

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

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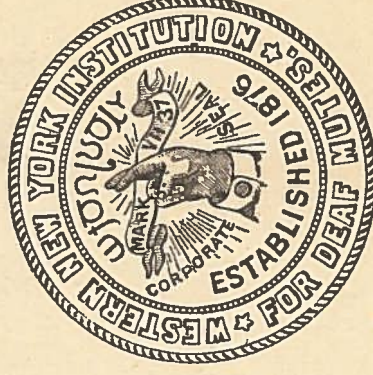
WESTERN NEW YORK INSTITUTION
FOR DEAF-MUTES,

AT ROCHESTER, N. Y.,

TO THE

Legislature of the State of New York,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 1899.



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1890.

That language is essential * to intellectual development is demonstrated by the ignorance, misery, and animalism of untold hosts of deaf-mutes who were, and are still in unchristian countries, waiting for schools to give them words with which to think.

During thousands of years there is no instance recorded wherein any individual or any associated deaf-mutes have ever, through a natural language, or through a language of their own invention, raised themselves above a low plane of animal existence. † There have been no cases of spontaneous intellectual generation. There seems to be an intellectual law according to which the deaf and hearing alike shall be transformed from animal to intellectual life only through the intervention of those possessed of intellectual life. Such agency has been furnished the deaf principally through the instrumentality of schools. ‡

The schools of this country have worked together with great unanimity. At first all followed the methods introduced by the pioneer of deaf-mute instruction, Dr. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, teaching through the signs of the De l'Epee gesture language, by what is known as the French Method. The success abroad attending the teaching through what is called the German Method resulted in the establishment of several articulation schools in this country, in which the deaf are taught through speech. Nearly every State in the Union has its

* The fundamental tenor of the Science of Thought is that language and thought, though distinguishable, are inseparable.—*Müller's Science of Thought*, p. 62.

† It is conceivable that a community of deaf-mutes, gathered together in some limited area of the earth's surface and separated entirely from intercourse with the rest of mankind, might, in the course of generations, develop some kind of cult, some rough system of jurisprudence, as an element in the new and unique type of barbarism or civilization which would emerge from such an unprecedented experiment in human history, but it is certain that the individual has never yet done so. The uneducated deaf-mute is the only human being who has no conception of a Creator or moral Governor, or of the nature and destiny of man, no form of worship, no sense of the eternal, no ambition beyond the supply of his daily bodily wants, no hope or aspirations beyond the present moment.—*J. Scott Hutton, Sixth Conference of Principals*, p. 34.

‡ A final fact adduced against the theory that it is impossible to think without language, which was formerly very popular, is that deaf and dumb people cannot speak and yet can think. At present, however, it is well known that, if they think and reason, they have learned it from those who use words, only substituting other signs for the words and concepts of the hearing; while, if they are not so taught, they never rise above what we may call thinking even in animals, nay, often remain entirely imbecile.—*Müller's Science of Thought*, p. 61.

THE AMERICAN VERNACULAR METHOD.—1

A PAPER exhibiting the practicability of the acquirement by the deaf of the vernacular language of their country through its exclusive use, showing what has been accomplished by the "French," or as it is now called the "American Combined Method," and by the "German Method," and the advantages claimed for the "American Vernacular Method."

Throughout Christendom intellectual life has been given to the deaf and dumb within a little over a century through the instrumentality of schools, without which they never would have been endowed with words to express thought or with power to think.

Our Lord gave to the deaf the power to comprehend words, and to the dumb the power to utter them. * In fulfillment of the promise to those who should believe in him, "the works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do." † Christian men have been inspired to devise means by which the deaf are educated, and through their labors every one of the hundreds of schools for the deaf, scattered throughout Christian lands, has been enabled to give to hundreds, some of them to thousands, the power of human intercourse.

The deaf-mute, far more than one who hears can be, is the child of his *Alma Mater*; to her he owes the conscious birth as well as the nourishing and development of his mind. He comes to school ‡ possessed of a few signs; a little home-made language that has been his medium for such limited communication as he has been able to hold with his friends; yet, as compared with hearing children, and as compared with what he himself will become after a few weeks at school, he seems not yet to have begun intellectual life.§

* Mark vii. 37.

† John xiv. 12.

‡ They enter [school] with minds darkened by ignorance, and with only rude and uncouth means of communication with their fellow-beings.—*H. C. Rider, Principal of the Northern New York Institution, Annual Report, 1889*, p. 19.

