

**ON A NEW MODE OF TREATING
DEAFNESS WHEN ATTENDED
BY PARTIAL OR ENTIRE LOSS OF
THE MEMBRANA TYMPANI**

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On a new mode of treating deafness when attended by partial or entire loss of the membrana tympani by James Yearsley

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JAMES YEARSLEY

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DEAFNESS WHEN ATTENDED
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THE MEMBRANA TYMPANI**

[Reprinted from "THE LANCET."]

ON
A NEW MODE OF TREATING
DEAFNESS

WHEN ATTENDED BY PARTIAL OR ENTIRE LOSS
OF THE MEMBRANA TYMPANI,
ASSOCIATED OR NOT WITH DISCHARGE FROM THE EAR.

BY
JAMES YEARSLEY, M.R.C.S. ENG.

SURGEON TO THE METROPOLITAN EAR INFIRMARY,
RACEVILLE STREET,

AUTHOR OF "DEAFNESS PRACTICALLY ILLUSTRATED,"
"A TREATISE ON DISEASES OF THE THROAT,"
ETC. ETC. ETC.



LONDON

JOHN CHURCHILL, PRINCES STREET, SOHO.

1852.

A note from a highly respectable physician, printed at page 110, and testifying to the extraordinary efficacy of the New Mode of Treating Deafness described by Mr. Yearsley, will be read with interest by the profession.

We have ourselves seen the remedy applied by Mr. Yearsley in several cases of apparently incurable deafness, and in some of those cases the effect produced appeared to be almost miraculous. This happy discovery establishes for our profession another claim to public gratitude and respect.—*Leading Article of THE LANCET, July 22, 1848.*

Lancet, page 110.—To the Editor of the Lancet.

SIR,—Allow me, through the medium of your journal, to express my deep obligation to Mr. Yearsley for the successful application of his important discovery, in the person of my own son, who, in consequence of his visit to that gentleman this morning, is enabled to enjoy, without effort, the conversation of his friends—an advantage from which he has been debarred for years. I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

CHARLES JAMES FOX, M.D.

39, New Broad Street, City,
July, 1848.

Lancet, page 165.

SIR,—I feel very great pleasure in bearing my testimony to the value of Mr. Yearsley's important discovery in the treatment of Deafness from perforation of the membr. tympani. . . . a discovery which I consider in importance second to nothing which has been brought before the profession for many years.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THOMAS BARRETT,

Bath, July, 1848.

Surgeon to the Bath Ear and Eye Infirmary.

To James Yearsley, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Having witnessed with the highest satisfaction and delight the happy and most surprising result of your operation upon one of my patients at the Eye and Ear Infirmary, who laboured under deafness from perforation of the drum of the ear, I beg to express to you my warmest thanks, and, at the same time, a sincere hope that you will gratify the profession at large in this town by a public exhibition of this most simple and beautiful application of the art of surgery.—I have the honour to remain, dear Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN EDWARDS, M.D.,

One of the Surgeons to the Liverpool Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Liverpool, 153, Duke Street,
Sept. 12, 1849.

Extract from a Letter from Dr. Noggerath, of Brussels, specially engaged in the treatment of Diseases of the Eye and Ear, to James Yearsley, Esq.

I have read with the highest interest an account of your valuable discovery of the artificial tympanum. I had formerly treated the son of my friend, Dr. Alloway, who has been lately under your care, and am delighted to see the immense benefit he has derived from your method of treatment.

Brussels, 28, Rue de la Paix,
Sept 4, 1849.

PREFACE.

WHEN circumstances transpired which appeared to indicate that the time had arrived at which it was incumbent on me to promulgate an important medical fact that I had repeatedly verified in my practice, I considered it to be my first duty to make it known to the profession of which I am a member; and, with this view, I selected a medium through which I believed it would attain great professional publicity—THE LANCET. From that publication the following pages are reprinted, for circulation among those equally entitled to my consideration—namely, patients who, during the last few years, have done me the honour to consult me, many of whom it was my painful duty to pronounce incurable by any measures ordinarily adopted for the relief of Deafness. To these I would recommend a careful perusal of the following pages, for to many of them the new treatment will doubtless afford relief.

