreign correspondents, that my treatment has not only been successfully employed in Germany, but on other parts of the Continent; and that some respectable practitioners of late have paid some attention to this neglected branch of practice; yet it is to be observed with regret, that others have attempted it, who are not of the profession, and consequently wholly ignorant of the subject; and that these pretenders have had the effrontery to condemn that practice, of which they could form no correct idea: such intrusions are met with in every department of science, and are attended with much injury to the interests of society.

In considering the history of the medical art, it is pleasing to remark the vast improvements, that have taken place within these thirty years, and the advantage mankind have derived from the labours of the profession. In this period we have seen one formidable disease nearly exterminated, and a diminution in the bills of mortality, produced by vaccination, to a considerable extent: the same happy effect has attended our improved knowledge of the nature of febrile contagion, and its action on the human body: infection is now rooted from every quarter, with a certainty and expedition almost miraculous, and the dreadful ravages of continued fevers, so fatal in great towns, are now rarely known in this country, or to a very limited extent. The same may be said of another infection, very general, which is now not only less frequent, but of a much milder nature; nor is this improvement less



conspicuous in the bold and successful practice in internal inflammations, and even in typhus fever, where venesection is employed to an extent, which would have astonished and even frightened the practitioners of a former day. This last improvement has been chiefly owing to the experience acquired during the late war by those in the service. This fact I had the fullest opportunity of remarking, while employed, during six years, at his Majesty's Royal Naval Hospital at Haslar, and at the most interesting period of the war, when the troops returned from Corunna, Walcheren, &c. \*

\* A memoir of the author will be found in the European Magazine for April, 1819, which will show he enjoyed the most ample opportunities of medical improvement. First, under his father, an eminent physician in the country, and brother to the late celebrated botanist Mr. W. Curtis, and next under the different lecturers of the metropolis; after which he obtained his qualifications as

Without being accused of partiality, I may be permitted to say, in no hospital in Europe is the treatment of patients better regulated, nor the recoveries more certain and rapid, from some of the most fatal epidemic diseases, than in this: one instance of which I cannot avoid noticing here, being so highly creditable to the medical officers of this establishment. Two hundred patients were admitted in the space of twenty-four hours, many of them in a dying state, labouring under pneumonia and dysentery; and of these patients, the greater part were able to join the ranks, and fit for duty, in the short space of a fortnight, which was not the case formerly.

a surgeon from the Royal College of Surgeons, in London; and was appointed, in 1805, a medical officer in the hospital department of the public service, being employed at Stapleton, Haslar, and Forton. Since he commenced practice, he has confined himself to this particular class of diseases.

If, then, medical science has arrived at such an acmé of perfection on most of its leading and important subjects, the same success may be expected to follow in others, which have either hitherto been overlooked, or considered as not claiming an equal share of regard: of these I may particularly mention what respects the pathology and diseases of the ear. Impressed with the great consequence of this subject to society, and that the number of deaf persons greatly exceeded what could be supposed on a casual inquiry. I thought it would be a most important step, and would bring this point to indisputable certainty, the establishment of a Dispensary solely appropriated for this class of diseases. The effect of it has been, that although a former institution of the kind was given up, from the plan then pursued not being complete; yet the present one, after some difficulties at its com-

mencement, and after that struggle which arises often from jealousy and rivalry had subsided, has now received the most ample patronage from Royalty, Nobility, and the higher branches of the Profession, in consequence of the numerous proofs of its utility, not only to the metropolis, but the country at large; for since its establishment in 1816, upwards of three thousand patients have been admitted: a proof, in the first place, of the necessity for such an institution; and in the next place, of the advantages gained by patients attending it, three fourths of the whole number having been cured or relieved.

When to this number is added what has occurred in my private practice, and there are very few of the higher ranks of society, labouring under deafness or other imperfections of the organ, who have not

done me the honour of consulting me, as well as many of the middling ranks, it is evident that the actual number of deaf persons must have considerably diminished since the period alluded to. If the prejudice so long entertained in this country that diseases of the ear are incurable, could be removed, and persons labouring under this defect would at an early period of the malady apply for relief with the same alacrity as for other diseases, there cannot be a doubt but that the greater number of cases would be cured, by yielding to proper treatment; but one great source of error is, that patients are not sufficiently aware of the danger which is often connected with deafness.

Every accumulation of blood in the head at a certain period of life is marked by a

slight attack of deafness; and if this symptom is long neglected, and proper means not employed, we not unfrequently find that apoplexy ensues, or some equally alarming evil; the means, therefore, that remove the deafness, by reducing the action of the heart and arteries, and emptying the primæ viæ, will be equally successful in removing the impending mischief.

In the same manner deafness occurs as a symptom in nervous and irritable constitutions, particularly in females of a delicate chlorotic habit, and is often combined with hysteria, dyspepsia, and affections of the stomach; in this condition the general diseased state of the nervous system is communicated to the portio mollis of the auditory nerve; and the means of treatment here must be directed to the

system at large, and not limited to the idea of merely removing the imperfection of the ear.

As it is an admitted fact that the stomach is the grand centre, with which every organ sympathises, so every derangement of this organ will necessarily extend its influence to distant parts, particularly those of acute sensibility; hence the deafness, and often dimness of sight which accompanies the morbid state of system we term hypochondriasis. How vain, therefore, would be the attempt to remove these partial symptoms of imperfect hearing, without attention to the general derangement of the constitution, and without restoring the stomach and bowels to their natural and active condition, and giving a full play to the circulating and secreting powers of the system.

These facts are sufficient to show that deafness is not that simple and uncomplicated malady, too generally credited by popular opinion; on the contrary, it is to be received often as the forerunner of serious mischief, and should, with all persons somewhat advanced in life, be noticed with attention, and its cause particularly inquired into.

These reasons to every reflecting mind offer a sufficient argument why this organ and its diseases should form a distinct branch of the profession. Next to the eye, its structure presents the nicest organisation; its nerves are wound to a more acute feeling, than any other; they are affected more by the least change, of heat or cold; and they seem alive to the most trifling impressions, which do not act on other parts of the body. The sensibility of these nerves



is also particularly preserved by the presence of fluids, every where surrounding them; and it is the loss or diminution of these fluids in extreme old age, that blunts their sensibility, and occasions a dulness of the organ.

One circumstance which has tended much to retard our knowledge of diseases of the ear, is the few opportunities that have been afforded of examining the morbid changes, that have taken place in it. This arises from such diseases not being the subject of anatomical investigation, like the affections of the other organs; for the profession for the most part has attended only to the examination of the more important parts, essentially connected with the functions of life and health, while those of inferior consequence have been passed over without notice.

This particularly applies to the ear. Nature has placed the chief part of this organ beyond the reach of examination; we can never therefore examine it completely in the living subject; and wherever the ear comes to be dissected after death, we have not always an opportunity of knowing the previous history of the person while living; but whatever lesser changes may have taken place, we find two, which particularly claim notice; a diminution of the fluid in the cells, preventing the impression of sound, or an accumulation of cerumen impacted in the passage, thereby preventing its entrance. These changes account for the gradual manner in which deafness often takes place.

