

Speech for the Deaf.

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ESSAYS

WRITTEN FOR

MILAN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS.

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PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS.



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REPORT  
OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS  
ON THE  
EDUCATION OF THE DEAF, *Milan.*  
HELD AT MILAN,

SEPTEMBER 6TH—11TH, 1880;

TAKEN FROM THE ENGLISH OFFICIAL MINUTES,

READ BY

A. A. KINSEY,

SECRETARY OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING SECTION OF THE CONGRESS:

PRINCIPAL OF THE TRAINING COLLEGE FOR TEACHERS OF THE DEAF,  
ON THE "GERMAN" SYSTEM, EALING, LONDON.



WITH AN APPENDIX,

*Containing Papers written for the Congress by Members of the  
"Society for Training Teachers of the Deaf: and diffusion  
of the 'German' System in the United Kingdom."*

LONDON:

W. H. ALLEN & CO., 13, WATERLOO PLACE, S.W.  
1880.



## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT.

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THE Proceedings and Resolutions of the International Congress, recently held at Milan, are of such vital importance that the “Society for diffusing the ‘German’ system in the United Kingdom” feel it to be their duty to bring them under the consideration of their countrymen at the earliest possible period.

Official Reports will, doubtless, be issued in due course ; but these will be printed in the Italian and French languages only, and some time must necessarily elapse before they can be placed in the hands of the Members.

The only available Report in English is that which was read by the Secretary of the English-speaking portion of the Congress, Mr. A. A. KINSEY, as the official record of each day’s proceedings.

The following account is taken from Mr. KINSEY’s report, which, on being read, was approved by the members present.

The questions discussed at the Congress were the following :—

### ON METHODS.

1. State the advantages of the Articulation Method over that of Signs, and *vice versa* (looking at it chiefly

from the point of mental development without ignoring its relation in a social point of view).

2. Explain in what the “Pure Oral” method consists, and show the difference between that and the “Combined” system.

3. Define exactly the boundary between so-called “Methodical” signs and those called “Natural.”

4. What are the most natural and effectual means by which the Deaf-Mute will readily acquire the use of his own language?

5. When, and how, should Grammar be used in teaching language—whether articulation or signs are used?

6. When should manuals or books be put in the hands of pupils? In what branches of instruction may they be suppressed?

The discussion of these various subjects resulted in the adoption of the following Resolutions:—

## I.

### THE CONGRESS—

Considering the incontestable superiority of speech over signs in restoring the deaf-mute to society, and in giving him a more perfect knowledge of language,

*Declares—*

That the Oral method ought to be preferred to that of signs for the education and instruction of the deaf and dumb.

## II.

## THE CONGRESS—

Considering that the simultaneous use of speech and signs has the disadvantage of injuring speech, lip-reading, and precision of ideas,

*Declares—*

That the Pure Oral method ought to be preferred.

## III.

## THE CONGRESS—

Considering that a great number of the deaf and dumb are not receiving the benefit of instruction, and that this condition is owing to the ‘impotence’ (*impotenza*) of families and of institutions,

*Recommends—*

That Governments should take the necessary steps that all the deaf and dumb may be educated.

## IV.

## THE CONGRESS—

Considering that the teaching of the speaking-deaf by the Pure Oral method should resemble as much as possible that of those who hear and speak,

*Declares—*

1. That the most natural and effectual means by which the speaking-deaf may acquire the knowledge of language is the “intuitive” method, viz., that which consists in setting forth, first by speech, and then by writing, the objects and the facts which are placed before the eyes of the pupils.



2. That in the first, or *maternal*, period the deaf-mute ought to be led to the observation of grammatical forms by means of examples and of practical exercises, and that in the second period he ought to be assisted to deduce from these examples the grammatical rules, expressed with the utmost simplicity and clearness.
3. That books, written with words and in forms of language known to the pupil, can be put into his hands at any time.

## V.

## THE CONGRESS—

Considering the want of books sufficiently elementary to help the gradual and progressive development of language,

*Recommends—*

That the teachers of the Oral system should apply themselves to the publication of special works on the subject.

## VI.

## THE CONGRESS—

Considering the results obtained by the numerous inquiries made concerning the deaf and dumb of every age and every condition long after they had quitted school, who, when interrogated upon various subjects, have answered correctly, with a sufficient clearness of articulation, and read the lips of their questioners with the greatest facility,

*Declares—*

1. That the deaf and dumb taught by the Pure Oral method do not forget after leaving school the knowledge which they have acquired there, but develop it still further by conversation and reading, which have been made so easy for them.
2. That in their conversation with speaking persons they make use exclusively of speech.
3. That speech and lip-reading, so far from being lost, are developed by practice.

## VII.

THE CONGRESS—

Considering that the education of the deaf and dumb by speech has peculiar requirements ; considering also that the experience of teachers of deaf-mutes is almost unanimous,

*Declares —*

1. That the most favourable age for admitting a deaf child into a school is from eight to ten years.
2. That the school term ought to be seven years at least ; but eight years would be preferable.
3. That no teacher can effectually teach a class of more than ten children on the Pure Oral method.

## VIII.

## THE CONGRESS—

Considering that the application of the Pure Oral method in institutions where it is not yet in active operation, should be—to avoid the certainty of failure—prudent, gradual, progressive,

*Recommends—*

1. That the pupils newly received into the schools should form a class by themselves, where instruction should be given by speech.
2. That these pupils should be absolutely separated from others too far advanced to be instructed by speech, and whose education will be completed by signs.
3. That each year a new speaking class be established, until all the old pupils taught by signs have completed their education.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF TEACHERS  
OF DEAF MUTES,  
HELD IN MILAN,

SEPTEMBER 6TH, 7TH, 8TH, 9TH, 10TH & 11TH, 1880.

ENGLISH OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS,

BY THE SECRETARY

ELECTED FOR THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING SECTION,

ARTHUR A. KINSEY.

THE Congress commenced its initial sitting on Monday, 6th September, at Twelve, noon.