§ The mind of the deaf-mute is a *tabula rasa*. Upon it we may write any language we may choose, Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, Syriac, Chinese, or Japanese, French, Italian, or English [or, of course, the language of *De l'Epee* gesture]. * * * Deaf-mutes, previous to their admission into an institution, have no knowledge of this or any other language.—*I. L. Peet, LL. D., Principal New York Institution, Annual Report, 1886*.

school for the deaf, and some have more than one. The State of New York has seven schools wherein public-school children are educated.

The work that has been accomplished has been great, and worthy the attention and approbation of the world. It has, however, phases that are disappointing to those engaged in it. A teacher whose life has been given to educating the deaf, and who has experienced such disappointments most keenly, said recently: "We ought not to allow ourselves to be depressed by the limitation to the intellectual development of the deaf. We have, in articulation and sign schools together, used faithfully every means at our disposal, and in giving to the deaf such knowledge and such methods of communication as have been given, we have secured the best results possible; rather than disturb ourselves because we find some great objects of education unattainable, we ought to be unceasingly thankful for the magnitude of the work that has been accomplished." While thankful for the good that has been done, I disagree with his conclusion that the schools have made adequate use of the means at their disposal. The stone that should have been the head-stone of the corner has been rejected by some, and by others used only in fragments.

Criticisms presented from time to time by the foremost teachers of the deaf have shown in prevailing methods many defects which it were well not to follow blindly, though many of the critics have themselves been constrained to continue their work through methods they condemned. In the following summary of the reasons which have led me to oppose the "Combined Method," which teaches through "signs," also the "German Method," which teaches through speech, and in the presentation of principles that enter into the work I have planned and am pursuing, I disclaim any pretension to novelty.

The results of my work for the past fifteen years, compared with a previous knowledge of methods and results of deaf-mute education acquired through a period equally extended, have convinced me, with augmenting certainty, that the most satisfactory cultivation and training of the children confided

to my care have been, and are to be, attained by teaching, and by teaching through, the American Vernacular language. I do not, however, expect those who have not shared in my experiences to accept my conclusions.

I was present at the Eleventh Convention which met at the California Institution, at Berkeley, in 1886, and by my silence gave assent to the resolution approving "The American Combined Method of instruction," which obtains in four fifths of the institutions of the United States.* I had been asked by the Committee of Arrangements not to introduce discussions into the Convention upon any subject which would cause contention. Such a subject articulation had proved in other conventions, giving rise to acrimonious and profitless debate between the large majority of the profession, who had no faith that the deaf could be taught speech, and the minority, who were filled with enthusiasm because of the degree of success they had attained in teaching the deaf to speak. Had I voted on the resolution, I should have been merely a dissenting voice, accomplishing no good; had I presented the methods of this school, I should have disturbed the harmony of the convention. I accordingly acquiesced in the request of the Committee and have since held my peace.† I occupy these pages only in compliance with the request of the editor; and do so not in a controversial spirit, but as being "ready always to give answer to every man that asketh a reason concerning the hope that is in me." To the end that I may show clearly my relation to the two methods, I shall first review "the system of instruction existing in America,"‡ commonly called—

* We think Mr. Westervelt does not interpret the resolution of the California Convention rightly. As we understand the resolution, it does not approve "the American Combined Method of instruction which obtains in four fifths of the institutions of the United States" to the exclusion of the methods that prevail in the other schools, but commends—we quote its words—"the system of instruction prevailing at present in America, for the reason that its tendency is to include all known methods and expedients which have been found to be of value in the education of the deaf" [including the oral and the "vernacular" method], "while it allows diversity and independence of action, and works at the same time harmoniously, aiming at the attainment of an object common to all." The preamble of the resolutions, the remarks of President Gallaudet in introducing them, and of Mr. Elmendorf in seconding them, seem to be all in harmony with this broader and more liberal interpretation of the character and purpose of the resolution in question.—E. A. F.

† Through annual reports to the legislature, reports to the parents of pupils made at the close of school in June, and the little daily paper of the school, the character and work of our school have been published, together with quite a full presentation of such of the tenets of the school as may be regarded as peculiar.

‡ See the resolution above referred to, adopted without dissent at the Eleventh Convention, Berkeley, Cal.

THE AMERICAN COMBINED METHOD.

