

## SCIENCE:

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WE PUBLISH IN THIS NUMBER certain suggestions that have been made, by those best able to judge, as to improvements in the taking of the census of the deaf. At the same time we would call attention to certain suggestions by Dr. A. Graham Bell on the census-taking of the deaf which may lead to important results in the study of the heredity of this affection, and to its introduction into certain families through unfortunate marriages. One of the sections in the article to which we refer has reference to the offspring of first-cousin marriages. This is a point of grave importance, and one upon which, up to this time, no special data have been obtained in this country. The committee of the deaf, as it will be seen, recommends the introduction into the census schedules of a question bearing on this point, and it is certainly to be hoped that such a question will be inserted. In examining the ancestry of deaf-mutes, Dr. Bell has had occasion to consult the original population schedules of former censuses, which are preserved in the Department of the Interior, and he has found little difficulty in tracing the families backward from census to census in the male line of ascent. If the name of the father had been given in former censuses, it might now be possible for genealogical experts to trace from these records the American ancestry of every person now living in the United States in every branch, for the name of the father would give the maiden name of females. Dr. Bell therefore suggests that in the census of 1890 the father's

name should be noted in that part of the schedule that relates to the nativity of the parents, so that the people of the United States may leave to their descendants genealogical records from which their full ancestry may at any time be ascertained. This suggestion is full of interest to the genealogists of the country, and, if carried into effect, would undoubtedly prove of great value to them. The committee of the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, to whom this matter was referred, has strongly indorsed it, and it is hoped that a question on this point, as shown in the proposed schedule, will be inserted.

## THE ENUMERATION OF THE DEAF.

A MEETING of the executive committee of the conference of American instructors of the deaf was held in Washington, May 9 of this year, to consider the best method of enumerating the deaf of the next census, and confer with the superintendent of the census, Hon. Robert D. Porter, on the subject. Dr. Alexander Graham Bell and Mr. Frederick Howard Wines were invited to act with the committee. All the members of the committee, including Dr. Bell, were present; but Mr. Wines was unable to attend. After a discussion of several hours and a pleasant interview with Mr. Porter and Dr. J. S. Billings, who has charge of the mortality and vital statistics of the "Eleventh Census," Mr. Porter acceded to the request of the committee, that in the next census the deaf should be separated from the pauper and criminal classes, and promised to give careful consideration to any suggestions the committee might make. In accordance with this, the committee, — consisting of Edward M. Gallaudet, president of the National College for Deaf-Mutes; Isaac Lewis Peet, principal of the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb; Philip G. Gillett, superintendent of the Illinois Institution for the Deaf and Dumb; J. L. Noyes, superintendent of the Minnesota School for the Deaf; Caroline A. Yale, principal of the Clarke Institution for the Deaf at Northampton, Mass.; Alexander Graham Bell; and Edward Allen Fay, editor of the *American Annals of the Deaf*, — on June 21, addressed a letter to Mr. Porter, in which they made the following statements and suggestions: —

"At the sixth conference of principals and superintendents of American schools for the deaf, held at Jackson, Miss., April 14-17, 1888, — a body representing all the schools for the deaf in the United States, numbering last year 8,372 pupils, — we were appointed a committee to endeavor to effect a reform in the method of enumerating the deaf in the United States census, in the hope of securing fuller and more accurate statistics in 1890 than have heretofore been obtained. In accordance with your request at our interview on the 9th of May last, that we should make such suggestions as might seem desirable in this direction, we respectfully submit the following recommendations: —

"1. Section 17 of the act of Congress, entitled 'An Act to provide for taking the tenth and subsequent censuses' [approved March 3, 1879], provides that 'Schedule No. 1 (here reproduced) shall contain inquiries . . . as to the physical and mental health of each person enumerated, whether active or disabled, maimed, crippled, bedridden, deaf, dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic, and whether employed or unemployed, and, if unemployed, during what portion of the year.' In accordance with this provision, inquiries were made in the 'Tenth Census' concerning the disabled; and full returns were sought of all the classes named in the act, excepting the deaf and the dumb. Only those dumb were enumerated who were also deaf, and only those deaf who had lost hearing before the age of sixteen years. We urge that in the 'Eleventh Census' all the classes named in the act be fully enumerated; and we specially urge that the returns of the deaf be not limited to that sub-class of the deaf formerly denominated the 'deaf and dumb.' If the requirements of the law are fully complied with, the returns will be much more useful to us, as teachers of the deaf, than if the plan pursued in former censuses of inquiring only for the 'deaf and dumb' is continued. Pupils are admitted to the schools we represent, not on account of their dumbness, but on account of their deafness. Persons who are merely dumb are not received: persons who are merely deaf are received. Our schools are open to