An inaugural address was delivered by Caval. Dott. Augusto Zucchi, President of the Council of the Royal Institution for the Deaf, Milan, and Representative of the Minister of Public Instruction for Italy. The rules for the regulation of the business of the Congress were next read, and, in accordance with certain provisions therein contained, the election of officers by ballot was proceeded with. After considerable delay the following declaration was made of the result of the elections:—

President of the Congress :

CAVAL. SAC. GIULIO TARRA,

*Director of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb Poor of the  
Province of Milan.*

General Secretary :

PROFESSOR PASQUALE FORNARI,

*Senior Teacher of the Royal School for the Deaf, Milan.*

Vice-President for Italy :

PADRE MARCHIÒ,

*Master of the Institution for Deaf-Mutes, Sienna.*

Vice-Secretary for Italy :

PADRE LAZZERI,

*Rector of the Institution for Deaf-Mutes, Turin.*

Vice-President for France :

M. HOUDIN,

*Director of a Private School for Deaf-Mutes, Paris.*

Vice-Secretary for France :

M. L'ABBÉ GUÉRIN,

*Director of the Institution for Deaf-Mutes, Marseilles.*

Vice-President for Germany :

HERR DR. TREIBEL,

*Director of the Royal Institution for Deaf-Mutes, Berlin.*





**Vice-Secretary for Germany :**

**M. HUGENTOBLER,**

*Director of a Private School for Deaf-Mutes, Lyons.*

**Vice-President of the English-speaking Section :**

**DR. PEET,**

*Principal of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, New York, U.S.A.*

**Vice-Secretary of the English-speaking Section :**

**MR. A. A. KINSEY,**

*Principal of the Training College for Teachers of the Deaf, on the " German " System, Ealing, London.*

The meeting was then adjourned until the next day at 9 a.m.

*Tuesday, 7th September, 1880.*

THE proceedings of the Congress commenced at 9.30 A.M. After several documents, telegrams and letters relating to the official business of the Congress had been read, the Meeting proceeded to consider the Programme of Questions for discussion, as settled by the Organising Committee appointed by the last International Congress held in Paris in 1878 ; and it was determined to pass over Sections I. and II., " On School Buildings " and " Teaching," and to proceed at once to Section III., " On Methods," taking the questions in the printed order :—

# PROGRAMME.

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## I.

### BUILDINGS—SCHOOL MATERIALS.

1. Is the School to be a Boarding or Day School ? (Describe the advantages and disadvantages of both these methods of education.)

2. The Day School only comprises the construction and management of classes, in accordance with certain hygienic rules made with a view to preserve and ameliorate the health of the pupils ; the details of the school machinery—the arrangement of slates, desks, seats, &c.

3. The Boarding School comprises besides the classes, the construction—

1st. Of dormitories of proper dimensions, allowing for a number of children all living together in common.

2nd. Of a refectory.

3rd. Of a covered yard.

4th. Of an infirmary.

5th. Of one or more workshops so arranged as to answer the end contemplated, either that the Deaf-Mute should learn at School a trade in the usual course of study, or that he should be apprenticed in private workshops after leaving School.

6th. Lastly, it is necessary that a Boarding School should have large courts belonging to it and be well provided with gymnastic apparatus.

## II.

## ON TEACHING.

1. Of what should the working plan of a Deaf-Mute School consist ?

2. Which is the best age for a Deaf-Mute to be admitted to School, either in case of being taught by articulation or by signs ?

3. What are the physical and intellectual conditions necessary in order to enable a Deaf-Mute to be well instructed, and to obtain an intelligible pronunciation ?

4. How long should the studies of a Deaf-Mute continue, whether he is taught by articulation or signs ?

5. Is it necessary to separate congenital Deaf-Mutes from those who have become deaf from illness ?

6. How many pupils can one teacher teach thoroughly, either by the articulation method or by signs ?

7. Should Deaf-Mutes be under one teacher during the whole period of their instruction, or should the teacher be changed when they have acquired a certain amount of information ?

8. During lessons should the pupils usually sit or stand ? Should they generally write on black canvas or slates ?

9. What should be the length of each lesson ? Should there be an interval between two lessons ?

## III.

## METHODS.

1. State the advantages of the Articulation Method over that of Signs, and *vice versâ* (looking at it chiefly from the point of mental development without ignoring its relation in a social point of view).
2. Explain in what the "Pure Oral" Method consists, and show the difference between that and the "Combined" System.
3. Define exactly the boundary between so-called "Methodical" signs and those called "Natural."
4. What are the most natural and effectual means by which the Deaf-Mute will readily acquire the use of his own language ?
5. When, and how, should Grammar be used in teaching language—whether articulation or signs are used ?
6. When should manuals or books be put in the hands of pupils ? In what branches of instruction may they be suppressed ?
7. Should not elementary Drawing, *i.e.*, free-hand drawing, form an integral part of the education of the Deaf-Mute ?
8. What amount of knowledge in different branches of study would a Deaf-Mute attain to in a given time : 1st, taught by articulation ; 2nd, by means of signs ?
9. By what system of education is the best discipline arrived at, in a School of Deaf-Mutes ?

## IV.

## SPECIAL QUESTIONS.

1. Will the Deaf taught by articulation forget when they leave School the chief part of the learning acquired there, and will they when conversing with hearing people prefer using gestures and written language to articulation ?

If this reproach has any truth in it, to what must this state of things be attributed, and by what means can it be remedied ?

2. Where, and how, can young people, whose deafness prevents their studying classics, obtain an education analogous or equivalent to that given in secondary Schools open to hearing people ? Should it be in a higher division of the Schools for Deaf-Mutes, or in a special School ? Should it be with their own Teachers or with ordinary Professors ?

3. What professions do Deaf-Mutes generally follow ? Which offer most advantages to them ? Can any fresh careers be thrown open to them ?

4. Are there not diseases, and is there not a morbid state of health, more common to Deaf-Mutes than hearing people ? Are there not (in consequence of the ordinary temperaments of Deaf-Mutes) certain rules for health which should be followed ? And should not special care be bestowed upon the state of their health ?

5. Does the number of Deaf-Mutes as given in the most recent Censuses in the different countries of Europe, compared with the general population of each country, increase or diminish ? In either case, state the reason.



M. MAGNAT, Director of the Pereire School for the Deaf, at Paris, then proceeded to read from the Report which he had prepared as one of the official reporters of the Committee of Organisation, on the papers which had been received by that Committee in answer to the questions proposed. After some discussion and delay it was decided that, as the whole document was in print and in the hands of members of the Congress, it should be taken as read.

It was then proposed, in consequence of want of time, to limit speakers and readers to ten minutes, upon which Mr. B. St. John Ackers, Honorary Secretary of the "Society for Training Teachers of the Deaf and Diffusion of the 'German' System in the United Kingdom," observed that writers of papers having been requested to make them twenty minutes in length, such a proposition, if agreed to, would cause the withdrawal of most, if not all, of the papers prepared by the English section for the Congress.