"This system includes all expedients that have been found to be of value in the education of the deaf," but includes them as the American nation includes* the representatives of all other nations which come to it, absorbing them, and thus rendering them subject to its language, its laws, and its social customs. The language of the American Combined Method is the language of gesture, and the idea of the combination is that through this medium the attempt shall be made to teach English composition and reading, dactylology, speech and speech-reading on the lips, and aural apprehension. The gesture language the while prescribes what faith shall be reposed and what degree of interest exercised in these subordinate means and methods, and governs the measure of their use. To the degree in which they are incompatible with the work of the gesture language in the cultivation and training of the learner they are condemned.

Notwithstanding the importance† attached to gesture-language by the teachers of the Combined Method, they do not teach it;‡ that is, there is no systematic instruction looking to the mastery of the language by the little deaf child. The

* "Children in America, no matter what their foreign parentage, soon get 'digested into' American life, as Wendell Phillips used to phrase it, which is the best possible thing for all parties concerned.

The editor of *Our Youth* says he was one day seated in a barber's chair while the knight of the scissors was waving his weapon over his head. When a little boy came into the room.

The barber spoke to the lad in German, the boy answered in English, whereupon the former said: "I have to lick that little boy to make him speak German. I speak to him in German, and he every time dalks English. De oder day he wouldn't take his dinner to school in a German paper, and he makes his mudder buy him the New York Sun for two cents to make a kite mid, ven he could have a Cherman paper for nothings."

That sturdy little American-German boy taught us a lesson, that though to-day we may have German, Irish, Swedes, Italians upon our shores, to-morrow their children will be Americans.—*Youth's Companion*.

† The use of good scaffolding must attend the erection of every building. As scaffolding in architecture, so is the sign-language in deaf-mute education, and only types in architecture or education would dispense with either. The ripper the experience, the deeper the conviction comes of the necessity and usefulness of the sign-language, and in its use we find the cornerstone of all deaf-mute institutions. The cultivation of it and its effective use is the only peculiar, although not the chief, qualification of the teacher. He will teach written language by the sign, laying aside the latter as soon as the ready use of the former has been secured.—*Dr. G. O. Felt, Superintendent, in Report of Ohio Institution, quoted in the last edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica*.

‡ I wish to say here, and I wish to emphasize it: we do not teach signs, but we teach by the use of signs, using signs as a means to an end when necessary, and when no longer necessary as a means, we drop them.—*W. K. Argo, in Report of Kentucky Institution, 1886, p. 17*.

teachers, however,* use it to the little ones, expecting them to understand; the older pupils use it with the same confidence that the children will learn its meaning through use,† as it is the vernacular of the Combined-Method schools. Throughout the course of study it is depended upon as the medium through which everything shall be taught. One not familiar with the work of the profession might be justified in asking: At what grade in the Combined-Method schools is the limit reached when signs, being no longer necessary, are dropped? When does the expert teacher of the deaf, as well as the tyro, dispense with the convenience of gestural scaffolding and continue the work of character and intellect building without its aid? Even in the National Deaf Mute College the use of this, the vernacular language of its students, is continued in lectures and debates, and in school and college alike it is regarded as an almost essential convenience for the explanation of the difficulties that the various English text-books present. And these students are selected by the schools of the nation as their most advanced scholars, those best capable of receiving higher education.

The language used in all the Combined-Method schools is, with slight change, the ingenious gesture language devised by the Abbe De l'Epee about one hundred and twenty-five years ago,‡ and brought to this country by the Rev. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, and Laurent Clerc, a pupil of Sicard, the successor of De l'Epee. De l'Epee's appreciation of the language

* Signs are used to illustrate and impress more forcibly. They are used by the teacher as a means of instruction, never as an end; they are a dictionary, as it were, for the deaf pupil, until he has acquired a vocabulary sufficient to allow the use of one word in defining another.—*Mary Ann Burke, Principal, in Report of Le Contele St. Mary's Institution, Buffalo, N. Y., 1887*.

The system usually employed, the Combined-Method, that is, the free use of both signs and articulation, with the same pupils and by the same teachers, throughout the same course of instruction of all the pupils by means of the manual method, with special training of a part in articulation and lip-reading as an accomplishment, has been followed.—*E. B. Nelson, Principal, in Report of Central New York Institution, 1889*.

See also Report of Kansas Institution, 1880, p. 18.

† As ordinary children learn oral language from parents, older brothers and sisters, and playmates, so the little deaf children soon acquire a knowledge of signs by association with older pupils; and it is not long before they find themselves in possession of a language through which they can make every wish known.—*Goodson Gazette (published at Deaf-Mute Institution, Staunton, Va., 1889)*.

