

SECTION VI.

H I N T S

RESPECTING

THE SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

OF THE

DEAF AND DUMB CHILDREN
OF THE POOR.

IN contemplating Man, endowed with rational powers, capable of the highest mental cultivation, and of acquiring the sublimest sentiments of Nature and Nature's God, we are led to acquiesce in the dignified expression of the Hebrew legislator,

“ *In the Image of God created he him **,”

* Psalm viii. 5.

and



Rev. H. C. Mason

and thus the pride, if not the humility of man might be excited, if pride could result from gratuitous obligations, due to the Author of every blessing. Humility, however, must be exercised in viewing a fellow creature reduced to the level of the brute creation, from a deficiency in the organs of intellectual perception; for the deaf must be dumb, and the latent powers of reason remain for ever dormant, without the application of a medium of exciting them to action. What a contrast does man exhibit! But on him, who possesses the perfection of every organ of sense, greater is the moral obligation to raise his brother from an almost inanimate, to an animated rational rank, and thereby humbly to imitate the Author of his existence, and of his faculties! Sentiments like these gave rise to an institution, whose directors claim the patronage of the community in their public address.— Among these, my respected friend, the Rev. HENRY C. MASON, M. A. (*whose Silhouette* I have the pleasure to annex) has, by example and precept, greatly contributed to the establishment of this benevolent plan.

PLAN,

I regret that, at the time of introducing "Hints respecting the Support and Education of the Deaf and Dumb Children of the Poor," I was unacquainted with the highly respectable Instructor; but I am enabled to supply this omission from subsequent information, and particularly from "The History of this Asylum," in the words therein applied to "the Rev. John Townsend, who, with a promptitude honourable to his feelings, proposed his laudable design to Henry Thornton, Esq. who immediately pledged his assistance. Mr. Townsend then drew up and published an address, which being communicated to the Rev. Henry Cox Mason (since deceased), they united their exertions, and by the most persevering attention established the Asylum."

A spirit of benevolence seems truly to influence the family of the amiable Instructor. With the brother, the Rev. G. Townsend, of Ramsgate, I have the pleasure of claiming acquaintance, and embrace this occasion of expressing my high respect for him, and respected he must be, by every person who enjoys the happiness

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piness of his friendship; for few, indeed, unite equal suavity of manners with so much ardent zeal to promote the happiness of others, especially of the indigent and friendless. To offer this tribute of esteem, I only discharge an obligation which virtue and benevolence ever claim.

 P L A N, &c.

IT must be allowed, that Charity cannot possibly lend her assistance to objects more worthy of notice than the DEAF and DUMB *Children of the Poor*. The Lame and the Blind meet the eye of observation; but these pass unnoticed, because their calamity is unknown. In many families these evils are hereditary; with some the organs of Hearing have been rendered totally defective by disease, and the loss of Speech follows of course.

Surely the benevolent mind must pity those distressed parents, who have not only to struggle with the attacks of poverty, and whose pittance is scanty, though attended with the hardest industry, but who have constantly before their eyes the objects of their tenderest regard; *Deaf* to every useful lesson, either of industry or religion; and *Dumb* to relate the

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PLAN,

tale of their complicated distress. To relieve such families, and to render those *useful* who otherwise would be a *burthen* to society, is an undertaking worthy of the BRITISH CHARACTER.

When it is considered how long * the art of instructing these objects has been known, both upon the continent and in this country, it not only excites astonishment, that no effectual attempt has been made to extend assistance to the indigent; but it is a painful reflection, that many have lived in misery, and died in ignorance, who might have been materially benefitted, had there been a charity of this kind existing.

The case of these unfortunate children is peculiarly afflictive! They are not only left in ignorance of common occurrences, and excluded from the ordinary sources of information; but they have no outward means by

* In the year 1653, the celebrated Dr. Wallis first laid down the principles by which the Deaf and Dumb might be instructed. See the Philological Transactions, for the year 1666.

which

which they can attain a knowledge of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, but by receiving this kind of instruction, which the poverty of their parents renders them utterly unable to procure, and which this institution now imparts.