Dr. BUXTON, Secretary to the Society for Training Teachers of the Deaf, &c., London, pointed out that those who had been at great trouble and expense to attend the Congress, with papers most carefully prepared for the occasion, should at least have sufficient time afforded them for the reading of the same.

Mrs. ACKERS (Prinknash Park, Gloucestershire) was then invited to read her paper, which she proceeded to do, in the French language. She related in a most impressive manner the lengthened and exhaustive inquiries made by herself and Mr. Ackers in

search of the best system of instruction for their little deaf daughter, and, finally, how they were fully convinced of the immense superiority of the "German" system over all others.

At the conclusion of the paper, which was greeted with general and sustained applause, the President asked that it might be presented to the Committee, in order that it might be printed.\*

M. L'Abbé DE LA PLACE, Almoner of S. Médard, Soissons, mentioned that the schools in France now employ all methods by which the object of instructing the deaf may be attained.

M. KIERKEGAARD-EKBOHRN, Secretary of the Royal Court of Sweden, and Rector of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Bollnas, said that in Sweden, after many Congresses, the opinion was that the deaf and dumb should be divided into three classes,—

1. Those who could be taught to speak.
2. Those who could not (though not markedly deficient in intellect).
3. Those who were idiotic.

Dr. E. M. GALLAUDET, President of the Deaf-Mute College, Washington, United States, then read a paper, in French, defending the "Combined" system, and maintained that signs were the natural language of the deaf, as also the mother language of mankind.

M. HUGENTOBLE (Lyons) replied that the deaf taught upon the articulation system had ideas and language given to them *plus* speech by which to ex-

\* The English version will be found in the Appendix.

press themselves, which was an enormous gain over sign-taught pupils.

The Meeting then adjourned until 2 P.M., when the Rev. THOMAS ARNOLD, Private School, Northampton, proceeded to read a paper in favour of the articulating system. He had had twenty years' experience of that system, and was of opinion that it places the deaf on the same platform that we ourselves occupy.

The Rev. THOMAS GALLAUDET, D.D. Rector of St. Ann's Church for Deaf-Mutes, New York, replied. Having used the sign language for fifty years, he believed fully in its importance to the deaf-mute, and that it is necessary, in order to lift him up from ignorance to ideas. He accompanied his speech throughout by signs, and concluded by giving a sign version of the Lord's Prayer.

Padre MARCHIÒ (Sienna) exclaimed simply, in English, "Come and hear our pupils."

A *résumé* of a paper by Mr. R. ELLIOTT, Headmaster of the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, London and Margate, was given in French by M. Léon Vaisse. Mr. Elliott was of opinion that experience teaches the Combined system to be the best, and asked that such method be adopted.

M. L'Abbé BALESTRA, Director of the Institution at Como, replied that in Italy there were deaf children who could speak and express themselves without any signs or pantomime whatever, and he strongly urged upon the Congress the adoption of the method of speech.

Miss HULL (Private School, Kensington) then proceeded to read her paper, in French, upon her varied experience in teaching the deaf. The regulations of the Congress would not permit this paper being finished at one reading, and the latter portion was accordingly reserved till the following day.

M. HUGENTOBLE (Lyons), who had been requested to read a paper from Herr Director Rössler, of the Institution at Hildesheim, withdrew it, on the ground that the matter contained therein had already been sufficiently discussed.

The PRESIDENT proposed to close the sitting with a resolution. After a long and animated discussion as to the form of resolution, Dr. Peet (New York) proposed an amendment as follows:—"That the resolution be referred to a Committee, to consider and report upon, at the next Congress." This was put, and immediately negatived.

An adjournment for twenty minutes to consider the form of resolution then took place—After which it was put to the meeting as follows:—

# I.

## THE CONGRESS—

Considering the incontestable superiority of speech over signs in restoring the deaf-mute to society, and in giving him a more perfect knowledge of language,

### *Declares—*

That the Oral method ought to be preferred to that of signs for the education and instruction of the deaf and dumb.

The Resolution was carried almost unanimously, the numbers in its favour being about 160, as nearly as could be ascertained ; and the dissentients 4.

The result was greeted with loud applause, and the meeting then adjourned.

*Wednesday, September 8th, 1880.*

The sitting was opened at 12.50, P.M. The minutes of the previous meeting were read by the respective Secretaries of Italy and France. Certain corrections having been made, on the interposition of M. Vaisse (Paris), a short discussion followed between M. Magnat (Paris) and M. Franck, Special Delegate from France, of the Minister of the Interior ; after which the minutes were read in English. Telegrams from the King, Queen, and Minister were read.

M. L'Abbé GUÉRIN (Marseilles), upon the suggestion of M. VAISSE (Paris), proposed that the term *Méthode Orale pure* should be used during the sittings, to express the articulating, or "German" system, approved by the Resolution passed yesterday.

M. CLAVEAU, Inspector-General of the Charitable Institutions of France, next addressed the meeting, upon Question 2, Section 3.

Dr. TREIBEL (Berlin) proposed that Question 3, Section 3, should be taken first : On the difference between "Natural" and "Methodical" Signs.

Mr. ARNOLD (Northampton) next spoke upon this question : observing that in his opinion Natural Signs were those used by the uneducated deaf to express

their thoughts ; that they were rude descriptions of objects and actions. Methodical Signs were abbreviations of such signs, arranged according to some systematic method. Conventional signs were not symbols—they were abridged outlines of natural objects—and such aerial outlines were incompetent to express mental ideas. He concluded by stating that the sign language introduces an inverted order, and impedes the progress of language. A resumé of his address was given in French by M. Vaïsse.

M. HUGENTOBLE (Lyons) read Herr Dir. Rössler's (Hildesheim) answer to the same question, to the effect that natural signs are those used and understood by hearing persons ; all others are conventional, and should be abolished.

The answer of Mr. ELLIOTT (London and Margate) to the same question was read by M. Vaïsse. He thought it a very difficult matter to define exactly the difference between natural and conventional signs.

M. MAGNAT (Paris) and the Abbé BOUCHET (Auray) having spoken on the same subject,

Dr. TREIBEL (Berlin) said that teachers in Germany could not agree to define the exact difference between natural and artificial signs. A sign which was natural to one child was sometimes acquired or artificial in another. His opinion was the same as given in Herr Rössler's reply. He would willingly see many of the signs observable in certain schools entirely dispensed with ; but at the same time would not propose to deal with a young pupil after the manner of a

disciplined soldier with his arms rigidly fixed to his sides.