‡ The Abbe De l'Epee depended chiefly upon an ingenious sign-language devised by himself as a means of instruction, and is thus regarded as the founder of the manual, sometimes called the "French," method of teaching.—*E. A. Felt, in the Annals for October, 1888, p. 251*.

requirements of his own mind * enabled him to anticipate his pupils' need of concept signs through which he could convey thought to them, and to develop a language which would meet his requirements in their instruction. What he accomplished was giving to the deaf signs for ideas, words, which they could readily use and comprehend. The signs or gesture-words devised by De l'Epee, with a few others of later origin in harmony with the character which the language received at its inception, are uniformly accepted as constituting the language of the deaf throughout the American Combined-Method schools. A limited number of dialectic modifications have developed which point to the institutions in which those who use these gestural provincialisms acquired their knowledge of the language. This uniformity has been maintained, notwithstanding that it is over seventy years † since the De l'Epee language was introduced, and that it is the vernacular in at least sixty widely-separated schools. The prevalence of this language is owing, in part, to the fact that all who have taught it obtained their knowledge directly or indirectly from the elder Gallaudet and those who succeeded him at the American Asylum. Frequent conventions of the members of the profession have also contributed to this end, and the interest that has been excited at these conventions by experts in gesture has won over to its advocacy those who had been opponents.

Because of the uniformity with which the De l'Epee gesture language is used in the American schools, it is common to speak as if there were only one such language. This is inaccurate and misleading. Gesture languages differ from one another, the signs for conceptions being as unlike in any two as the English word-signs are unlike the signs for the same concepts in other languages. At a meeting of the Deaf-Mute Association in this city (Rochester) recently, I was interested in a conversation between two sisters who, I understood them to say, had attended school in Friedland, Germany, and had but recently arrived in this country. They were speaking in

* De l'Epee believed that the best means of reaching the mind of the deaf-mute was a system of gestures that corresponded most nearly to his own natural idiosyncrasies of thought.
—I. L. Peet, in *Report of New York Institution*, 1889.

† Extraordinary development has been attained by deaf-mutes in this country since the system of De l'Epee, improved by his successor, Sicard, was introduced.—*Ibid.*

gesture, but neither I, nor any one of the twenty-five or more adult gesturers who were present, could understand what the two foreigners were saying. Their language was wholly unlike ours. One of the sisters had learned a sufficient number of De l'Epee gestures to translate some of their words for us, greatly to our entertainment. I have been told by the principal of one of the articulation schools that the school had devised its own gesture language, the signs being wholly unlike the De l'Epee signs, and that the young children were allowed to learn this language from their schoolmates. This is done upon the ground that the deaf should be allowed to use a gesture language for, at least the first few years of their school life. There are a number of other gesture languages; the language used by the Indians, and those used by the various articulation schools in Europe are instances. I presume that De l'Epee gesture formed the basis of the language now used by gesturers throughout Great Britain, * but if so, it has been more positively modified through dialectic variations than in this country. I have met several deaf-mutes from schools in Ireland and England and have been unable to communicate through their or my accustomed "sign-language."

† Almost every deaf child acquires before coming to an institution a home-made gesture language of his own; a very diminutive language, to be sure but it is his all. These languages vary ‡ greatly in fullness, and the children vary, accordingly, in thinking power. The development of these languages and the children who use them depends upon the cultivation of parents and friends who severally devise a language to meet their requirements in their intercourse with their child. When the children come to school they are foreign to and cannot understand one another; like the motley assembly gathered at

* In a letter written from the New York Institution to the *Chronicle*, published at the Ohio Institution, in the number for March 16, 1880, the correspondent says: "Mr. Pece is not very well acquainted with our signs, as he but recently came from England. Roars of laughter issued from our mouths at the funny signs which are made in his native country."

† There are exceptional cases among the congenitally deaf who, through the intelligence of parents or friends, are so taught that they begin to think and converse in English before they begin their attendance at an institution for the deaf.

‡ If the deaf-mute child has intelligent friends who are ready to aid his attempts at the exchange of ideas in this way [through a home-made gesture language], or if he associates with other deaf-mutes, this language will be extended and elaborated to a high degree.—*E. A. Felt*, in the *Annals for October*, 1888, p. 242.