If it had been possible to have fixed a school-house in any situation, to which the children could have been collected every day, the society might have educated a greater number, at an expence not exceeding what it will now cost to educate a few; but, owing to the remote quarters from whence applications have been received, the society is obliged to *board* as well as *educate*.

It is no part of the design of this institution to attempt to remove the defects in the organs, either of Hearing or Speech, by Mechanical assistance.—This, it is presumed, has already been exerted without success; but its grand intention is to mitigate their affliction, and, as much as possible, assist their defects, through the medium of *this science*; and

though it is impossible to restore them *fully* to the exercise of Speech (and not to Hearing in any degree) yet the deficiency has been so far supplied, that most of the ideas which they endeavour to express, may be understood by those to whom they are conveyed.

It is hoped, that those persons to whom this plan is submitted, will consider the great importance of this institution; the afflicted objects it relieves; the families to which they belong; and the good of society at large; and, by assisting so laudable an undertaking, cause the benefits to be extended to all who petition for admission into this asylum.

RULES

RULES OF THE SOCIETY.

- I. THAT it shall consist of a president, vice-presidents, treasurer, life and annual governors.
- II. That one guinea per annum shall constitute a governor. And persons subscribing more than one guinea per annum, are entitled to all elections for children into the asylum, to vote equal to the number of guineas they subscribe.
- III. That a donation of not less than ten guineas shall constitute a governor for life; and any person appointed to pay a legacy of fifty pounds, or upwards, shall be entitled to the same privilege.
- IV. That a donation of two hundred pounds shall not only entitle the donor to all the privileges of a life-governor, but likewise to have one child always on the foundation.
- V. That a committee of twenty-four gentlemen be annually chosen, the second Monday

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day in January, eighteen from the old committee, and six from the general body, who, with the governors for life, shall meet the second Monday in every month, to conduct the affairs of this institution.

VI. That two general meetings shall be held annually, the second Monday in January and in July, for the admission of children, &c.

VII. That a general meeting of all the subscribers shall be held annually, the second Monday in January; when the proceedings of the committee, and the state of the charity, shall be laid before them.

VIII. That the donations be placed in the public funds, in the names of four of the committee.

IX. That all payments, made on account of this charity, shall be signed by at least three of the committee, and the secretary.

X. That no person shall be teacher to this institution, unless he produce substantial proof of

of his abilities, to the satisfaction of the committee.

XI. That no child shall be admitted but such as is DEAF and DUMB, which shall be attested by two credible witnesses; nor any one deficient in intellect be considered an object of this charity.

XII. That none be admitted before nine years of age, nor elected after fourteen.

XIII. To render this institution as extensively useful as possible; in case any should apply for education whose parents or friends are not in indigent circumstances; the committee shall have power of fixing such a sum as the parents or friends are capable of paying for their board; one quarter to be paid always in advance.

XIV. That ladies, members of parliament, and subscribers passing through a turnpike-gate to their usual place of residence, be allowed the privilege of voting by proxy at all general meetings; but no proxies to be received from any persons but subscribers.

XV. That at every election each subscriber is to furnish himself with balloting tickets from the printed list sent by the deputy-secretary in the circular letter, which he is to fold up in paper before presented. Each governor voting by proxy must depute only one person to ballot for him, and that by his own signature.

XVI. That a secretary, deputy-secretary, and collector, be chosen by the committee; the deputy-secretary and collector shall attend all the meetings of this society, and transact all such business thereof as the committee or secretary shall require: he shall collect all the subscriptions in London and its environs, pay them into the hands of the treasurer, and never keep in his own possession more than fifty pounds; to find two sureties, to be approved of by the committee, who shall be bound with him in a bond for two hundred pounds.