Dr. PEET (New York), whose remarks were translated by M. Vaïsse, thought that signs grew naturally out of the mind-picture of a deaf-mute, and that two deaf-mutes placed together would unquestionably develop a language of signs. The order of such a language was the same as that of an artist in painting a picture, and the incident of a boy shooting a bird would be dealt with in the same way, viz., that both artist and deaf-mute would delineate—first, the tree, then the bird, next the boy, then the gun ; and, finally, the shooting and the falling. Those who say that the sign language injures the English language should make the deaf mute blind as well, for nothing they see is in the English language ; but all in the language of signs. He then concluded by giving some examples of signs, supposed to represent the abstract ideas of religion, philosophy, &c.

M. L'Abbé BALESTRA (Como) replied that signs differed, as countries differed. Signs, it is true, might constitute the first crude language of nature ; but we cannot make them into a language in the proper sense of the word.

M. HOUDIN (Paris) thought that the only conventional signs were those of the Abbé de L'Epée, or others modelled upon them, and considered the time of the meeting was lost in discussing the difference between artificial and natural signs.

Miss HULL then proceeded with the concluding

portion of her Paper, in which she showed most clearly the weakness and failure of the various systems so long and earnestly tried by her, to advance deaf pupils to a serviceable command of language, with the sole exception of the Pure Oral method, in which she now "rests with perfect satisfaction." In her own simple, but most effective language, she said that she "gave up signs because they injured speech; she gave up the Combined system because it injured the voice as well as language, and she gave up vocal symbols (Visible Speech) because they reversed the process of nature, and hindered ready command of speech."

The reading of this Paper was several times interrupted by general applause, and it was ordered to be printed.\*

Signor FORNARI (Milan), next speaking, described himself as a disciple of the late Inspector Hill, of Weissenfels, who favoured natural signs as the only medium by which the teacher can at first make himself understood by his pupil; but went on to say that you must not make a regular language of signs, because signs once learnt by the pupil cannot be forgotten. We ought to abolish such a language from every institution. For himself, he upheld speech: "*Viva la parola.*"

DON VITTORE BRAMBILLA (Milan) urged similar views, reading from a printed work published some years ago.

M. MAGNAT (Paris) considered that in the ele-

\* See Appendix.



mentary stages signs were, to a certain extent, needed.

M. HUGENTOBLE (Lyons) would not admit that signs were necessary at all.

The PRESIDENT then addressed the meeting, saying that yesterday the Assembly passed a Resolution, by which articulation was declared preferable to the sign system. They must choose one method or the other. Like the real mother before King Solomon, who claimed her child in its entirety or not at all, so he decided wholly in favour of speech. To teach by speech alone required great courage, and signs must be abjured, though a very few simple gestures might be allowed when the little child was first introduced to school life. In the school-room begins the "redemption" of the deaf-mute; he is waiting to be made a man of by his teacher. Let the pupil be taught to move his lips in speech, not his hands in signs. The Oral method is possible; the Mixed system impossible and illogical. To make the deaf baby into a speaking man, give him what our mothers gave us—language. The Mixed system is impossible, because, if you move the fingers, hands, arms, head and the whole body at the same time as the lips, the pupil's attention is distracted. The method of signs stands in deadly opposition to that of speech. Of all movements for the expression of ideas, those of the lips are the most perfect. All is comprehended in that wonderful instrument, the mouth, played upon by the hand of the Deity. Patience, patience, and patience! Instruc-

tors must concentrate their efforts to teach pronunciation quietly, exactly, and perfectly, and then will speech prove itself to be the best, the only possible method.

The President broke off here amidst enthusiastic applause, and

The sitting was adjourned at 4.30 until the following day at 8 A.M., when the President would continue his address.

*Thursday, September 9th, 1880.*

The Sitting commenced at 8.35 A.M.

Signor FORNARI (Milan) read conclusion of the minutes of the proceedings of September 7th, on which M. GUÉRIN (Marseilles) followed with the minutes in French, the minutes in English having been read in full on the preceding day. Announcements were made from the Chair that in the afternoon, from 2 to 4 o'clock, the School for the poor would be open for inspection, and that at 8 P.M. there would be a dramatic performance at the Royal Institution by some of the deaf pupils; also that there would be an examination next Sunday, at 12.30, of the girls and former pupils of the poor school of the province.

Telegrams from Dr. Matthias (Friedberg) and Herr Schiebel (Zurich) were read, sending cordial greetings to the Congress.

The Abbé BALESTRA invited the Members to visit his school at Como after the close of the Congress.

The PRESIDENT then proceeded with his address,

saying that the Pure Oral method gave to the pupil correct pronunciation, facility of speech, and exact comprehension of words, with easier use of them ; and that the great advantage of the method was to develop in the most natural way the tender faculties of the pupils. This method, too, was particularly adapted to the teaching of religion. He also fully agreed with what had been read by M. Brambilla. When God gave a soul to man, He gave him the faculty to form ideas, and to express them He gave him speech. He added that he had taught religion for many years by signs, but decided definitely to adopt the Pure Oral system, because he was satisfied that his pupils instead of understanding abstract ideas, which he endeavoured to convey to them by means of signs, were only placed in possession of grossly material images.

M. L'Abbé GUÉRIN (Marseilles), in translating this address, added that he was a convert to the Pure Oral method. The impossibilities urged against the system cannot stand before the analysis of the arguments of the purists. He was also glad that M. Franck, his countryman, had acknowledged the superiority of the Oral method over that of signs. He concluded by thanking the whole Congress, and in particular those ladies who had spoken so firmly and so well, and ended a most eloquent speech amidst loud applause.

M. EKBOHRN (Bollnas, Sweden) following, said, that he voted for speech—pure speech, but did not think the system could be applied to all deaf-mutes,

as some intellects could not be reached by the simple spoken word.

Mr. KINSEY (Ealing, London) called attention to the fact that but very little time remained for the discussion of the large number of questions on the programme, pointing out how very important certain of them were to the general benefit of the deaf, more particularly in after life. He thought that, after the most eloquent and powerful addresses of the President yesterday and to-day, the discussion might be closed, and begged to submit the following resolution to the Congress :—

“ That members desiring to read papers prepared for the Congress by invitation should have precedence over those members who have already been accorded such an opportunity, or who have spoken at some length more than once.”

Mr. Kinsey went on to say, that as he had been called upon by the President, on several occasions, to speak upon the questions before the Congress, and had declined to do so, on the ground that he could not read detached portions of his paper which dealt with most of the questions on the programme, he asked that his paper might be read in two parts.

M. HOUDIN (Paris) observed that as he had always worked for the Oral system, he was surprised to have been alluded to as a partisan of signs. He applauded most heartily the Pure Oral method.