Castle Garden, they are obliged to cast about for a means of communication, and have no other recourse than pointing and pantomime until they acquire the language of the new community. Their home languages are dropped and soon forgotten, and when they return to their homes they are unable to communicate with their friends through the signs they used before coming to school. It takes a hearing child but a short time to acquire a foreign tongue when surrounded by those who use it, and a deaf child in a gesture or Combined-Method school should learn the De l'Epee language with the same readiness. It would seem from the limited vocabulary that this language possesses, as compared with the languages used by the hearing, that it should be acquired by the deaf child in a much shorter time than a foreign tongue by those who hear. It is difficult to judge regarding this, as opportunities are rare for comparison between deaf and hearing youth with regard to the time required to learn a new language. Hamerton says: "In three months my oldest child replaced English with Provencal."* The child, English or gesturer, with his diminutive thoughts, does not learn, nor require, so large a vocabulary as is used by the adult.

It is, at most, but a few months after arrival at a Combined-Method school that the little child is naturalized as a De l'Epee gesturer; and notwithstanding the paucity of the language, and the small part of its vocabulary which the child acquires, his mind is rapidly enlarged through its use.

With regard to the language which is thus made the language of the deaf, the vocabulary used by the ordinary gesturer, omitting the gestural designations for persons, the proper nouns of the language, does not number over three or four hundred words. The expert has a somewhat wider range, but the fullest gestural vocabulary is meagre.

The gesturer is often restricted to the use of a sign that inadequately suggests a thought which in the fullness of English terms could be expanded into several words or into a sentence expressing its most delicate shades of meaning. Many words are better than one where every one is essential to clear

* Intellectual Life, p. 120.

understanding. Often the same-gesture-word is made to do duty in a large number of offices, standing as a representative of many shades of thought, so that the exact meaning is not conveyed by the word itself, but is understood by the context, or by insight, by quickness of sympathetic apprehension; oftentimes when this sympathy is lacking there is serious misunderstanding, causing alienation, where if the language used had been more exact and exacting there would have been perfect accord.

It would seem as if little could be accomplished through this medium. Yet it may be said of the gesture language as Professor Whitney says of the Chinese: "As an instrument in aid of human thought it is of all languages the most unmanageable, the most defective and insufficient, yet such is the power of mind, independent of and over means of expression, that this imperfect language has served the ends of a cultivated and thinking people throughout its whole history."

The De l'Epee gesture language was developed out of the first efforts to teach the deaf. It was demonstrated to be good, and as no other was proved to be better, the schools have since seemed to be committed to its use.

Between gesture and the Chinese language there is a difference, very much to the advantage of the latter, which has not only a conversational but a chirographic form, and a classic literature, while gesture has only a conversational form. No books have been written in gesture. Missionaries have often found it necessary to invent a *littera scripta* for the people to whom they minister, but no teacher has ever felt called upon to give the gesturer a written form of his vernacular; the gesturer, however, does it for himself.* Though it is the purpose of the teacher that he should write English, he writes nothing more or less than gesture—the exact transcription of his gesture words in an English equivalent, meaningless except as it represents to himself the ideas pictured in his mind in gesture idiom. Considered as composition in gesture, it may be good,

* We teach them in the sign-language, but we must guard them from writing in the sign-language too. They have got two languages, and they must learn to distinguish between them.—Rev. Dr. Thomas Gallaudet, *Proceedings of the Sixth Conference of Principals*, p. 112.

but as English it is far from satisfactory.* It is an almost hidden cypher to one not familiar with the gesture words of which it is a transcription. The gesturer is blamed, because in thus transcribing his thought he writes the words in the order of gesture rather than in the order of English; he is blamed for doing the best thing he could do. If the gesture language is the only one of which he can acquire fluent and natural use, he should not only be allowed—he should be taught—to write his gesture thoughts in gesture language, and gesture should be written and printed for him to read. The gesturer has the right to demand that his text-books for study, his daily news, his Bible, should be given him in his vernacular language in permanent form. This would not be difficult, for the literal translation of gesture words into English or any other language, retaining always the same written word-signs as the representative of the gesture-signs, would give good gesture writing. Is it not a waste of time for the gesturer of ordinary intellect to attempt to learn to read and write English? His failure is a foregone conclusion. The gesturer's thought, his social life, his love, his religion, is in gesture. All whose friendship the gesturer appreciates, all who would be socially intimate with and helpful to him, must acquire his language. The result of the neglect to provide him text-books and literature in his vernacular language is that he is shut out from present interest in intellectual work and from the possibility of future self-improvement through study and composition, unless it be in a foreign language, and from this he cannot receive the same profit and enjoyment that he would from his own language. So that, after leaving school, the gesturer, in his paternal home, is isolated and forlorn. His family and friends may desire him to possess himself of the information, intellectual stimulus, and companionship which the works of the great authors afford them, but, though piled within his reach upon the shelves of his father's library, to him they are as apples of Sodom—filled with matter unsuited and unpalatable.