The approach of the imperfection is slow and imperceptible, unattended with pain, or any other strong sensation to mark its attack; hence the patient for a time is

not aware of his own infirmity, and so gradual is its progress, that his friends often notice it before he does himself. From these remarks it is evident, that the principal morbid changes of the ear are confined to the labyrinth or internal part, and as this is so difficult to be reached by local means, it points out an early attention to check the progress of this state as soon as the first appearance of disease takes place. Indeed, I can affirm from the experience that I have had in the various species of deafness, produced from different causes, that where the patient has early applied, and submitted to the regulated system of treatment laid down for him, I have rarely failed in procuring him relief; at the same time, I must also observe, much depends on the patient himself, and his attentively conforming to my instructions.

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THE most frequent disease of the ear, to which every period of life is subjected, is a collection of matter in the meatus, or passage, termed the puriform discharge; and, according to its progress, it is divided into three stages. The first consists of a simple discharge of matter, the second is complicated with fungus or polypi, and the third is when caries of the bones takes place.

This disease was formerly considered by surgeons in general as hopeless, but now it is found to yield to proper treatment. This arises from a more complete research into its nature, in consequence of the frequent cases that occur. I have now ascertained that it is not a constitutional disease, but a mere affection of the part; and that active local remedies, properly

applied, are the certain means of cure. My mode of treating this disease I published for the benefit of the profession, in the London Medical Journal, and also in the London Medical Repository, which was afterwards copied into the American and other foreign journals; and I have the satisfaction to find the plan I detailed, has been followed up with success by those, who have had occasion to employ it.

It may be here proper, in order that the annexed Cases may be better understood, to give a short history of the disease. Its progress is always uncertain: at one time in a few months it passes through its different stages, while at another time it requires years to reach the same state. The degree of deafness that attends it is equally varied as its progress; neither does the

degree of deafness correspond always to the apparent injury of the organ : in many cases there is little or no imperfection in the sense of hearing, though the disease has advanced to its ultimate stage ; while in others the deafness is complete, although the injury is trivial.

In the first stage the morbid change is very slight, and consists in a mere thickening of the parts, but still sufficient to obstruct somewhat the passage of sound from the external to the internal ear. In the second stage the difficulty of hearing cannot fail to be more considerable, in consequence of the mechanical obstruction occasioned by the formation of a fungus, or polypus, retarding the entrance of sound : and in the third stage, which is most to be dreaded, the deafness will be complete, if the disease, in

the progress of ulceration, has affected the stapes, the most important bone of the ear to the perfection of hearing.

From this short view of the nature of the disease, no decided opinion can be given on the result, or to the degree of perfection, to which the hearing may be restored ; for the parts being situated beyond our inspection, we cannot always determine the exact stage to which the disease has arrived. But whatever the stage may be, in checking the discharge much caution is required ; for where it is continued long, it forms, as it were, a medium for the transmission of sound, and if suddenly suppressed in this last stage, the hearing is still more diminished ; for it is a curious fact in this stage, that even the syringing of the ears gives a temporary restoration of hearing.

In this complaint a great deal depends on the patient himself; for by an examination of the following Cases, it will be found that in its early stage there is little difficulty in effecting a cure; and when this is neglected, the patient exposes himself to very serious injury: indeed an idea formerly prevailed, that the discharge was of a salutary nature, and ought to be encouraged. This idea has now fortunately been abandoned; and thus mischief prevented from patients waiting the fruitless expectations of nature in accomplishing a cure without medical assistance.

Although this disease, as I have already stated, is not of a constitutional nature, yet wherever it occurs in an infirm or weakly habit, the latter must be invigorated, and general remedies employed along with the



local treatment. This subject I have considered at large in my work on the Physiology and Diseases of the Ear, and pointed out the means of cure; it is only necessary here to recapitulate the leading circumstances of the disease, in order that the subsequent Cases may be more fully elucidated.

Next to the disease termed the puriform discharge of the ear, comes to be remarked that species of deafness which arises from an obstruction of the Eustachian tube; and it is often difficult to distinguish, whether the imperfection arises from this cause, or from the internal ear; and in order to its successful relief, it is necessary, in such cases, that a proper distinction should be made. It is ingeniously observed by that late celebrated physician, Dr. James Sims, in the Memoirs of the Medical Society of London, that the

Eustachian tube may be considered as the principal regulator of our own voice; and that wherever obstructed, independent of hearing others, the person cannot even judge of his own voice in conversation. The most frequent cause of this species of deafness is the catching cold, which inflames and swells the soft mucous glandular membrane, that lines that part of the tube next the fauces. The same effect follows the secretion of the glands of the throat, when it becomes viscid, and blocks up the tube, as is frequent in cases of fever.

Many other affections of these parts have the same influence, as polypus, swelling of the palate, of the tonsils, and occasionally ulcerations from aphthæ.

It has been observed that women are more

liable to this species of deafness than men ; and perhaps it may be extended farther, that there are more females suffer from deafness in general, than those of the other sex ; it is also not unworthy of remark, that the same consent seems to exist between the two ears as between the two eyes ; for if we stop the hearing of one ear, we do not hear with the other in the same perfect state as before ; and in cases of deafness, where one ear only is affected, the other generally suffers in a short time, and becomes less acute in its transmission of sound.

The symptoms, that peculiarly mark this species of deafness from obstruction of the Eustachian tube, are, that it is preceded by some of the causes enumerated as affecting the throat. Secondly, on expiring, and retaining the breath by stopping the mouth and

nose, there is found no sense of pressure upon the tympani, or drum of both ears; but on the other hand, where there is no obstruction, so great is the pressure on these parts from this effort, as to produce considerable pain, and even endanger a rupture of the membrane. Thirdly, in this species of deafness, the sound of the patient's voice is somewhat changed to what it was before. Fourthly, a sense of confused noise is heard by the patient in his own ear. Fifthly, in such cases the patient hears better when there is any considerable noise, as riding in a carriage. And sixthly, the hearing is much more impaired from this cause, in proportion, than when it arises from the external ear.

The treatment of this species I mentioned in my former work, by inflating the tube by

means of my new instrument; but a still more simple method has been adopted by Dr. James Sims, and that with considerable success.

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AN important subject, very much overlooked in cases of young persons, is the connexion found to exist between the sense of hearing and the exercise of speech. In most cases of deaf and dumb, a defect of hearing prevails; and it is this defect which is for the most part the sole cause of the want of speech. Hence it would be most advisable, wherever a case of deaf and dumb is presented, the state of the ear should be particularly examined; and there is little doubt, if hearing can be obtained, which I have found it can in some instances, that speech will naturally follow.