Mr. ARNOLD (Northampton) said that in England

a strong feeling existed in favour of the Combined method. He was altogether opposed to it, as it was nothing more than a compromise fatal to both systems. The Pure Oral method is not a failure when carefully used. It supplied the best instrument of thought, and prevented mutism. The Mixed system introduced confusion. Those taught by signs, thought in signs; those taught by words, thought in words. Translation from signs to words only bred confusion; signs inverting language, as so graphically shown yesterday by Dr. Peet.

M. L'Abbé BOUCHET, Aumonier des Sourds-Muets de la Chartreuse d'Auray, would use speech in school, but thought there were some words which must be explained by signs.

DON VITTORE BRAMBILLA (Milan) said that after the eloquent address of the President, he would withdraw the remainder of his paper.

Frère HUBERT, Inspector of the Schools for Deaf-Mutes of S. Gabriel at S. Laurent sur Sévre, remarked that having taught the deaf very many years on the sign system, and having heard that the Italians instructed without the use of signs, he came, saw, and was completely converted to the Pure Oral method, and hoped that the method will be adopted by the whole world.

The PRESIDENT then invited any opponent of the Pure Oral method to speak,

Whereupon the Abbé BOURSE (Soissons) observed that the last speaker's conversion had simplified his

own opinion. He, too, should leave the Congress with convictions of the superiority of the Pure Oral method not to be shaken.

M. L'Abbé COUVERT, Almoner of the Institution for Deaf-Mutes at Bourg, said that he was a new partisan of the Oral system, but did not think it applicable to deaf-mutes of inferior intellectual power.

Dr. PEET (New York) then read a paper defending the sign system. He said that signs were more simple than labial articulations, and more easily understood. He had, however, seen wonderful results of the Oral method in Milan, and would endeavour so to arrange the proposed new buildings at New York, that he might apply the articulation method in a greater degree than at present.

The PRESIDENT, in reply to a question, said if children come to them of very limited intelligence they do admit them ; if totally idiotic they do not, it would be useless. They have a special programme for the less intelligent children, and great results were obtained with them. He concluded by inviting members to come and see this special class, for themselves.

It was then determined to end the discussion. Several forms of a resolution were presented to the Congress--whereupon an adjournment of ten minutes took place, to settle the form, and on resumption of the sitting, those proposed by M. Franck (Paris) and Signor Fornari (Milan) were submitted :—

Finally, that of M. Franck was passed by a majority of about 150 to 16 :— \*

THE CONGRESS—

Considering that the simultaneous use of signs and speech has the disadvantage of injuring speech and lip-reading, and precision of ideas,

*Declares—*

That the Pure Oral method ought to be preferred.

The following members were selected a Committee to suggest the place and date of the next Congress :—

Cav. PINI	.	.	.	Milan.
Dr. BUXTON	.	.	.	London.
Dr. TREIBEL.	.	.	.	Berlin.
M. MAGNAT	.	.	.	Paris.
M. VAISSE	.	.	.	Paris.
M. L'Abbé BALESTRA	.	.	.	Como.
M. LA ROCHELLE	.	.	.	Paris.
Dr. PEET	.	.	.	New York.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 P.M., until the following day at 8 A.M.

\* Signor Fornari was careful to explain on the following day that the voting of himself and others took place under a misapprehension. He said his only objection was on a point of form : in spirit he was heart and soul with the majority.

*Friday, September 10th, 1880.*

The sitting commenced at 8.50 A.M.

After the minutes of the proceedings of the 8th instant had been read—

The PRESIDENT said that the Abbé Balastra wished to know how many members of the Congress desired to visit his school at Como.

It was proposed and approved that letters should be sent to the Mayor, Prefect, and Government, thanking them for their assistance, and to the Committee of Organization at Paris, represented by M. Vaïsse.

It was announced that a second sitting would be held to-day from four to six o'clock, and that the Congress would be closed to-morrow after the twelve o'clock sitting.

Signor FORNARI (Milan) said that in voting yesterday it was on a point of order, for in spirit he cordially approved of M. Franck's resolution, especially as M. Franck had been at one time opposed to the Oral method, but now acknowledged its superiority over the sign system.

Dr. E. M. GALLAUDET (Washington), being about to leave Milan, was permitted by favour to read a paper on the higher education of the deaf and dumb. He said he was of opinion that the deaf-mute, when requiring a higher education, was not in a pleasant position in schools for the hearing, and therefore should be received into special schools. His own



college for this purpose was founded in 1849, and Government aid was asked for it. The results had been excellent, and he should like to see such institutions in Europe.

The PRESIDENT thanked him for the paper, and said that it should be printed.

Dr. BUXTON (London) asked if papers which had been prepared on other subjects would also be printed, and the reply was in the affirmative.

M. HUGENTOBLE (Lyons) thought that there was not a sufficient number of deaf-mutes to require the foundation of special institutions.

PADRE MARCHIÒ (Sienna) was of opinion that considering the large number of deaf-mutes wanting even a common education, it was not yet time to think of universities.

Mr. KINSEY, referring to a statement made by Dr. Gallaudet, that a number of scholars from the Washington College, having passed in classics, mathematics and sciences, had obtained positions as teachers, asked whether such teachers were not employed in teaching deaf-mutes like themselves.

Dr. GALLAUDET answered that was so.

Mr. KINSEY further remarked that although we were all rejoiced to know that the higher branches of education were not beyond the deaf taught on any system, yet he thought it far more serviceable to the ordinary deaf pupil that he should be placed in a full command of his own language before proceeding to the study of sciences. He quoted from a report of

Dr. E. M. Gallaudet, as follows:—that “ he had felt diffident about conferring a degree on a young man upon his graduating, who was not competent to construct a grammatically correct sentence in his own native language.”

The PRESIDENT asked for a resolution requesting the Governments of all civilised countries to declare obligatory the elementary education of all deaf-mutes.

M. EKBOHRN (Bollnas) said that in Sweden and Norway that was already the case.

Dr. TREIBEL (Berlin) said that the time allowed for deaf-mute education was not sufficient, and asked for a vote that societies should be founded to help and protect deaf-mutes when they leave school.

Mr. ELLIOTT and the Rev. W. STAINER (London), and the Abbé BOURSE (Soissons), having spoken briefly upon certain disadvantages which attend the present education of the deaf—

Madame ROSING (Christiania, Norway) mentioned the case of two deaf-mutes educated by the Oral method at Christiania, who had studied at an university, and afterwards occupied high positions under Government.

