

THE DEAFENED CHILD

WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR THE HARD-OF-HEARING CHILD?

(By Alice G. Bryant, M. D., Boston, Member Gorgas Memorial.)

The problem of the deafened are not new, but our methods of approach, interpretations and procedures are new. The problem is vital for preliminary surveys of the children in our public schools by the American Federation of Organizations for the Hard-of-hearing find 3,000,000 children with defective hearing.

In 1902, Martha Bruhn founded the first school in lip-reading for the deafened adult. Other schools have been established, and they have all exercised a profound influence and enriched the lives of the deafened.

Dr. Frank Bock of Rochester, N. Y., believed that many of the retarded children in the public schools were hard of hearing due to ear troubles. In 1909 he was permitted to hold a clinic in a public school; in 1916 he was able to introduce lip-reading in the public schools of his city, and later his appeal to hold speech correcting classes was granted. Today many lip-reading teachers are actively functioning. A few of the public

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schools have introduced lip-reading. Last year a department of lip-reading was established by the board of directors of the National Education Association. The Volta bureau has rendered able assistance.

An acoustic engineer, Dr. Horace Fletcher, has invented the phonaudiometer which correctly and accurately detects the grades of deafness. It is efficiently productive, for it permits group testing, thus shortening the testing period. The percentage of deafness and the "danger zone" aid ear specialists and lip-reading teachers. When the deafened school-children repeat once, twice or more times, it is a waste of education. The pupils are penalized, but we are the offenders. We owe the pupils a new valuation in education. They become repeating machines where efforts are stupified, spirits are depressed and pride at a discount.

Do not stress overhead costs. Increase production by eliminating waste, waste of effort, time, strength and usefulness. Expert lip-reading teachers will materially help to solve the problem. They have discovered the fact that by laborous work. They have knowledge by conviction, as each child must be judiciously studied and individually taught.

The hard-of-hearing pupil should not be segregated or isolated. He needs a knowledge of school conditions. He should associate with his teachers and school mates. He no longer is forgotten or falls behind in his classes or enters the great vast world unheralded, unwelcomed and unprepared to meet its problems. No longer are his wistful hopes shattered. He has a romantic history of progress. In spite of his handicap, with strengthened confidence and unshaken faith, backed by a full record of progress and output, he is qualified for his life's work and he meets it. The captains of health and education have been his life preservers.

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