This examination I strongly recommended some years ago to the governors of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum\* : and when it appears

*\* To the Chairman and Committee for the Deaf and Dumb.*

GENTLEMEN,

IN presuming to address you on a subject which so materially interests the institution for the deaf and dumb, your patronage of which does you so much credit,

I beg leave to premise, that my object is not to interfere in the least with the present medical establishment ; as I have the highest opinion of the professional talents, and deserved reputation of the medical officers you have been pleased to nominate ; but these Gentlemen, I have no doubt, are too liberal in their sentiments, not to admit that the defect of being deaf and dumb, calls for an exclusive attention to these particular organs, greater than can be paid by any practitioner in general practice, however distinguished his abilities, or extensive his science, from wanting that particular experience which one exclusively confining himself to this department of surgery must possess.

In consequence of this, I beg leave most respectfully to suggest to your consideration, the advantage that would result to the institution, were an aurist appointed to attend, and minutely examine the particular defect in each child admitted into your establishment ; by this means an

that no less than sixty-seven children were unable to obtain admission into that establishment, according to the last report, it is clear the importance of the measure I proposed cannot be too much appreciated. Out of such a number, no one, but will allow, that by a careful examination, some of these unfortunate individuals might be found to possess some small sense of hearing, and consequently some chance of acquiring speech; for this last defect, as I

opportunity would be given of trying such methods as appear best calculated to give relief; and by this plan, I conceive many of the objects of your laudable charity might probably be found curable, restored to society, and rendered useful; by which the bounds of your humane establishment would be extended, and greater scope given to your highly benevolent views.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

With great respect,

Your most obedient humble servant,

JOHN HARRISON CURTIS.

Soho-square, Jan. 11, 1817.

have already observed, is invariably connected with deafness.

A viscid mucus often fills up the ears of children at birth, in the same manner as the meconium fills up the intestines, and for a time suspends their action; thus the cerumen requires to be removed in many cases before the child is capable of hearing, producing a congenital species of the complaint; and this is not surprising, when it is considered, that the parts of the concha and passage are so narrow; and nature has intended they should be defended, while the child is in the womb, against the waters of the amnios which surround it. This congenital species, however, is entirely different from that defective organization of the ear which has been met with, although very rare; for nature we find seldom errs in the perfection of her works, and it is only in



a few insulated cases that this structural deficiency occurs. That it is not more frequent, is surprising, when we consider the very intricate structure of the ear in the human subject; and that there is no part of it, even the smallest bone, but has its particular and important use: nay, when we farther attend to the delicacy of its structure, and to the numerous windings and sinuosities it every where displays, our wonder and admiration are excited at the extreme nicety of its mechanism, and that so intricate a structure should not oftener deviate from the healthy state: nor is our astonishment less when we consider how much this organization is varied in the different tribes of animals; and the more it is examined, the more we are struck that in each it is admirably fitted for the different situation and character of the individual.

All this must afford complete evidence to those who reflect at all, that such a complex structure can only be the work of a Supreme Being, modifying the organization of every creature, whether animate or inanimate, for its place.

Every part of anatomy establishes this great truth; and no part more than the examination of the different organs of sense. A fine nervous expansion is the universal medium on which impressions are made, conveyed, and imparted; but why this nervous expansion should in one case be affected in a peculiar manner by light, and a similar expansion should be equally and peculiarly affected by sound, remains beyond our research; yet looking apparently at the structure, they would seem the same, differing only in a peculiar modification, which

fits them for the particular impression they are to convey to the mind.

But although I have observed there is rarely a defect of organization in the senses of hearing or speech, yet we often find the exercise of the former impeded by casual circumstances. In this species of early deafness, it is difficult to know whether the child has been born deaf, or become so at an early age ; or, in other words, whether the deafness is the effect of malconformation or casual disease : and this difficulty has led to more uncertainty and confusion in the disorders of the ear, than in any other organ.

In all cases the previous history of the child should be inquired into, and examination then made to ascertain the real cause, so far as it can be detected ; and if the child shows no weakness of intellect, I should re-

commend the ears to be well syringed, after the cerumen has been previously dissolved; and if by means of an ear-trumpet, the child should appear to have a sense of hearing, I should recommend the treatment I have employed in the annexed Cases; for, in my opinion, no child should be given up as lost until every means have been resorted to. The plan I employ is simple, and therefore attended with no unpleasant effects.

There is no doubt, when nothing is done in the way of relief, the deafness becomes confirmed; and in proof of this, it has been the observation of mothers, that at the time of teething they heard a little, and took notice of every thing; but that afterwards they appeared completely deaf. This shows the necessity of early treatment, which it is hoped will not be neglected before any case of deaf and dumb is given up as lost.

It is clear the actual state of the organ is beyond our inspection; but so peculiar are the affections of the ear, that in cases of poor persons at the Dispensary, when I had entirely despaired, I have often by perseverance succeeded: one instance of which it may be proper here to notice. An old woman, who had been fifty years deaf, applied to me at the dispensary; from her great age, and other circumstances, I considered the case a hopeless one: this opinion I expressed to the patient, who was much dissatisfied; and urged by her importunities, I immediately commenced a very active treatment, which, in a short time, I was astonished to find enabled her to hear with ease.

From this, and a great variety of cases equally unpromising, I am induced to urge that a trial should always be made; and so convinced am I from experience of the ad-

vantage of this, that at the Royal Dispensary for Diseases of the Ear, we attempt relief in all cases. The patient, by mild treatment, cannot be injured; and if other diseases, equally out of our reach, are every day relieved, reasoning from analogy, why should diseases of this kind be given up in despair?

With regard to this, I find the teacher of the deaf and dumb at that Institution, observes in his work, that total dumbness seldom proceeds from any other cause than the want of hearing. If this is the case, as admitted by this learned author, can any thing enforce with more propriety the examination I have insisted on? Such an examination, it is clear, requires to be made by one well conversant with deafness and its causes; and it is surprising that an institution of so much importance,

whose funds are adequate to every purpose, should not have a surgeon appointed, as is the case in every institution in the metropolis, which will appear by examining the list of their officers; there is indeed a consulting surgeon\*, who is called in, in cases of emergency.

When the number of applicants every day soliciting is considered, it is singular to remark, that some steps are not taken to select the candidates for admission; which could only be done by the examination I have proposed, and the chance of ascertaining the nature of the defect. Instead of which, without regard to the actual circumstances, the candidate is admitted solely by the number of votes, and the influence his friends can use to procure them.

\* A consulting surgeon to an institution, is generally considered as a nominal appointment.

I do not mean by this to derogate from the utility of such an institution ; it is only my wish, by these remarks, to render it more extensively beneficial to the community. And the advantage of this examination I contend for, will be confirmed by two circumstances noticed by the teacher himself in his last historical sketch of the society. He there makes it appear, that so frequent is this defect of deaf and dumb, that in twenty families, containing one hundred and fifty-five children, there are no less than seventy-eight of them (more than one half the number) in this forlorn state.

If this is a correct statement, how inadequate must the Asylum be to remedy this defect in such numbers, when we are next told by the same gentleman, that his system of education requires five years to complete it with each individual!