Mr. ELLIOTT mentioned that in London education had been provided for some of the deaf-mute poor by the School Board, but no help from Government had been given.

M. L'Abbé BOURSE (Soissons) would ask Government to grant means to institutions for providing adult institutions of an industrial kind.

M. L'Abbé BALESTRA (Como) said that yesterday we called for speech ; to-day we must call for money, money which moves the world.

M. HUGENTOBLE (Lyons) said that deaf-mutes are born with the same faculties as hearing children. They differ from the rest of mankind only when they are taught signs. Moral development is then prevented. Writing should be considered only as a secondary form of communication. Speech must be learnt by practice, not by grammar.

M. CLAVEAU, Inspector-General of Charitable Institutions in France, spoke in high praise of the work he had witnessed at Bordeaux, and expressed his opinion that women were better fitted than men to undertake the education of the deaf.

A resolution was drafted at the suggestion of the President, and submitted to the Congress in the following form :—

THE CONGRESS—

Considering that a great number of the deaf and dumb are not receiving the benefit of instruction, and that this condition is owing to the impotence (*impotenza*) of families and of institutions,

*Recommends—*

That Governments should take the necessary steps that all the deaf and dumb may be educated.

This was agreed to unanimously. The sitting was then adjourned.

When the sitting was resumed, at 5 P.M., M.

HUGENTOBLE (Lyons) read a letter from Dr. Matthias, Director of the Friedberg School, expressing regret for his absence from the Congress.

M. HOUDIN (Paris) then submitted his resolution.

Slight alterations were proposed by the Abbé BALESTRA, Padre MARCHIÒ, and M. FRANCK.

Dr. TREIBEL (Berlin), proceeded to speak upon question No. 5, sec. 3, saying that from the nature of the German language it was found impossible to dispense with the teaching of grammatical rules in the education of deaf-mutes. In Germany the practice of not teaching grammar had been tried, with bad results. He thought that during the last two years of the course, a full and complete idea of grammar should be given to the pupils.

M. HURIOT, Director of the National Institution for Deaf-Mutes, Bordeaux, remarked that M. Houdin's resolution was not opposed to the spirit of Dr. Treibel's ideas: grammar should be taught by practice and as occasions present. After a lengthy discussion, in which several verbal amendments were proposed, the sitting was adjourned until the following morning at 8, when the vote upon M. Houdin's resolution will be taken.

*Saturday, September 11th, 1880.*

THE proceedings commenced at 8.30 A.M.; the minutes in Italian, French, and English being read by the respective secretaries.

After a few remark by Signor FORNARI, the Abbé

BALESTRA, and the PRESIDENT, the joint resolution of the PRESIDENT, Padre MARCHIÒ, and M. HOUDIN was submitted to the Congress as follows :—

THE CONGRESS—

Considering that the teaching of the speaking deaf by the Pure Oral method should resemble as much as possible that of those who hear and speak,

*Declares—*

1. That the most natural and effectual means by which the speaking deaf may acquire the knowledge of language is the “intuitive” method, viz., that which consists in setting forth first by speech, and then by writing, the objects and the facts which are placed before the eyes of the pupils.
2. That in the first, or *maternal*, period the deaf-mute ought to be led to the observation of grammatical forms, by means of examples and of practical exercises; and that in the second period he ought to be assisted to deduce from these examples the grammatical rules, expressed with the utmost simplicity and clearness.
3. That books written with words and in forms of language known to the pupil, can be put into his hands at any time.

The resolution was carried by a large majority.

The PRESIDENT then announced that the Abbé Binaghi offered a premium for the best elementary lesson-book in French or Italian, also a premium for

one in English, to be awarded by a Special Committee at the next Congress.

The Report of the Sub-Committee upon the time and place of the next Congress having been presented, it was resolved that the next Congress should be held at Basle in August 1883, and the following members were appointed a committee to organise arrangements, in conjunction with a local committee to be formed at Basle :—

Mr. B. ST. J. ACKERS	.	Prinknash Park,
		Gloucestershire.
M. L'Abbé BALESTRA	.	Como.
M. L'Abbé BOURSE	.	Soissons.
Dr. BUXTON	.	London.
Signor FORNARI	.	Milan.
M. FRANCK	.	Paris.
M. L'Abbé GHISLANDI	.	Milan.
M. GROSSELIN	.	Paris.
M. L'Abbé GUÉRIN	.	Marseilles.
M. HOUDIN	.	Paris.
Frère HUBERT	.	St. Laurent-sur-
		Sèvre.
M. HUGENTOBLER	.	Lyons.
M. HURIOT	.	Bordeaux.
M. LA ROCHELLE	.	Paris.
M. MAGNAT	.	„
M. L'Abbé MARCHIÒ	.	Sienna.
Dr. PEET	.	New York.
M. EUGÈNE PEREIRE	.	Paris.
Frère PIERRE.	.	„

Dr. PEYRON . . .	Paris.
Cav. PINI . . .	Milan.
Herr RÖSSLER . . .	Hildesheim.
Cav. SAC. TARRA . . .	Milan.
Dr. TREIBEL . . .	Berlin.
M. LÉON VAISSE . . .	Paris.
M. VIMIN . . .	St. Étienne.
Cav. ZUCCHI . . .	Milan.

M. HOUDIN (Paris) then submitted the following resolution :—

THE CONGRESS—

Considering the want of books sufficiently elementary to help the gradual and progressive development of language,

*Recommends* —

That the teachers of the Oral system should apply themselves to the publication of special works on the subject.

Carried.

M. L'Abbé GUÉRIN (Marseilles) then submitted the following resolution to the Congress :—

THE CONGRESS—

Considering the results obtained by the numerous inquiries made concerning the deaf and dumb of every age and every condition, long after they had quitted school, who, when interrogated upon various subjects, have answered correctly with a sufficient clearness of articulation, and read the lips of their questioners with the greatest facility,

*Declares—*

- 1 That the deaf and dumb taught by the Pure Oral method do not forget after leaving school the knowledge which they have acquired there, but develop it still further by conversation and reading, which have been made so easy for them.
2. That in their conversation with speaking persons they make use exclusively of speech.
3. That speech and lip-reading, so far from being lost, are developed by practice.

Mr. ACKERS (England) said that as the question before the Congress, contained in the Abbé Guérin's resolution, was one on which he had prepared a paper, which time did not permit of being read, he wished to say that he completely agreed with the opinion expressed by the Abbé Guérin ; and, as he had found pupils taught on the Pure Oral method in a much better condition after having left school than pupils taught on other systems, he would impress upon the young teachers present, or those new to the system, that just in proportion as you allow signs to pupils in schools, so in after life will such pupils fail to express themselves intelligibly in spoken language.

