

SCIENCE:

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Attention is called to the "Wants" column. All are invited to use it in soliciting information or seeking new positions. The name and address of applicants should be given in full, so that answers will go direct to them. The "Exchange" column is likewise open.

HEREDITARY DEAFNESS. — A STUDY.

THE American Asylum is the oldest school for deaf-mutes in the United States. Its history covers three-quarters of a century. It has had under instruction, including those now in school, 2,459 pupils, a number exceeded by that of but one other school in this country. There have been nearly six hundred marriages, in which one or both of those making the marriage contract were once pupils in the school, and the offspring of these marriages number over eight hundred children. The records of the school have been carefully preserved, and from these and much personal inquiry we have been able to gather some facts which will be interesting at this time, when the question of hereditary deafness is receiving so much public attention. It will be seen at a glance that the field is a favorable one for the study of this subject, and, though not broad enough to warrant the drawing of general conclusions therefrom, the facts are valuable pointers, and may serve as one of the studies, which, when collated, will give sufficient data to work out a general law.

That there is a tendency to deafness in the offspring of congenitally deaf parents, there can be no doubt. Nor can it be doubted that this tendency is comparatively slight in the offspring of parents both of whom are adventitiously deaf. But let the facts speak for themselves. They are believed to be reliable so far as they go; but it is quite probable that in some of the families included in the following table other children may have been born since the dates at which the facts were reported. The general proportion, however, in all probability, would not be affected by such additions. In this table, c. = congenitally deaf; ad. = adventitiously deaf; h. = hearing; u. = age at which deafness occurred unknown.

When we consider how heavy a handicap congenital deafness is, it is appalling to think that 31 per cent of the offspring of the congenitally deaf may be born deaf. But I believe that this proportion is far above that of the general

average of such cases throughout the country. I believe that there are causes at work in New England, not in operation to any thing like the same extent in other parts of the country, which will account for no inconsiderable part of the large percentage of congenital deafness in the offspring of congenitally deaf parents in that section.

Facts gathered from the Records of the American Asylum at Hartford, Conn.

	Number of Marriages.	Children Congenitally Deaf.	Children Adventitiously Deaf.	Hearing Children.	Children whether Deaf or Hearing unknown.	Whole Number of Children.	Percentage of Children Congenitally Deaf.
Husband, c.; wife, c....	52	48		88	15	151	31.78
Husband, c.; wife, ad..	37	5	1	74	7	87	5.74
Husband, ad.; wife, c..	51	17		102	5	124	13.70
Husband, ad.; wife, ad..	55	4		129	6	139	3.87
Husband, h.; wife, c....	16	12		52	2	66	18.18
Husband, h.; wife, ad..	5			16	2	18	
Husband, h.; wife, u....	1			4		4	
Husband, c.; wife, h....	26	9		58	5	72	12.50
Husband, ad.; wife, h..	6			13		13	
Husband, ad.; wife, u....	23			43	8	51	
Husband, u.; wife, u....	2			4	2	6	
Husband, c.; wife, u....	27	9		58	4	71	12.67
Husband, u.; wife, h....	1			4		4	
Husband, u.; wife, c....	2			4	1	5	
	31						
Sterile.....	283						
Totals.....	590	104	1	649	57	811	12.82

¹ Three families are reported with several hearing children in each.

Of the fifty-two families in which both parents are congenitally deaf, twenty-three have congenitally deaf children.

Of the thirty-seven families in which the husbands are congenitally deaf and the wives adventitiously deaf, two have deaf children,—four in one family, and one in the other.

Of the fifty-one families in which the fathers were adventitiously deaf and the mothers congenitally deaf, seven produced deaf children, and nine of the congenitally deaf children come from two families.

There are fifty-five families in which both parents are adventitiously deaf, and from these have sprung four congenitally deaf children,—one in each of four families.

Four of the sixteen families in which the husbands hear and the wives are congenitally deaf have deaf children.

In five families out of the twenty-six in which the husbands are congenitally deaf and the wives hear, there are children born deaf.

Six of the twenty-seven families in which the husbands were congenitally deaf and the state of the hearing of the wives is unknown produced congenitally deaf children.

Of the twenty-six families in which both parents are deaf and have congenitally deaf children, there are five families in which one of the parents has one deaf parent, seventeen families in which both parents have deaf relatives of the same generation, four in which one parent has deaf relatives