

MEDICINE

Many Deaf Gain Hearing

Fenestration operation is successful "in all respects" for 82% of 623 patients. Usually about half of hearing lost is restored.

➤ MORE THAN 500 formerly deafened persons are now happy with the improved hearing they have since undergoing the fenestration operation on their ears.

These patients, making up 82% of a total of 623, regard their operation as "successful in all respects," Dr. George E. Shambaugh, of Northwestern University Medical School, reported at the meeting of the American College of Surgeons.

Another 4% of the 623 among Dr. Shambaugh's patients who answered a questionnaire consider the operation successful but still wear a hearing aid at times. In another 1% the patient considers the operation a success but the family is doubtful. The results are regarded as a failure by 10.6%, and 1% want to wait longer before saying.

Since the patient's opinion may be influenced by psychological factors, it cannot be taken as the only criterion for evaluating the results of treatment, but should be considered together with objective tests by tuning fork and audiometer.

The fenestration operation almost never restores the hearing to normal, Dr. Shambaugh emphasized. It may be expected to restore about half the hearing that has been lost, provided the patient is suitable for operation. But this much improvement apparently satisfies most patients and generally enables the patient to understand speech better than he did before the operation with his hearing aid.

The hearing improvement present two years after the operation may be regarded as permanent.

The operation, performed for certain cases of deafness due to otosclerosis, may not only provide a permanent opening in the bony growth to allow passage of sound waves but may also in some cases check or delay the degeneration of the hearing nerve in otosclerosis.

Evidence for this has come from patients followed for five to seven years after the operation, but the question cannot be finally answered until a large number of successfully operated patients have been followed for another five to 10 years.

Science News Letter, December 28, 1946

RADIO

'Seeing' Metal Hears Radio

➤ SEEING and hearing became confused in a Johns Hopkins University laboratory recently to produce one of the year's strangest scientific discoveries: a piece of treated metal smaller than a common pin can tune in on radio broadcasts.

Drs. Donald H. Andrews and Chester Clark, with Peggy McEwan, a laboratory technician, were experimenting upon the infra-red bolometer using a strip of superconducting metal. The bolometer is a device developed during the war for "seeing" in the dark. Working with a cryostat, used to cool with liquid hydrogen the bolometer to its point of sensitivity, the investigators made a routine connection with a loud speaker to check on vibrations in the audible range of frequency.

Out of the loudspeaker came the pro-

gram being broadcast by a local radio station. Changing the temperature of the cryostat tuned in other stations.

A thread-like ribbon of columbium nitride is the heart of the new bolometer "radio," picking up broadcasts at a temperature of about 435 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. Scientific explanation of the strange phenomenon may lie in superconductivity, the sudden drop in resistance of metals as they approach absolute zero in temperature. Dr. Andrews explained that the broadcasts were received only within the narrow temperature zone of transition between normal and super-conducting states of the columbium nitride ribbon.

The Johns Hopkins scientists claim no revolutionary radio development, though experiments with the bolometer are continuing. They say that since the

bolometer is so sensitive to infra-red waves, it can also be sensitive to radio waves. The discovery is regarded as a possible explanation for static-like "noise" encountered in other tests with the bolometer.

Science News Letter, December 28, 1946

PHYSIOLOGY

Eggs Colored Inside Before Being Laid

➤ EASTER would be a more appropriate time than New Years Day for this story to break—it was born about four months too soon.

Eggs can be colored inside before they are laid by feeding the hens certain kinds of food, says Clyde Driggers, poultry husbandman at the Florida Experiment Station.

Eggs will have their whites turned pink if the hens are fed on a diet including plants of the mallow family, among which are hollyhocks and the ground-hugging weed known variously as green cheese and cheeseweed. Pink-tinged whites also result if hens are fed on cottonseed meal and the eggs kept in storage for a time. Worth noting is the fact that cotton is another member of the mallow family.

Yolks can be made a darker orange-yellow by feeding yellow cornmeal, alfalfa leaf meal and other items rich in the carotenoid pigments. Too much cottonseed meal will color the yolks a dark olive.

It is also possible to add artificial colors that will tint up the yolks, provided the dyes are fat-soluble.

Science News Letter, December 28, 1946

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By Oscar L. Levin, M.D.
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