On the conclusion of Mr. Ackers' address he was invited by the President to present his paper to the Congress, in order that it might be printed.

The resolution was then put and carried.



The rules for the next Congress were next read, each rule being submitted and agreed to separately.

The following resolutions were also submitted to the Congress and carried :—

THE CONGRESS—

Considering that the education of the deaf and dumb by speech has peculiar requirements ; considering also that the experience of teachers of deaf-mutes is almost unanimous,

*Declares—*

1. That the most favourable age for admitting a deaf child into a school is from eight to ten years.
2. That the school term ought to be seven years at least ; but eight years would be preferable.
3. That no teacher can effectually teach a class of more than ten children on the Pure Oral method.

THE CONGRESS—

Considering that the application of the Pure Oral method in institutions where it is not yet in active operation, to avoid the certainty of failure, should be prudent, gradual, progressive,

*Is of opinion—*

1. That the pupils newly received into the schools should form a class by themselves, where instruction should be given by speech.

2. That these pupils should be absolutely separated from others too far advanced to be instructed by speech, and whose education will be completed by signs.
3. That each year a new speaking class be established, until all the old pupils taught by signs have completed their education.

The Papers of Dr. Symes Thompson, of Dr. Buxton, and of Mr. Kinsey, (London,) were accepted by the President, for use in preparing a full report of the Congress.

Meeting adjourned at 11 A.M. till 12.30.

*Saturday Afternoon, September 11th, 1880.*

The final Session of the Congress commenced at 1 P.M., the Prefect of the Province, Signor Basile, Signor Cæsare Correnti, and other persons of distinction being present. A *resumé* of the work accomplished by the Congress was then read by Signor Fornari, after which Cav. Zucchi, in the name of the Government, took leave of the Congress, and, in an able speech, declared that Time alone would do justice to the resolutions which had been passed, and show the wisdom of the reforms which had been agreed to. He felt sure that every one would return to his own country with deep convictions of the superiority of the Pure Oral system, the universal adoption of which was so ardently to be desired.

M. FRANCK, representative of the French Government, followed with a candid avowal of his complete conversion from his old views, in favour of the manual system, to the Pure Speech method. What he had himself seen and heard in the Italian schools, combined with the lucid arguments of Signori Tarra, Guérin, and Balestra, had produced conviction in his mind not to be shaken. He would say to them in conclusion, “ *Viva la parola pura.* ”

The PRESIDENT regretted to part from his new friends so soon. He was, however, rejoiced to think that in departing they would take with them everywhere to the deaf children of their various countries the good tidings—“ You shall speak.”

Mr. ACKERS (England), through M. Vaisse, presented a written address of thanks on behalf of the English members of the Congress. It was as follows :—The English members of the Congress, assembled in Milan to deliberate upon the education of the deaf, desire to place upon record the expression of their warmest thanks for the cordiality with which they have been received by the officers and the heads of the institutions in this city, and especially to acknowledge their obligations to the PREFECT of the Province, who has presided on the occasions when the Congress has been received at the Royal Institution for the Deaf and Dumb,

To Cav. ZUCCHI, President of the Board of Directors of the Royal School,  
 ,, Cav. PINI, President of the Board of Directors  
 of the School for the Poor,

To Cav. TARRA, the devoted and eloquent President of the Congress, whose services to the cause of the education of the deaf, which he has promoted with such conspicuous success, cannot be too highly honoured,

„ M. L'Abbé BALESTRA, for his services in the same cause, by personal labours and unwearied advocacy,

„ M. L'Abbé GUÉRIN, Vice-Secretary of the French Section, whose abilities and eloquence have been so pre-eminently shown at this Congress,

„ M. HOUDIN, and all the other acting officers of the Congress, who have so ably performed their several duties; and especially to the venerable Honorary President, M. LÉON VAISSE, whose services they gratefully acknowledge (particularly for his great kindness in interpreting the proceedings for the English members), and whom they warmly congratulate on the success which has attended his labours to promote the purpose of this enthusiastic Congress.

They beg to present their tribute of respect and thanks also to

M. FRANCK, the Representative of the Minister of the Interior, of the French Government, and  
M. CLAVEAU, Inspector-General of the Charitable Institutions of France,

for their influential support and advocacy of the cause of the education of the deaf.

To all their colleagues in attendance at this Congress, they offer their hearty congratulations on the good feeling and the success which have marked this assembly of the friends of the deaf, gathered from so many of the most eminent nations in the world.

The address was then laid before the President, and Mr. ACKERS proceeded to address the meeting as follows :—

“ M. LE PRESIDENT,—In the name of the English portion of the Congress, I beg to hand you their written thanks. Let me also tender to the members of this august convention my deepest personal thanks for allowing my wife to read her paper, and for the more than kind way in which it was received. Only a mother’s love—burning to give to other deaf children the blessing her own child, who has lost its hearing, has received, viz., that of education under the pure system of speech—would have induced her to come forward and read her paper. It is the first time she has ever spoken or read in public.

“ I desire to express my deep thankfulness to Almighty God for having permitted so great an advancement in the education of the deaf, in the last eight years.

“ When, at that time, we visited some forty schools, we were told that it was of no use to visit Italy, because the pure system of speech had only recently been introduced there. What a change has taken place since then, we have now all seen for ourselves. This is mainly owing, I believe, to the burning

eloquence of M. L'Abbé Balestra, but more especially to the noble-heartedness and unwearied devotion of our President, Signor Tarra ; and I can say, from our own personal observation, that the result has been that in no country has the system been more perfectly carried out than here in Italy. Nor is it in Italy only. I hardly know whether, on the one hand, to be more thankful that France now repudiates the term 'French' as applied to the sign system, and considers it a reproach that it should be named after her, or, on the other hand, that Italy is jealous, and righteously jealous, of any one country—even Germany, where the system has flourished for more than 100 years—giving its own name to the best of all systems, that of pure speech.

“ I am, indeed, deeply thankful to think that there should be such a desire that this system should be universal, and I hope and believe that such will be to a great extent the result of this Congress, throughout the countries of the civilised world. Let me conclude by saying *Viva la parola.*”

The Rev. THOMAS GALLAUDET, D.D. for America ; M. HUGENTOBLE, for Germany ; the Abbé GUÉRIN, M. HOUDIN, and the Abbé BOUCHET, for France, and M. EKBOHRN, for Sweden, respectively returned thanks for their various countries.