Of what consequence then would it be, if by a careful and early examination, and by the use of means adapted to the apparent defect, a part of the unfortunate objects of the Institution might be prevented from becoming burdensome to the charity? And on this subject I cannot fail to be sanguine, from what I have occasion every day to observe in the cases of young children labouring under such defects. By this plan the cause of humanity would be highly benefited, and the charity form only an asylum for forlorn cases; which is the more necessary, as the last report, July 9, 1821, proves, that out of eighty-seven candidates, only twenty were admitted. What is to become of the sixty-seven who had not interest sufficient to gain admission? Ought not something to have been attempted to see how far some of their cases admitted of

relief, and before these defects were confirmed by time and habit, which may render any future attempts more difficult?

Besides, in respect to the twenty candidates admitted, would it not have been more consistent with the principles of humanity, that these twenty should have been selected, not by a plurality of votes in their favour, but by the degree to which the defect seemed to extend, rendering them outcasts of society?

The Institution, it appears, has been established for a period of twenty-nine years; during the first fourteen years the very small number of one hundred were educated here; in the second fourteen years upwards of five hundred have received the same advantages: so that the whole labours of the

charity for this period, have been confined to six hundred individuals.

In perusing this statement, I am inclined to think, without wishing to give any offence to the officers of this excellent establishment, that were my suggestions to be adopted, the number of pupils would gradually lessen, and a considerable saving to the funds of the charity ensue: indeed there can be little doubt that the removing the defects in a comparatively small number of individuals, is of more importance to society than instructing double the amount.

I perfectly agree with the instructor of the children of the Asylum, in many of the observations he has made in his work; but at the same time I must object to the opinion he inculcates, of the impossibility of detecting the causes of congenital deafness, or of

the attempts that may be made to rectify them. Instead of this, and sitting down according to his wish, in hopeless apathy, and leaving the whole to nature or Providence, we should, on the contrary, use every means to ascertain the cause of the original defect, and not think any thing beyond our reach or research. If disappointed in doing this, we can only then leave it to nature: but still the attempt should be made in the first instance, and not considered hopeless until proved so. At present the only object is to substitute the perceptions through other senses, and thus to supply the loss in a very imperfect manner. But my plan, on the contrary, instead of trusting to the tedious effect of education, is directed at once to the actual development of the natural and physical powers of the organs themselves.

Some useful information on these points may be obtained by the perusal of M. Beauvais de Preau's work on the Deaf and Dumb, who was formerly physician at Orleans; likewise the works of the Abbé de l'Epée and the Abbé Secard, the celebrated teacher of the deaf and dumb at Paris.



## CASES.





## CASES.

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### CASE I.

Mrs. W. applied to me, under a violent inflammation of both ears, attended with much pain and fever.

After taking a few ounces of blood from the vicinity of the parts, and applying warm fomentations, the symptoms gradually subsided. It may be remarked, that her hearing was not much affected, although she could not hear sounds distinctly. By the use of laxative medicines, at the same time adopting an anti-phlogistic plan, she is now perfectly recovered.

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### CASE II.

GEORGE ROBINSON, a man of colour, was admitted at the Royal Dispensary on the 10th of

May. He complained of otitis, or inflammation of the ear. When he first applied, his head was of a most enormous size; and from his grotesque appearance he almost frightened the rest of the patients in the waiting-room. It appeared he had been drinking a few nights before, and having fallen asleep in the open air, he had caught cold: the inflammation had extended considerably, but with proper remedies he recovered in the course of a fortnight.

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CASE III.

Miss B. applied to me with an herpetic eruption of both ears, to which she had been subject at different times for the last five years. By taking the compound calomel pill regularly every night, for about a month, and anointing the external part of the ear with an ointment made of equal parts of the nitrated mercurial ointment and hog's lard, she is now perfectly well. It was, however, necessary to order her

an astringent injection, which was continued for the space of ten days.

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CASE IV.

MISS L. complained of an ulcer which covered the whole of her left ear. It was not attended with a puriform discharge from the tympanum, but merely the external part was diseased. As the ulcer had been of long standing, I was fearful that she would lose her ear, as she appeared of a scrofulous habit. After continuing the use of an alterative medicine for near a month, and applying the ointment of zinc to the parts affected night and morning, they began to put on a better appearance. But in order to hasten the cure, I found it necessary to substitute the nitrated mercurial ointment, mixed with hog's lard; which, in the course of a month from her first application, completely restored her.

The ulcer, however, left a slight scar; but was not very observable.

## CASE V.

MR. C. applied to me with a puriform discharge from the tympanum, which had continued for some time. As it was in its first stage, it yielded to a single astringent injection of the sulphate of zinc.

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## CASE VI.

COL. W. applied to me in consequence of a puriform discharge of the tympanum. On inspecting the tympanum, I found it injured; as air could be blown out of the meatus. By observing a strict antiphlogistic regimen, using an injection of the sulphate of zinc, and taking an alterative for six weeks, the discharge was suppressed, and the hearing restored.

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## CASE VII.

MR. E. had been subject to a puriform discharge from both ears, which had troubled him,

more or less, for several years. The discharge, when he first applied to me, was very considerable, and was extremely offensive; it was occasionally mixed with blood; and such was its acrimony, that the ear and neck were excoriated by it.

Observing my usual plan of not stopping the discharge hastily by the use of astringent injections, for fear of producing an inflammation of the brain, a caution necessary to be attended to in the treatment of diseases of this nature, and on which too much stress cannot be laid, I prescribed, for some few weeks, small doses of the submuriate of mercury, and twice a week some purgative medicine. After following this plan for about ten days, and having blisters applied behind the ears, I ordered him an injection of the nitrated silver, which he used night and morning for a month; at the expiration of which time the discharge was suppressed, and the hearing restored.

## CASE VIII.

ROBERT CARTWRIGHT had been deaf nine years when admitted a patient at the Royal Dispensary: his deafness at the same time was attended with a puriform discharge from the tympanum. By adopting the plan already recommended, he is now quite well.

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## CASE IX.

LADY Y. applied to me with a swelling of the glands of the neck, from using a strong astringent injection, which she was recommended to try, by the advice of a friend, for curing a discharge from the ears. This nearly proved fatal. Several instances are recorded in the different medical journals lately, where stopping these discharges suddenly has been attended with most injurious consequences. By reproducing the discharge, and by exhibiting neutral laxatives, her ladyship is now quite well, and the discharge suppressed without any inconvenience.

## CASE X.

MR. D., aged thirty-two, had been deaf of the left ear from his childhood. On inspection, I found it perfectly sound. The fault evidently lay in a deficiency of the natural secretion : by restoring this, by means of proper applications, and by observing for some little time a strict antiphlogistic regimen, so perfectly has his hearing been restored, that he can hear the tick of a watch at the distance of four yards ; which before he could not do unless held in direct contact with the ear.

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CASE XI.

