

THE
JOURNAL OF LARYNGOLOGY,
RHINOLOGY, AND OTOTOLOGY.

Original Articles are accepted on the condition that they have not previously been published elsewhere.

Twenty-five reprints are allowed each author. If more are required it is requested that this be stated when the article is first forwarded to this Journal. Such extra reprints will be charged to the author.

Editorial Communications are to be addressed to "Editor of JOURNAL OF LARYNGOLOGY, care of Messrs. Adlard and Son, Bartholomew Close, E.C."

NOISE-DEAFNESS AND ITS PREVENTION.

THE present issue of the JOURNAL OF LARYNGOLOGY, RHINOLOGY, AND OTOTOLOGY, contains a seasonable article upon the above subject written by Dr. Ritchie Rodger, of Edinburgh. This article, as it happens, is the first of the present year's series of reports from Dr. Logan Turner's clinic at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, and we should like to take this opportunity of publicly expressing our deep indebtedness to Dr. Logan Turner and his fellow-workers, for a regularly recurring series of important contributions to the literature of our speciality, unsurpassed by any other school of workers in this country.

Noise-deafness, as recent contributions and *communiqués* in the medical and lay press have shown, has of late come to assume a natural but unusual degree of prominence and importance from the fact that the hearing of those exposed to the detonation of artillery, whether on sea or land, is temporarily and, in some cases, permanently injured to a more serious extent than during ordinary gun-practice in times of peace.

From the purely scientific point of view, Dr. Ritchie Rodger's work speaks for itself, as is shown by the fact, elicited by him, we believe, for the first time, that noise-deafness is characterised by a loss of hearing for low, as well as for high tones.

At the moment, however, it is to the treatment that we turn with the greatest interest, and in this connection we should like to

lay stress upon a remark made by the author that meatal plugging, in spite of the doubt which has been thrown upon it, does afford a considerable protection to the hearing; the only difficulty, indeed, has been to induce workmen exposed to harmful noises to avail themselves of this simple preventative measure.

According to one of the daily newspapers, a Committee has been recently appointed by the Admiralty to investigate gun-deafness, and that Committee is now, we are told, pursuing its labours. This action is commendable, but somewhat belated, as the matter was brought before the authorities, to our knowledge, some six or seven years ago, probably on more than one occasion, and from more than one quarter.

Not that the Admiralty and other Government Offices have been altogether negligent. For it is the case that as a result of representations made about that time, both the Home Office and, we understand, the Admiralty took steps to bring the advantages of meatal plugging to the notice of workmen, gunners, and others exposed to loud noises.

As to the material used for the purpose, plain cotton-wool is the handiest and most popular. Unfortunately, as anyone can ascertain for himself, it is also the least efficacious. Its value rises, however, if it is plentifully smeared with vaseline, or better still, if it takes the shape of a plug of some mouldable or plastic material. The Home Office and, it is said, the Admiralty also, advise plasticine with cotton-wool worked up in it as a binding substance—like the hair in wall-plaster. And a particularly elegant material of similar consistence is supplied by surgical instrument makers who specialise in hearing appliances. Our readers have also doubtless had their attention drawn to other plugs, all of which are probably of considerable value.

There is one little practical point in the use of plastic meatal plugs which deserves note. After the plug is packed into the meatus, the air contained in the canal, becoming warmed, expands and causes an unpleasant sense of fulness or pressure in the ears. This can be easily remedied by releasing the plug for a moment, so as to allow an escape of the excess of air.

The importance of Dr. Ritchie Rodger's advocacy of the meatal plug requires no special insistence at the present moment. But this we may say, that the knowledge of its usefulness should be brought to the notice not only of naval gunners and of artillerymen, but also of all those who may be exposed to the nerve-racking din of a modern battlefield.