Twelve months have now elapsed since the new mode of treatment herein propounded was first made known to the profession. During the previous six years I had frequently proved its value in my practice, but its publication was withheld for reasons

which recent experience shows to have been well founded. Many difficulties beset the inexperienced surgeon in his attempts to use the remedy, and failures have prompted all sorts of deviations from my own well-matured method of applying it, justifying the observations made at pages 9 and 10. Substitutes for water for moistening the cotton have been suggested, such as cod liver oil, glycerine, and other syrupy fluids, all more or less objectionable, on account of their clogging or irritating the passage of the ear, which, if adopted, would inevitably mar the effect of the remedy, however skilfully applied. I firmly believe that cotton wool, moistened with distilled water, warmed to the temperature of the body, will never be superseded.

It is far from my wish to discourage the attempts of others "to place aright these magical bits of wool," but truth compels me to add, that, simple as it would appear, it is an operation requiring the most delicate tact to manipulate with success, which great experience only can confer.

JAMES YEANSLEY.

16, Savile-row, St. James's.

ON A
NEW MODE OF TREATING DEAFNESS,

ETC.

(Reprinted from the LANCET.)

UP to the present time, no successful mode of treating perforations of the membrane of the drum of the ear, either as respects the restoration of the membrane, or the relief of the accompanying deafness, has been discovered. The only means resorted to for the latter purpose have been the removal of pus or mucus from the tympanal cavity by syringing, or rendering it free by passing air through the perforation, by way of the Eustachian tube. Either of these proceedings will produce a temporary improvement of the hearing in cases where the tympanum suffers from obstruction, but in many others, when such a state does not obtain, they are of little, if of any service. Another mode of treatment, but one directed to the renovation of the drum, is the employment of mercury, with a view to produce "a new creation of membrane." The translator of Kramer's work (Dr. R. Bennett) has referred to such a case, but it was not attended by results that would justify others in pursuing a similar treatment. In this case, one-fourth of the membrane was gone, but, under the influence of mercury (?) a thin pellicle

extended over the aperture, which led to the hope that an artificial membrane would form. But, in the first place, I believe a patient would be in much better condition, with a loss of one-fourth of the membrane, than with either an artificial membrane or a cicatrix; in the next, I doubt whether the supposed membrane was anything more than a film of mucus, such as frequently fills up a perforation in the drum; at all events, it disappeared as mysteriously as it had formed. The hearing was at first stimulated, but, after the mercurial course, the auditory organ gradually became, as is usual in such cases, more and more torpid.

I have now, however, the extreme gratification of promulgating a mode of relief for deafness attended by loss of the *membrana tympani*, which will cause great surprise among the readers of *THE LANCET*, not less from its extreme simplicity, than from the extraordinary success which generally attends its employment.

In 1841, a gentleman came from New York, to consult me under the following circumstances:—He had been deaf from an early age, and on examination, I found great disorganization of the drum of each ear. On my remarking this to him, he replied, "How is it, then, that, by the most simple means, I can produce in the left ear a degree of hearing quite sufficient for all ordinary purposes; in fact, so satisfied am I with the improved hearing which I can myself produce, that I only desire your assistance on behalf of the other ear." Struck by his remark, I again made a careful examination of each ear, and observing their respective conditions, I begged him to show me what he did to that ear, which I should unhesitatingly have pro-

nounced beyond the reach of remedial art. I was at once initiated into the mystery, which consisted of the insertion of a spill of paper, previously moistened at its extremity with saliva, which he introduced to the bottom of the passage, the effect of which, he said, was "to open the ear to a great increase of hearing." This improvement would sometimes continue an hour, a day, or even a week, without requiring a repetition of the manipulation. Such an interesting fact could not fail to excite my attention, and it naturally occurred to me to try so simple a method in other cases. I did so in several which appeared to me to be identical with that of my patient, but I invariably failed. I was on the point of abandoning the idea that the remedy could ever be made available in practice, and of considering either that my American patient's case was unlike all others, or that it depended on some idiosyncrasy, when it happened that a young lady came under my care, by the recommendation of Mr. Squibb, surgeon, of Orchard-street. She was the daughter of wealthy parents, whose anxiety for her relief was so great as to induce them to bring her to me long after I had discouraged their visits, and openly expressed my inability to relieve her. She had become deaf at a very early age, after scarlatina, which had produced disorganization of the drum of each ear, and the deafness was extreme. Unwilling, however, to abandon hope, her friends continued to bring her to me, in order, as they said, that "nothing might be left untried." With little expectation of success, after so many previous failures, I was induced to apply the new remedy, with some modifications upon my previous experiments. Instead of adopting