MRS. N. applied to me in consequence of a large polypus which came out of the meatus. It appeared after a puriform discharge from the tympanum. For some time air had passed out of the meatus, on blowing the nose : this symptom had ceased about the time the excrescence

was first observed. I succeeded in extracting the polypus, which came out entire. After dressing the parts for a short time with the red nitrated mercurial ointment, the surface to which the polypus adhered healed. I conceived it necessary to adopt the alterative and purgative plan, which was carried on for about a month; at the expiration of which time she was quite well.

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CASE XII.

MISS W. was sent to me with a polypus in her left ear, attended with a puriform discharge from the tympanum; which had impeded her hearing so much, that her friends took her from school. On inquiry, I learned that she had had the discharge for some time. I extracted the polypus with a pair of small forceps; but was not able to bring it away entire. I afterwards pinched the roots, and applied the *argentum nitratum*, as recommended by Mr.



Saunders. But I found it necessary afterwards to order an astringent injection, which, being used for some little time, succeeded in suppressing the discharge. As she was a girl of a delicate constitution, I administered the bark, joined with a chalybeate. Her hearing is not only restored, but her general health also considerably improved.

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CASE XIII.

CAPT. D. applied to me with a considerable polypus of the left ear, which had troubled him for several years : it was attended with a profuse discharge. As he had a great dislike to any operation, I had recourse to the ligature, as recommended in my former work ; and by passing the ligature with a probe to the bottom of the fungus, I succeeded in tying it, thereby stopping the circulation of the vessels. In a short time the polypus came entirely away, but as there was still a discharge, I had recourse

to an injection of the sulphate of copper, which suppressed the discharge, and his hearing is most completely restored.

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CASE XIV.

MARY ROBSON was admitted at the Royal Dispensary, with a polypus in the right ear, of a large size, which completely deprived her of hearing on that side. By removing it by ligature, she was cured.

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CASE XV.

ANNETTE BRUN, a poor Frenchwoman, was sent to the Dispensary. On admission she was exceedingly deaf. As she had enlarged tonsils, by removing a part thereof, by means of a pair of forceps I have constructed for that purpose, she is now quite well.

## CASE XVI.

PETER OLIVER was recommended as a patient to the Royal Dispensary. He had been deaf nearly four years when he was admitted. As I found it was a nervous affection, I applied blisters behind both ears, put him on an antiphlogistic plan, gave him small doses of submuriate of mercury, and occasionally a brisk dose of the vitriolated magnesia. In the space of five weeks he was perfectly well.

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## CASE XVII.

DAVID VOIR, a lad nine years of age, was admitted a patient of the Royal Dispensary on the 21st of March, 1817. He was a very delicate boy, and laboured under great difficulty of hearing. I treated this case in a similar manner to the former. The blisters behind his ears were kept open for a fortnight, and it was ten days before he found any considerable relief.

He continued the use of the alterative and cathartic medicines for some time; which, although they relieved his hearing, reduced him more than I wished. I put him on a strengthening diet, and administered the bark in small doses. He has now perfectly recovered his strength, together with his hearing, and is altogether much better in his health than formerly.

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#### CASE XVIII.

GEORGE DAWSON, aged twenty-two years, was admitted a patient for an obstinate nervous deafness, at the Royal Dispensary, on the 28th of March. On inquiry, I found he had been deaf for several years; and upon inspection, I found his ears quite dry, wanting the natural secretion: he complained of the noises in his head, frequently attending nervous deafness, which at times prevented him from following his employment. As he was a robust man, and of a plethoric habit, and was very desirous of obtaining

his hearing, I took twelve ounces of blood from his arm, put a seton in the nape of his neck, and applied a blister behind each ear, which was kept open for a fortnight: he took five grains of the submuriate of mercury every night, and an ounce and a half of the sulphate of magnesia twice a week; at the same time adopting a strict antiphlogistic regimen. He persevered in the use of his medicines for a short time. As he was reduced, I ordered him the bark. He was discharged on the 6th of May. I have seen him since the seton has healed, which it had not when he was discharged. He continues quite well, having his perfect hearing, and is not troubled with any noise whatever in his head.

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CASE XIX.

MR. T. applied to me; his case was similar to the preceding one. I pursued the same plan, only in a milder degree. The blisters were applied; and not having the desired effect,

I had recourse to the seton, which was kept open a month. The parts are now healed, and his hearing is perfectly restored.

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## CASE XX.

MR. N., a gentleman resident in Ireland, wrote to me respecting his case; which, from what I could learn, appeared to be a nervous affection; for, besides being very deaf, his head was much affected with strange noises, which at times made him melancholy.

I prescribed nearly the same mode of treatment as in the preceding case; at the same time ordering him to lose six ounces of blood from the nape of the neck, in case the medicine and antiphlogistic plan did not relieve him. I heard from him a short time since, to the purport that his hearing is much improved, and the noise in his head considerably abated.

His brother has since called on me, to acquaint me he is now quite well.

## CASE XXI.

AMELIA STUBBS, aged eighteen years, had been troubled with an obstinate nervous deafness for twelve years, without having obtained any relief. She applied at the Royal Dispensary on the 22d of September, and in about six weeks was discharged perfectly cured, by the method I have so repeatedly laid down, and so successfully adopted.

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## CASE XXII.

WILLIAM HILL was admitted a patient at the Royal Dispensary on the 12th of June. His case is rather singular, having been born in the open air, as his mother was passing a common in coming from an entertainment. He informed me he had been deaf from his birth. By the usual means employed, he has perfectly obtained his hearing.

## CASE XXIII.

THOMAS SMITH, a private in the first regiment of horse guards, was admitted at the Royal Dispensary on the 3rd of May. Independent of being very deaf, he had been affected, for three months preceding his deafness, with considerable derangement of the digestive functions; his appetite was bad, and acid eructations accompanied digestion; he was liable to severe nervous headaches, and he complained of a sense of weight and uneasiness in the region of the liver, and on the top of the right shoulder. Judging from these symptoms that his deafness might proceed from the torpid and diseased action of so important a viscus as the liver, I put him under a gentle mercurial course; and in the course of six weeks I had the pleasure to see my views of his case verified, by the restoration both of his health and hearing.



## CASE XXIV.

Mrs. A. applied to me with a violent noise in her head, and consequent obtuseness of hearing. Her spirits were much depressed, her bowels were costive, and she complained much of the globus hystericus. These are symptoms which we do not find at all uncommon in females after a certain period of life.

By attending to her general health, and strengthening the tone of the whole nervous system, the noise in her head ceased, and she shortly afterwards recovered her perfect sense of hearing.

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CASE XXV.

LOUISA GREEN, a married woman, who was the mother of thirteen children, was admitted a patient at the Royal Dispensary on the 10th of August. She was of a delicate and feeble con-

stitution, of a spare habit, and extremely nervous. About seventeen weeks previous she had caught cold in her head, accompanied with deafness; which last had progressively increased. By tonic remedies, and stimulating applications to the ear, she got perfectly well in five weeks.

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## CASE XXVI.