AT

AT the first establishment of this institution, the original promoters of it had considerable difficulty to convince those whose support they solicited, of the utility of such an undertaking. It was urged against it, that a number of objects sufficient to claim the attention of the publick were not to be met with; and that little or nothing could be effected, in the way of instruction, beneficial to the naturally DEAF and DUMB.—Experience has proved these objections to be wholly groundless: the number of indigent deaf and dumb persons in this country do indeed, unfortunately, far exceed what was first supposed by those who were most deeply impressed with the importance of an institution for their relief. All who are touched with compassion at the lamentable situation of these unfortunates must wish to see it stated, that no necessary application is made in vain to this asylum; but the case is yet far otherwise; for,

for, though between forty and fifty children have at various times been already admitted, there are at this time upwards of fifty candidates; twenty-nine of whom are at or above the age of nine years; out of this last number, five only were received at the last election: nevertheless, under the blessing of Divine Providence, so much has been accomplished in so short a time, that the public attention seems already awakened to the affecting condition of the INDIGENT DEAF AND DUMB; and the list of subscribers is yearly augmenting, by the addition of many respectable names; so that a comfortable ground of hope is afforded, that this institution will flourish, so as to be able to extend its succour to all who stand in need of its peculiar assistance.— What this assistance is, remains no longer problematical, as all the subscribers, or persons wishing to become so, upon whose mind there is any doubt, may convince themselves by visiting the asylum; where they will find those who were once dumb and ignorant as the beasts of the field, receiving a course of moral religious instruction, and enabled to speak, read,

read, write, cypher, and comprehend the meaning and grammatical arrangement of words.

Another thing which must present itself to all who turn their thoughts on this subject, and which has been hinted at in some of the plans before circulated, is the establishment of some manufactory, or mechanical occupations, under the patronage of this society, wherein those who have finished their education in the school, might immediately find employment:—thus they would be rendered not merely intelligent, but active and useful members of the community, enabled to provide for themselves, and perhaps to assist their aged and indigent parents, on whom they were once a heavy burthen. What more grateful return could the supporters of this benevolent institution hope for? And how highly gratifying to every well-disposed mind, to behold an useful establishment carried on by those who have too long been considered as *automata*, and left ignorant of their Creator, and the proper application of their own powers.

ers *. To the accomplishment of this desirable end, more extensive patronage is still wanting; and when the vast importance of relieving this class of unfortunate beings shall be more generally understood, as well in regard to themselves as to society, may it not be reasonably hoped, that the British Legislature will not think it beneath their attention?

Of those who left the asylum, two only (who were discharged for mental incapacity) received no essential benefit. The others went out capable of conveying their ideas by words, and are now following various useful employments.

* To the honour of private beneficence, the Governors have been enabled to establish manufactories near the asylum, for the instruction of these objects of their care.

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The following are still under Tuition, and, according to their different Capacities, and the length of Time they have been in the Asylum, are in proportionate Degrees of Forwardness:

WILLIAM HUNTER, aged fourteen years; no father; mother poor, with two children.

Charles, son of Charles and Susannah Webster, aged thirteen years, whose father has deserted his family, and left five children unprovided for.

James Grant, not wholly on the foundation, his father paying a certain sum, according to his circumstances, towards his maintenance.

Richard, son of Richard and Mary Hart, aged fourteen years; father a labourer, with six children.

Thomas, son of James and Mary Pounceby, aged thirteen years; father a dyer, with twelve children, four of which are in the same affecting situation.

James, son of William and Rebecca Jones, aged twelve years; father a journeyman weaver, with seven children,

Nehemiah

Nehemiah, son of John and Amy Hill, aged fourteen years; mother a poor widow, with four children.

Thomas Bailey, not wholly on the foundation, his friends paying a certain sum towards his maintenance:

John, son of Mary Lovell, aged twelve years; mother poor.

Michael, son of Cornelius and Hannah Callaghan, aged fourteen years; father a smith, with five children, two of which are in the same affecting situation.

Lucas, son of Mary Hobby, aged ten years; mother a widow.

Stephen West Fox, son of — Fox, victualer, who pays a part towards his maintenance.

George, son of George and Esther Coleman, aged thirteen years; parents poor working people, with eight children, five of which are in the same affecting situation.