* It will of course be, as it has repeatedly been, contended that deaf-mutes learn, from using pantomime, to write in an un-English manner. "Nay, sir," said Dr. Johnson of a dancing dog, "the creature, it is true, dances ill, but the wonder is that it should do it at all." The same might, with truth, be said of mutes with regard to their use of English. —Robert Patterson, *Proceedings of the Ninth Convention*.

table to his tongue. To him the Bible is an almost unintelligible book. He subscribes for no newspapers unless it be one designed for gesturers, wherein he has a chronicle of events transpiring within the narrow circle of his school associations.

Not only is this true of the relation of the gesturer to the English language, its literature, and the people who speak, read, and write it; he is also a foreigner to every other language and people. De l'Epee gesture is totally unlike the language of any one of the nations whose deaf children are taught to use it. A peculiar language, it makes those who use it a peculiar people; like the Jews, a people without a country. Whenever two De l'Epee gesturers meet, though born in different lands, their common language reveals them to be children of one mother tongue,* but in so far as they affect the written languages which they have so hardly acquired, they are aliens.

Yet when the educated gesturer is compared with the deaf-mute as he was before the invention of the gesture-language of De l'Epee, the incalculable good that it has accomplished is manifest. Under the circumstances which prevailed during the early years of deaf-mute instruction, when those admitted to the schools were adults or fully grown youths, and the time allowed at institutions was but four years, there was doubtless need of gesture language. It is immaterial to us now whether or not equal benefit would have been derived from the use of different methods in their instruction. Through the work of the Combined-Method schools of America, the thousands who have attended them have acquired vernacular use of the De l'Epee gesture language, and through them it has become the language of the large proportion of the deaf-mute population of the country, including those who have not attended schools.

It is not to be wondered at that those whose vernacular it is should have a feeling of resentment toward any who oppose their use of the gesture language, or criticise the language itself.

Although it is true that the De l'Epee language has not, in the hands of gesturers, been an instrument of so great and gen-

* At the Empire State Association of Deaf-Mutes, held in the city of Rochester in August last, Mr. Nelson, of Rome, said that when abroad he met some French deaf-mutes who did not know English and could not write French well enough to converse with him. He would have been unable to communicate with them if he had not known their mother tongue (the De l'Epee gesture language).

eral usefulness to themselves and others, as English has been to the hearing who surround them, or to those deaf persons who have had English given them as their vernacular, it is impossible to estimate the benefits that De l'Epee gesture has conferred. The schools having ordained that all their benefits should be afforded through this language, the pupils had to use it or deprive themselves of advantages. Gesturers, so created, have won the esteem of all who know them as a people; and they respect themselves and are happy in their estate. As a rule, they do not indulge in morbid regrets on account of their deafness or their isolation.

Men regard a difference in languages as constituting almost a difference in species; and, in consequence of the gregarious characteristics of mankind, the social ties between the deaf-mute gesturer and his gesture brethren are often stronger than those which unite him to his kindred by blood. His school-mates are familiar with all the incidents of his life, as his life was almost without incident before he began a sentient existence, through the language given him at school. Because of the drawing toward those with whom he can hold unrestrained intercourse, the gesturer is accused of "clannishness." A man of any nationality in a foreign land, his brain wearied with the effort to understand the jargon of strange sounds which fill his ears, and ill at ease with the consciousness that every effort to communicate through the unaccustomed language calls upon the sympathy of the natives, is drawn by this same "clannishness" toward any one who speaks his mother tongue. Under such circumstances the sound of familiar words will call forth a cordial interest, in one who at home might be met with indifference. This "clannishness" is in nowise the result of deafness; there are many deaf persons, English-thinking Americans, who are in nowise dependent upon the society of gesturers for companionship; they find companionship among all persons of education and refinement.

So much has been said about "the clannishness of the deaf" that many of the deaf themselves avoid, to their hurt, all association with other deaf-mutes, and others, who have enjoyed the benefits of education and home culture and are thereby qualified to do good, resist every impulse that seems "clannish" in its tendency. This *bête noire* is thus made to belittle their humanity, to deprive them of noble pleasure, and pre-

vent the kind promptings of the heart, so that those whom the Master has meant should receive benefits from them are defrauded. In our schools the germ of every moral and intellectual quality is developed, and our pupils are led to evince a just and broad benevolence toward all in need, and sympathy for every form of affliction; and school and home friends should cultivate, at least should not repress, the especial tenderness that it is natural the deaf should feel toward all others who are deaf. Some with education, and some with abundant means as well, have shown their sympathy by a noble philanthropy and devotion, contributing to the comfort and well-being of those who are pupils in institutions, and caring for and ministering to the graduates of our schools gathered in large cities.