MR. V., a native of Switzerland, complained of a dulness of hearing, with great noise and pain in his head, which at times was so violent as almost to distract him. His whole appearance indicated a melancholic temperament; and having reason to suspect a deranged action in the liver, I ordered him an alterative course for three weeks, and afterwards sent him for a fortnight to the Leamington Spa, from whence he returned perfectly recovered.

## CASE XXVII.

MR. M., a clerk in a public office, from want of sufficient exercise, and consequent constipation, had impaired his health, and become deaf, with a perpetual noise in his head; which he compared, to the singing of a tea-kettle. By the administration of bark, bitters, aloetics, and by gently stimulating the ear, he was cured.

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## CASE XXVIII.

MRS. G., a widow lady, was troubled with a violent noise in her head, attended with total deafness, from great nervous irritability and domestic circumstances. When I was called in she was completely insane. With the concurrence of her physician, I bled her profusely, and gave her brisk purgatives, and applied a blister to the head, also a seton to the nape of the neck. The noises which she complained of in her head, which, according to her account, were extra-

ordinary, have entirely left her ; and she has regained her faculties and hearing, so as to enjoy common conversation.

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#### CASE XXIX.

MISS K., a young lady from Ireland, of superior accomplishments, was subject to considerable hysterical affections, attended with their usual symptoms, such as dejection of spirits, anxiety of mind, effusion of tears, difficulty of breathing, sickness at the stomach, palpitations at the heart, &c.

As she had been very deaf for some years, and had consulted many of the most eminent practitioners in town and elsewhere, I did not give her much hopes of cure ; but as her relative who accompanied her, was very desirous that I should attempt something by way of relief, I began by gently evacuating the bowels, and applied strong stimulants behind the ears, and joined with the use of tonic medicines and

generous diet, I have the pleasure to state the young lady is now perfectly recovered in her health and hearing.

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#### CASE XXX.

Mrs. D., a married lady, consulted me; whose case was similar to the preceding one, only that she complained of violent noises in the head and ears. What made this case the more distressing was, that being possessed of all the luxuries of life, her spirits were so depressed she was rarely free from shedding tears, even at church, the theatre, or elsewhere: she had two fine children, an indulgent husband, and, as she often expressed herself, was perfectly happy; I must remark here, her deafness was not considerable; but by the usual means I employ in this species of nervous deafness, I was successful in obtaining her hearing, and getting rid of the noise in her head and ears. She recovered her spirits

in some measure ; and as I thought change of air would be of service to her, I recommended her to go to Cheltenham. I have heard from her since, informing me she is now quite well.

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## CASE XXXI.

MISS G., a native of Pennsylvania, applied to me with an obstinate nervous deafness, which had baffled many of the American practitioners. Besides being extremely deaf, she was likewise subject to hysterics.

It appears that women of a delicate habit, and whose nervous system is extremely sensible, are those who are most subject to hysteric affections ; and the habit which predisposes to these attacks, is acquired by inactivity and a sedentary life, grief, anxiety of mind, late hours, dissipation, a suppression of the customary evacuations, &c.

Conceiving this case to proceed chiefly from a deranged state of the nervous system, I treated it similar to the two preceding ones, and with

the happiest effect, as the lady has now returned to her own country perfectly relieved.

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CASE XXXII.

MR. Q. had consulted most of the profession in London and Edinburgh, when he applied to me. He complained of great pain in his head, especially at night, which disturbed his rest. This gentleman had been a long while in the West Indies, and had formerly lived a very free life. He had no appetite, and his bowels were at one time costive, at another time lax. By attending to the regulation of the constitutional symptoms, and thus giving tone to the nervous system, by passing a seton through the nape of the neck, and throwing warm injections into the ear, he became perfectly well.

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CASE XXXIII.

Mrs. N., a case similar to the preceding one, had been electrified regularly every day for

nearly six months, without effect, and had likewise been galvanized: indeed I never knew either of these remedies of any permanent use, although I and my pupils have given them a full trial at the Dispensary. The electrical machine I employed was one of extensive powers, being constructed for the late Mr. Royston. In this case the same constitutional and local treatment was equally successful as in preceding ones.

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#### CASE XXXIV.

MASTER P., a fine youth, became quite deaf on one side from the blow of a ruler, which was inflicted by one of the ushers of the school. The deafness had been preceded by violent hemicrania, but the internal ear had not suppurated. By blistering, alterative medicines, and stimulating injections, the boy eventually recovered his hearing.



## CASE XXXV.

LIEUT. R., an officer in the royal artillery, became deaf in consequence of a violent explosion of a large barrel of gunpowder, which had affected him for some years; but by a continued course of alteratives, and repeated blistering, his hearing became very much improved.

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## CASE XXXVI.

MR. F. became deaf from a severe cold, caught by being washed overboard on the passage between Dover and Calais, having only escaped with his life. By appropriate means, as indicated by the case, and varied according to the progress of the cure, his hearing was restored.

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## CASE XXXVII.

MR. B. had the tympanum perforated by an unskilful practitioner, for a slight defect

in hearing; the effect of which was to make him completely deaf. I could cite several other instances of equally unhappy results. By mild astringent and stimulating injections, my patient was much relieved.

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CASE XXXVIII.

THOMAS NEVENSON, a carpenter, was admitted a patient at the Royal Dispensary on the 3rd of February. He had some time before received a fall from a scaffold, and remained insensible for some days. Blood had flowed freely from the ear; and on his senses returning, he found himself deaf. Leeches were applied to the external ear and neighbourhood, and afterwards a perpetual blister kept open behind the ear. He took full doses of the neutral salts thrice a week, and in the course of four weeks was quite well.

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CASE XXXIX.

SARAH GREEN, five years of age, was brought by her mother to the Royal Dispensary on the

3d day of May. The child appeared very deaf, and of a listless aspect; by her mother's account she passed restless nights, gnashed her teeth during sleep; appetite various, at one time indifferent, at another time voracious. The child's appearance was sickly, the eye languid and heavy, countenance pale, and the upper lip somewhat tumified; the bowels were irregular, and the stools dark and offensive.

Suspecting, from the deranged state of the digestive functions, that the deafness might be sympathetic of this affection, I felt inclined to try the effect of gentle emetics, repeated twice a week, with doses of calomel intervening. I shortly had the satisfaction to find the stools become less fetid, the appetite more natural, and the general health and appearance of the child to improve; as these changes for the better took place, a corresponding alteration in the local affection of the ear accompanied them. In short, with a restoration to good health, there was also a complete recovery of the sense of hearing. No worms were observed

to pass by stool, and the child remains perfectly well.

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CASE XL.

IN about a week after the last case was dismissed cured, Master Macnamara, a fine boy, about nine years of age, was brought to my house, labouring under similar symptoms. From the efficacy of emetics in the case of Sarah Green, I had recourse to them in this; and without detailing the symptoms at length, and the progressive and simultaneous disappearance of the disorder of the system and the sympathetic affection of the ear, suffice it that their use appeared equally appropriate, and their effect was equally beneficial.

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CASE XLI.

