

THE
JOURNAL OF LARYNGOLOGY,
RHINOLOGY, AND OTOLOGY.

As we approach the Millennium I thought it would be interesting to see what our forebears were writing about 100 years ago. The Journal of Laryngology, Rhinology and Otology was then published by Rebman Publishing Company, Limited, 11 Adam Street, Strand, London, W.C.—Editor

THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL OTOLOGICAL CONGRESS

LONDON, AUGUST 8 TO 12.

PROFESSOR OSTMANN (Marburg) read a paper on *The Therapeutic Effects of Vibratory Massage in Chronic Deafness*.

Long-continued closure of the Eustachian tube and inflammatory affections of the middle ear frequently give rise to changes in the sound-conducting apparatus, removal of which can by no means always be attained by our present methods of treatment. Any method, therefore, which seems to promise an advance in the treatment and these hitherto incurable cases of deafness, deserves careful and scientific investigation. Vibratory massage of the sound-conducting apparatus appeared to me to constitute such a method. By some specialists it is repudiated off-hand, by others warmly praised, but by none has it yet been scientifically tested.

This scientific testing was undertaken by me in my "Experimental Examination of Massage of the Ear" ("Archiv. f. Ohrenheilk.," Bd. xlv. and x.v., 1, 2). In this investigation I first examined the various kinds of massage apparatus with regard to their mechanical effects as such, and also with regard to their influence on the sound-conducting apparatus of the healthy ear. As a continuation of these experiments it would have been of great value to submit ears with morbid alterations of the sound-conducting apparatus to the same experimental examination, but unfortunately I have not succeeded in obtaining suitable specimens. I therefore proceeded to investigate clinically the curative value of electric vibratory massage, using as subjects patients suffering from chronic deafness due to middle-ear disease. These patients had all been deaf for years, and had been treated, but without effect, in various ways by different doctors.

The most effective method of employing electric vibratory massage was established by my experimental investigations on normal ears. With a stroke of 2 millimetres, even with extremely rapid succession of "air-blows" (*Luftstosse*), there was no danger of injuring the ear by too great pressure. The method of application was accordingly as follows: Hirschmann's (Berlin) electric massage apparatus, set for a 2 millimetre piston-stroke, was applied to the ear daily for ten minutes or more, and driven so fast that 1,000 to 1,200 "air-blows" per minute were driven against the membrana tympani. In one case the sitting was prolonged experimentally to twenty-five minutes. It is of the utmost importance that the apparatus be applied to the ear in an absolutely air-tight manner, because if even the smallest leak exists the sound-conducting apparatus does not take on the vibratory motion, therefore no massage-effect is produced. After massage, applied thus, no signs of irritation, beyond a slight fulness of the plexus mallei, are to be observed objectively, whilst subjectively no disturbance is complained of. Generally the patients stated that they experienced a sensation of warmth in the depth of the ear, which lasted about a quarter of an hour after the sitting.