Every Christian heart must sympathize with and rejoice in the work which Dr. Gallaudet, Mr. Syle, Mr. Mann, and others are carrying on for the gesturers of the country; and those who are forming clubs, societies, and associations are also doing great good. The results which these organized efforts in behalf of gesturers have produced show that, rather than fewer, there should be more of them.

Undoubtedly the influence of exclusive association with gesturers will affect* the method of thought of those who devote themselves to this people, though in neither a greater nor a less degree would this be necessarily true of missionaries to gesturers than of those who labor among any other foreign people. This renders the devotion of the faithful disciples of our Lord who give their lives to this service the more commendable.

Gesturers having no literature are dependent upon personal intercourse, not only for growth, but for their very existence as intellectual beings. I have been shocked by the condition of some of my former gesturing pupils who have come to visit me after a dozen years' isolation among hearing people. Such I advise to find some place where they can enjoy social life; and I am glad for them when they find work where they can be members of the associations that have been organized in our large cities.

* I think in the sign-language myself. I am like a deaf-mute from birth. I spell a word now and then, but my ideas are in the sign-language.—Rev. Thomas Gallaudet, Sixth Conference of Principals, p. 118.

I have had nothing to say regarding the features of the Combined Method other than its gestural element, as this is its distinguishing feature, and what should be understood by the name. The public schools for the hearing teach as many branches as schools for the deaf; have as great a variety in their schedule of studies, and in their objects are identical, though the methods are modified, and in their earlier steps inverted as to order; and yet no one thinks of speaking of our public schools as "Combined-Method" institutions.

The gesture language cannot be held responsible for the inability of the deaf to use English. Any one is able to use English if he knows how, and if he does not know how, he cannot. The deaf can read and write English correctly, if they know how, but if they never have done it they never have learned to do it. In an advertisement of spectacles the vender guaranteed every purchaser to be able to read every style of print with clear understanding. No more than the charlatan, can the gesture language of the schools give the deaf a familiar understanding of English without the labor of acquiring it through habitual use.

While the gesture language is a passive agent, and not responsible for the deaf-mute's ability or inability to read and use English, his teacher, or the deaf-mute himself, or his friends and associates, are responsible. If he is not taught it primarily and does not use it as the language which forms his thought, if it is not used in intercourse with him, and if he does not habitually practise it, he can never acquire that command of it which would make him an American.

Although the language of the Combined-Method schools is gesture, yet a considerable number of the pupils of every institution are able to use English fluently. One reading this paper who is unacquainted with deaf-mute education may be puzzled to know why all the deaf educated in Combined-Method schools are not equally dependent upon the gesture language.

Such deaf children as have lost recollection of speech, or have never learned to speak, on coming to a Combined-Method school are soon made familiar with, and, as they are expected to do, speedily acquire use of, the language of gesture; and during the formative years of their lives it is their vernacular. It is the matrix of their mind; it brings forth and develops their

intellect; it is their mother tongue; it is theirs by intellectual birthright. Such may be called native gesturers. Those who acquire gesture after and in addition to a language gained through hearing, to which they hold gesture subordinate, do not become gesturers. To them gesture is a foreign language, their habits of thought are fixed, and their foreign mannerisms of thought and expression usually so mark them that the semi-mute and hearing are easily distinguished by gesturers.

The gestural delivery of a semi-mute is often grotesque to a degree that is painful to witness. One of the professors of the Rochester University, witnessing an address to the deaf in the gesture language by a semi-mute, remarked to a friend who was with him: "It is pitiful. It is the saddest sight I ever saw." Every one witnessing an address by a master of gesture habituated to this language as his mother tongue, is impressed by its grace. Such gesturers as Mr. Gamage, who acquired the De l'Epee language in New York, or Messrs. Spofford and Raffington, pupils of the elder Gallaudet, or any of the many deaf-mute gesturers distinguished for their graceful use of the language, entertain the hearing as well as the deaf.