MASTER C., the son of a worthy Baronet, was exceedingly deaf when brought to me. He

too was of a pale complexion and languid appearance, ground his teeth when asleep, and often when awake picked his nose; his bowels and appetite were irregular, stools fetid and dark-coloured, belly hard and tumid, and frequently he complained of griping pains about the umbilicus.

Emetics were had recourse to without effect; but as the symptoms of worms were unequivocal, he was put on a course of strong anthelmintics, and vermes of the lumbrici kind were passed in abundance. The general health shortly after this improved daily; and what proves that the hearing was affected sympathetically, was the restoration of this sense on the other complaints being got rid of.

No topical means were applied in these cases, but the cure was wholly effected by having detected and remedied the remote, yet indubitable source of the deafness.

## CASE XLII.

SUSAN VAUGHAN was admitted a patient of the Royal Dispensary on the 6th of September. She complained of a violent pain in her left ear, which annoyed her exceedingly: the meatus auditorius appeared considerably enlarged. By continuing the use of a stimulating liniment by means of a bougie, she was surprised one morning to find a worm, nearly two inches long, come from her ear; and by continuing the use of the application, in the course of a week a second was ejected, leaving a discharge, which yielded in a little time to an astringent injection. Her hearing is now perfectly recovered.

## CASE XLIII.

MR. F. received a severe blow on the right side of the head, when attached to the army in Lisbon, in the year 1811. He applied to many medical men of eminence, but without receiving

any relief. During the campaigns from 1811 to 1814, the constant exposure to cold, damp, and night air, completely confirmed his deafness, which continued obstinate on that side.

About two years ago, when in America, Mr. F. began to be affected with deafness in his left ear, which daily increased, attended with violent headaches, dyspepsia, constipation, &c. He went to Scotland for his health, and there remained nine months; at the end of which he found his deafness in that ear so great, attended with a copious discharge, that he could only hear when one person was speaking with a loud voice, very indifferently. He is now perfectly cured on that side, and considerably relieved on the other.

By adopting local remedies, combined with a constitutional treatment, I have to attribute the success of the case.

## CASE XLIV.

MR. C., was troubled very frequently with epileptic fits, which he observed to me were always preceded by dimness of sight, noise in the ears, and complete loss of hearing. After the paroxysms had subsided, the dimness of sight left him, but the noise in the head and the deafness continued, attended with great debility, although not to that extent as before the coming on of the fit.

Upon inquiry, I found he had been subject to worms; and as I have known them to produce epilepsy and deafness in other cases, I was desirous of employing strong anthelmintics, combined with the other remedies for his deafness. The vermifuge medicines had the desired effect; for he voided a worm of the tape kind nearly twenty inches long. His hearing by degrees returned; the noise in his head left him, and he has not had a recurrence of a fit for the last nine months; whereas before he used to have them frequently at least once in about three weeks.



However, I do not wish to be understood that epilepsy always proceeds from this cause; on the contrary, it frequently proceeds from blows, tumors, polypi, violent affections of the nervous system, fits of passion, sudden frights, great emotions of the mind, frequent intoxications, &c.; I merely wish to observe, before prescribing any remedy for the relief of a disease, it is essentially necessary to endeavour to find out the cause.

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CASE XLV.

Miss P., aged five years, being left to the care of a servant of a thoughtless disposition, during the absence of her mother, in consequence of her fretting, the servant carried her into the cellar, by way of frightening her. This had instantly such an effect upon her, that she became entirely deaf and dumb, in which state she was brought to me. After an inquiry into the cause of these defects, I considered it as a case of

nervous deafness, and treated it as such. She has considerably recovered her hearing and speech, but still the influence of the fright has not left her; but I trust, in time, from the present advantages gained, in the end the cure will be complete.

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CASE XLVI.

Miss A., ten years of age, was brought to my house, by her mother, very early one morning, being quite deaf, and nearly insensible. When I had recovered her a little, I found she had been considerably frightened during the preceding night by her elder sister, who, it appeared, slept with her. I pursued the same plan as in the former case, and with the same success.

I insert this with a view to deter any one from alarming children, as it is an evil that remains a long time, sometimes till death; not unfrequently producing epilepsy, and a long train of diseases.

## CASE XLVII.

MR. Y. applied to me with a most obstinate case of nervous deafness, as he expressed himself, for which he had tried a variety of means to obtain relief; and being also a medical man, he had consulted most of his acquaintance. As I considered it a good case for the new mode of practice I mentioned in my former work, I began by excluding the external air from the meatus, which was continued for some days; at the expiration of a month he lost the violent noise in his head, which had so much distressed him, and in a fortnight after this, by continuing the plan, his hearing returned.

A considerable number of cases of nervous deafness of long standing, connected with hysteria and hypochondriasis, might be recorded, that have yielded to proper treatment; indeed these complaints most frequently attend patients affected with nervous deafness.

## CASE XLVIII.

DR. B., a physician of some eminence, consulted me for an odd noise in his head, which he could not account for, attended with deafness, and great depression of spirits.

The case appeared to be hypochondriacal, as it was attended with inactivity, a want of resolution to set about any thing, great despondency, and apprehension of evil upon the slightest grounds, and a dread of danger from any unusual feeling, even of a trifling kind, together with flatulency of the stomach and bowels, acid eructations, costiveness, spasmodic pains in the head and other parts of the body, giddiness, and palpitations: in fact, his symptoms, to detail them, would outstretch our limits. Suffice it to say, that attending to the digestive functions, as he was much troubled with dyspepsia, and administering strong nervous medicines, different from what he had before taken, I have the satisfaction to find he is now quite well, and able to attend his professional duties; at the

same time having his perfect hearing. One thing I recommended to him, and which, I am persuaded, tended much to the recovery of his health, was taking constant exercise on horseback, instead of riding in a carriage.

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Hypochondriasis frequently attends nervous deafness, and by removing the latter, you cure the former. The disease seems to depend on a loss of energy in the brain, or a torpid state of the nervous system, induced by various remote causes, such as close and intense study, long and serious attention to abstruse subjects, the constant remembrance of some material loss or disappointment which has occurred, great anxiety of mind, leading an inactive, indolent, or sedentary life, immoderate indulgencies, or the use of crude, flatulent, or unwholesome food, being guilty of great irregularity and intemperance, as likewise from a variety of other causes. As to its prognostic, the disease, if recent, is

rather to be regarded as troublesome than dangerous ; but if long continued, it is apt to produce scirrhi of the viscera, cachexy, dropsy, incurable melancholy, or madness.

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#### CASE XLIX.

MR. Y., a young man twenty-seven years of age, applied to me with an obstruction of the Eustachian tube ; which, from what he informed me, I was induced to think proceeded from a syphilitic cause. After using a stimulating gargle for some time without effect, I was induced to perform the operation of puncturing the tympanum, which succeeded instantly in restoring his hearing ; but I had some difficulty in preventing the aperture from again uniting. The edges of the wound became fistulous, and in a few weeks the membrane recovered its usual tension ; but his hearing is now restored.