Robert, son of John and Elizabeth Fisher, aged ten years; father a poor shepherd, in the county of Norfolk, with ten children, three of which are in the same affecting situation.

Thomas,

Thomas, son of Charles and Mary Wager, aged fourteen years; father a labourer, with three children.

Stephen John, son of Mary Hopkins, aged eleven years; mother a char-woman, with four children.

George, son of Samuel and Catherine Taylor, aged eleven years; father a shopman, with four children.

Adolphus, son of Sarah Davis, aged eleven years; father died in the sea-service, and left his widow with three children, wholly unprovided for.

Charles, son of Abraham Tuck; father a widower, with five children, and whose fifter is likewise in the asylum.

George Thomas, son of George and Sarah Paynes, aged eleven years; father a victualler, with five children, another of which is in the same affecting situation.

John, son of John and Ann Weeks, aged thirteen years; father a wounded sailor, mother very poor, with four children to provide for.

James, son of Edward and Sarah Harrol, aged twelve years; mother a widow with five children,

dren, another of which is in the same affecting situation.

Daniel, son of Peter and Susannah Jacobs, of Broadstairs, Isle of Thanet, aged twelve years; father a poor shoemaker, with eight children, another of which is in the same affecting situation.

William, son of Isaac and Sarah Rawlins, aged fourteen years; father a journeyman painter, with five children, another of which is in the same affecting situation.

William son of Mary Aldborough, aged thirteen years; mother a widow, very poor, with five children, two of which are DEAF and DUMB.

Stephen, son of ——— Osborne, aged thirteen years; father a labourer, with eight children, three of which are in the same affecting situation.

Thomas, son of ——— Alice Sharp, aged twelve years; mother a char-woman, with four children.

James, son of John and Mary Berry, aged thirteen years; mother a widow, very poor, with four children.

GIRLS.

ANN, daughter of Abraham and Elizabeth Tuck, aged thirteen years; father a widower, with five children, two of which are in the same affecting situation.

Sarah Nighdy, daughter of William and Sarah Mason, aged fourteen years; father a labourer and widower, with two children.

Esther, daughter of George and Esther Coleman, aged sixteen years; parents poor working people, with eight children, five of which are DEAF and DUMB.

Mary Scott, of Ashford in Kent, aged twelve years; whose parents have eight children, four of which are DEAF and DUMB.

Frances, daughter of John and Sarah Smith, aged twelve years; father a journeyman grocer, with four children.

Elizabeth, daughter of ——— Rutherford; mother a widow; the father, who was schoolmaster in Scotland, is lately dead. His widow is left with seven children, three of which are in the same affecting situation.

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Elizabeth

Elizabeth Hall, not wholly on the foundation, her parents paying a certain sum towards her maintenance.

Elizabeth, daughter of Richard and Mary Barrett, aged ten years; father a tapster at an inn, with four children.

Mary Handcock, aged eleven years; a poor orphan, left with three more, and was maintained chiefly by the benevolence of friends.

Elizabeth, daughter of George and Esther Bruce, aged thirteen years; father a poor labouring man, with six children.

Priscilla, daughter of Allen and Priscilla Aitken, aged ten years; father a journeyman taylor, with three children.

LINES,

LINES, spoken by some of the Children educated at the Asylum for DEAF and DUMB CHILDREN, at the Anniversary of the Patrons to that Institution, held at the London Tavern, April 25, 1800.



THE DEAF and DUMB, through Britain's Isle,

The bounty you dispense partake;

Yours is the honour to have rais'd

The first Asylum for their sake!

Nor think the objects of your care

Inconscious of the good you give---

We feel, and know the happy truth,

That great's the blessing we receive.

And could we open to your view

The feelings of a mind opprest's'd

With anxious cares—with joys—or woes---

By Dumbness cruelly suppress'd;

Then would you highly prize, with us,

The bliss by your Asylum given!

Nor scorn the feeble voice that lisps---

Our gratitude --- to you --- and Heaven!