Notwithstanding the marked difference between the gesture delivery of native gesturers and those who acquire it as a secondary language, the gesturer rarely manifests amusement or criticises the grotesqueness of the tyro struggling to make himself understood through this language. One reason for this may be the fact that the gesturer is conscious of his intellectual inferiority to the semi-mute or the hearing.* The gesturer watches all who gesture to him with patient attention, seemingly laying blame upon himself for any difficulty he may experience in understanding.

The independence and mental power, together with the social advantages enjoyed by the deaf who have acquired such familiarity with English as that their habitual thought signs are English words, contrast strongly with the dependence and iso-

* It is nothing new, but it is just as well for us to remember that neither of the two orators selected for the Gallaudet Memorial unveiling is a deaf-mute. We do not write this as a criticism of the selection, for both gentlemen are in every way competent for the positions; we simply point it out as an illustration of how deaf-mutes are ignored at their own celebrations. This has come to be such a common occurrence as to escape any special notice.—From a recent issue of the *Deaf-Mutes' Journal*.

lation of the De l'Epee gesturer educators have in mind when they speak of "deaf-mutes." The terms "semi-mute" and "deaf-mute," the first including the deaf who think and speak in English, the latter such as have no recollection of speech, are the only ones in general use for distinguishing differences among the totally deaf. Yet it is not the retained speech, diminished in fluency until the speaker is called a *half-mute*, that differentiates the semi-mute or the English-thinking deaf from the gesturer; for although his speech may be impaired, the vigor of his English thought is not; the distinctions, then, are not physical but intellectual; they are such as result from the developing power of the two languages respectively. They are distinctions of nationality. The semi-mute does not lose his distinctive peculiarities as a native American can by acquiring a tentative command of gesture; nor does the gesturer become an American by a similar familiarity with English. The gesturer is, and always will remain, a foreigner to his family and to the hearing people of the nation with which he is physically identified. Children brought up as natives of any country are called English, German, French, etc., as the case may be, after the language forming their thought. Moving from one country to another cannot change their nationality because it cannot change their mental character. Foreign-born naturalized citizens, who have learned to think as Americans do in matters of public policy, are still obliged to perform their mathematical calculations, their reasoning processes, in the language in which they acquired the power to perform these operations.

If, on coming to school, the little deaf child found the scholarship in his gesturing associates, and the rich and varied literature in the gesture language, which the semi-mute finds in the English scholars that surround him, and in the literature of the English language, there would be less reason for the intellectual disparity that exists. That this disparity does exist it is useless to deny; the cause of it may be explained in the words of the frequently quoted truism, "We think in words, and he who lacks fit words lacks fit thought."

But if the gesturer were to have a language as full as English (and it is maintained by some that the gesture language, even in

its present undeveloped state, is superior),* if he had a literature greater than he could use, so that among a community of gesturers he enjoyed a high order of intellectual and literary life, the gesturer would still be a foreigner to the hearing; and a foreigner rarely receives consideration or favor. Ignorant Irish and Scotch immigrants are received by the American people more cordially than even the intelligent of other nationalities, because, as they speak the language of the country, they can be more readily brought into cordial and helpful relations with its people and institutions. If the choice were given to the deaf between the acquisition of English and of the gesture language so improved that its vocabulary were fuller than the English, its literature greater, its scholars more intelligent, it would still be better that every American deaf-mute child should acquire the language which would best fit him to read the papers and books and understand the intercourse of the American people. It were better for every child who is to spend his life among the American people that he should be brought up an American and not a foreigner.†

Z. F. WESTERVELT,

Superintendent of the Western New York Institution.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

* No true deaf-mute, I might also add, no hearing person, who does not understand the language of gesture, can attain to the same intelligence that he would by its use.—*I. L. Peet, in Report of New York Institution, 1889, p. 26.*

† Early in the Civil War a regiment halted for rest in the streets of Phillipsburg, N. J. One of the privates took out his pipe and asked a young man on the sidewalk for a match. The fellow replied, in German, that he did not understand English. When the pipe was lighted the private asked the man in German from what part of Germany he came. He replied that he never was in Germany; he was born and brought up there in Phillipsburg. "What!" exclaimed the soldier; "here am I, born in Germany, not coming to this country until I was nearly grown up, marching now to peril my life in defending the Constitution and laws, and you, born and brought up here, cannot read them." The fellow said he had them in translations. "Nonsense," replied the soldier; the German language has no words that can correctly express American ideas; go to school, I tell you, learn English, read the Constitution and laws and the debates of the legislative bodies in the tongue in which they are formulated." The soldier's idea was right.—*Thomas Hill, in the Forum, April, 1889.*