It may be proper to remark here, that in recent cases of obstruction of the Eustachian tube, I

have found a slight stimulating gargle of the greatest service, and in my opinion it deserves a trial in cases that are supposed to proceed from this cause ; as the remedy is simple, its application cannot be attended with any unpleasant effect. It may, indeed, make the throat a little sore, but that soon goes off.

An obstruction may proceed from various causes, as I mentioned in my former work ; but the most frequent one is a cold, when the orifice of the tube becomes swollen : in that case a gargle is of great service.

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CASE L.

MR. W. came to me with an unusual sensation of both ears, which he had laboured under for some years. On inspection, I perceived there was a quantity of cerumen in a very hard state, collected at the bottom of the meatus. By continuing to syringe the ears, the whole was removed. On the first application of the syringe,

which brought away a considerable quantity, he was able to hear the church clock strike, which he had not done for several years before. What makes this case rather singular, is, that this gentleman conceived he laboured under a violent nervous affection. I need not mention that he was much pleased at being relieved by such easy means.

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Many other cases of a similar nature have come under my observation; all which point out the necessity of minute examination, in order to ascertain the cause of the defect, before offering any decided opinion.

In the dissection of the ears of those who have been deaf for many years, whatever other derangement of structure may exist, there is always a quantity of inspissated wax in the passage, in a very hard state, as formerly mentioned; which shows, that a morbid condition of the organ necessarily affects the secretion of this



part, and that the secretion itself accumulated in this way may act as an additional mechanical cause in increasing the obstruction of hearing.

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CASE LI.

THOMAS HAMILTON, a boy seven years of age, was brought by his mother to the Royal Dispensary. She informed me he had been both deaf and dumb from his birth. Although I did not give her any considerable hopes of cure, I was desirous of attempting relief. I accordingly employed the same mode of treatment as I have recommended in cases of nervous deafness; having, however, previously ordered the ears to be well syringed. He was admitted on the 22d of April, 1817; and since that time his hearing has been regularly improving, and he has also acquired the faculty of speech.

## CASE LII.

MISS B., aged fifteen years, had been from her birth deaf and dumb, and when she was first brought to my house, she could neither hear nor articulate a word. Being the daughter of wealthy parents, her education had been well attended to, for she could write remarkably well, and play on the piano forte. This case I treated in a similar manner to the preceding ones: with the assistance of excluding the external air from the meatus, at the same time exciting a slight degree of inflammation at the bottom of it: my success was here equal, for the young lady can now hear and speak.

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## CASE LIII.

CHARLES VERNON, aged twenty-eight years, was admitted a patient at the Royal Dispensary on the 24th of April, at the recommendation of a Royal Physician. On inquiry, I found

he was deaf and dumb, and that he had been four years in the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in the Kent-road. As I was desirous of attempting relief, I employed the same means as in the preceding case, and not without considerable effect; for in the course of a short time he was able to hear sounds distinctly. I regret that I had not an opportunity of following up the plan I had laid down, and which was pursued with so much apparent advantage, as he went to Scotland to superintend his brother's business, he being an excellent mechanic, content with, and grateful for, the benefit he had already received.

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CASE LIV.

MISS W., a very interesting young lady, was brought to me by her mother, who informed me that she had been deaf and dumb from birth. By adopting local remedies and constitutional treatment, I have the satisfaction to find that

she hears sounds, such as a clock strike, a dog bark, &c. which she did not do before; and by steadily following the plan of cure which I prescribed, her medical attendant and I concur in the well founded expectation that she will shortly obtain her perfect hearing.

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CASE LV.

JAMES BUTLER, twenty-four years of age, born deaf and dumb, who had been several years in the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, was recommended to the Royal Dispensary, under my care. By a persevering use of the means already mentioned, he now hears; and as he is still under my care, I trust I shall be able to dismiss him with the faculty of speech; for his character seems changed by the relief he has already received; and he shows a cheerfulness and alacrity he never appeared to have before.

## CASE LVI.

GEORGE MORGAN, without father or mother, was sent by the rector of this parish to the Dispensary. On admission, I found he was quite deaf and dumb. His forlorn situation made me anxious to give him every relief. I employed here the means I have already detailed in these unfortunate cases; and since he has been under my care, he has acquired a sense of hearing, which, I trust, will be preliminary to that of speech, as he shows already some efforts.

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## CASE LVII.

MASTER B., from the country, was placed under my care, being to all appearance deaf, and unable to speak many words. As I conceived in this case, as in most others, that if he could acquire his hearing, his speech would naturally follow, in this I was not disappointed;

for since he has acquired the sense of hearing, he has increased his powers of speech ; and by the last accounts from his father, his progress is every day becoming more rapid, to the satisfaction of his friends.

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## CASE LVIII.

MRS. L. came to me with her only son, a child of three years of age, who, she was apprehensive, was born deaf and dumb, as he appeared to take no notice of any thing. On examination, I observed a quantity of hardened cerumen at the bottom of the passage ; which, by being dissolved and removed, I had the satisfaction to find, on applying a trumpet to his ear, that he appeared to hear, which he did not before. He has now both his hearing and speech.

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FROM the perusal of the Cases enumerated in the different species of deafness, and the success which has attended my practice, it cannot be inculcated too strongly, that in all diseases of the ear, arising from whatsoever cause, perseverance is an essential point, and one on which I consider the favourable issue of these cases chiefly depended.

Although no visible alteration should take place for some weeks, still the patient is not to be abandoned, and some further changes made, so as to modify the treatment to the apparent circumstances. From no remedy have I found greater effect in cases of deaf and dumb, than from blisters applied behind the ears, and continued gently open in the form of an issue. The period of continuing this issue must be regulated by the appearance and progress of the amendment.

In very young children, backwardness of

speech, although it frequently points out a want of hearing, yet the latter does not often arise from any organic or permanent defect; for if the ears are *completely syringed*, and the other means employed I have before stated, a sensible change has been observed to take place, and the children have begun to talk. This is a sufficient inducement for early attention; which, if regularly paid, I flatter myself there would not be then found so many suffering from this malady.

Though it is allowed that the diseases of the ear are not numerous, yet, compared with other classes of disease, the misery they entail by excluding the sufferers from the intercourse of society, renders them objects of high consideration.

For many parts of the treatment recommended, I acknowledge myself indebted to the late Mr. Saunders; but in consequence of the establishment of the Royal Dispensary, I have had opportunities of treating diseases of the ear to a greater extent than my predecessor, and



accordingly I have seen the necessity of varying and amplifying his original modes of practice. This circumstance leads me to speak with confidence on what can be done in most affections of the ear, as the result of observation and experience.

THE END.

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It is to obviate these evils, so distressing to the lower orders, that the present Institution is established, in which every surgical aid is given that the nature of the subject admits; and if the inconvenience cannot altogether be remedied, the patient is supplied, free of expense, with such artificial means as have been found by experience useful in such imperfections of the organ.

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