SIGNOR CORRENTI, in bidding all farewell, regretted sincerely that, when he was Minister, his efforts in behalf of education for deaf-mutes had not had the full measure of real beneficial results which he

desired. He would not say good-bye, but many times *au revoir*.

SIGNOR BASILE, Prefect of the Province of Milan, in thanking the strangers present for words of sympathy and encouragement to Italy, said, if Italians were not yet fully worthy of them, they would feel animated by them to persevere in the path on which they had entered. The work of the Congress had been that of the redemption of a neglected class ; and of this work Charity had been the queen.

The PRESIDENT then declared the Congress closed.

# A P P E N D I X.





## PREFACE TO APPENDIX.

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THE following papers were written for the Congress by members of the "Society for Training Teachers of the Deaf and Diffusion of the 'German' System in the United Kingdom." A programme of questions (inserted at pp. 12-15) was issued, in January last, by the Committee of Organisation, in order to give a direct aim and limit to the papers and discussions of the Congress. The writers of the papers, having these questions before them, addressed themselves, with as much fulness as the twenty minutes' limit would allow, to those portions of the subject which they had selected. For the present publication, the Society is indebted to the kindness of that firm friend and generous supporter of the "German" system, Mr. C. E. Johnston (Messrs. W. H. Allen & Co., Waterloo Place), whose hope is that the current of popular opinion in favour of the pure system of speech, which has now set in so strongly, may, by this means, be augmented in its strength and in its sweep, so that the pleasure with which he sees the manifestations of improvement in his own son, may become the happy lot of all other parents of deaf children, whether rich or poor.

# P A P E R S

*Contributed by Members of the "Society for Training Teachers of the Deaf and Diffusion of the 'German' System in the United Kingdom."*

## I.

**M**ENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEAF UNDER THE  
"GERMAN" SYSTEM. By Mrs. ST. JOHN ACKERS.

## II.

**M**Y EXPERIENCE OF VARIOUS METHODS OF  
EDUCATING THE DEAF-BORN. By SUSANNA E. HULL.

## III.

**O**N THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF. By ARTHUR A.  
KINSEY, *Principal of Training College.*

## IV.

**A**DVANTAGES TO THE DEAF OF THE "GERMAN"  
SYSTEM IN AFTER LIFE. By B. ST. J. ACKERS, *Hon. Secretary.*

## V.

**O**N THE HEALTH OF DEAF-MUTES. By E. SYMES-  
THOMPSON, M.D., *Vice-Chairman of Committee.*

## VI.

**S**PEECH AND LIP-READING FOR THE DEAF: A  
TEACHER'S TESTIMONY TO THE "GERMAN" SYSTEM.  
By DAVID BUXTON, *Secretary.*

# MENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEAF

UNDER THE

“ GERMAN ” SYSTEM.



## A PAPER

READ AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AT MILAN,

SEPTEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>, 1880,

BY

MRS. ST. JOHN ACKERS.



## PAPER BY MRS. ST. JOHN ACKERS.

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THE subject of the Paper which I have been asked to write for this most interesting Congress is "The advantages of the articulation method over that of signs; looking at it chiefly from the point of mental development without ignoring its relation in a social point of view."

Now one of the chief objections urged against the "German" system of teaching the deaf (*i.e.* by articulation and lip-reading) by those who advocate in preference the "French" system (*i.e.* by signs and the manual alphabet), is, that the mental development of children taught under the former is far behind that of those taught under the latter. Our earnest attention having been called to the subject of the education of the deaf by the fact of our only child losing her hearing at three months old, we, in the years 1872 and 1873, most carefully visited something like forty institutions and schools for the deaf, some on the "French," some on the "German," and some on the "Combined" system, in America, on the Continent of Europe and in Great Britain,\* and

\* For further particulars see "*Vocal Speech for the Dumb*," a Paper on the education of the "Deaf and Dumb," "German" system, read April 25th, 1877, before the Society of Arts, by B. St. J. Ackers. Published by Messrs. Longmans & Co., London.

we not only saw the pupils at school, but also after they had left it—some many years. Having examined the pupils thoroughly, not only those in the higher classes, but in almost every instance working our way up through *every* class, from the lowest to the highest, we feel anxious to give our unqualified support to the “German” method, as affording to its pupils greater advantages in point of mental development than the “French” method, and I cannot help thinking that those who urge that the “German” system “dwarfs the intellect,” do so without knowing what the “German” system is. Many speak and write as if the mere development of the mechanical part of articulation constituted the “German” system. They do not now deny that deaf children can be taught to speak, but many still insist that when they do they only talk like trained parrots.

Many teachers of the “French” system too, good and earnest people as they are, anxious for the welfare of the deaf, and anxious, if possible, to take an unprejudiced view, yet both speak and write about the “German” system without having investigated, except in the most superficial way, what that system is.

As an example, one writer of great authority, the Principal of a large institution on the “French” system, who commences his remarks in an article comparing “Articulation with the manual method,”\*

\* See an Article in the American Annals, July, 1878, “*The greatest good to the greatest number*,” by I. L. Peet, LL.D.

by saying that "adequate opportunity has been afforded in connection with this institution for thorough investigation, and that a degree of interest has been felt sufficient to justify a claim to an impartial expression of opinion," yet goes on to say, "Articulation, without lip-reading, is a source of annoyance rather than convenience. Lip-reading, if generally possible, would have far the greater value of the two, as it would give the deaf-mute an idea of what was being said in his presence. *It is however a still rarer accomplishment,*" showing how entirely he fails to appreciate the fact that, with pupils taught properly on the pure "German" system, articulation, lip-reading, and writing are all simultaneous. One branch is not allowed to get ahead of the other. A pupil is taught to pronounce a word which is then explained to him, he reads it from the lips, and then has it written down, and the whole course of instruction is upon this principle. Though in the very early stages of teaching, the same amount of *ideas* may not be given to a child as might be in the same time on the "French" system, that is still no criterion that his mental powers are not being quite as much developed—*e.g.* a child taught on the "French" system, having no practice in articulation and lip-reading to occupy his time, may be in a position to begin a certain amount of geography, arithmetic, history, &c., months, or even more, before a child taught on the "German" system; but surely no one will say that therefore his mental development is



greater. The memory is exercised, the powers of observation and reasoning are cultivated, habits of attention and studiousness are being fostered quite as surely and as carefully in the "German" system pupil as in the "French"; only those powers are being devoted to the study of the language (articulate; read from the lips, and written,) of his own country, instead of to a variety of other subjects. When the language is once acquired sufficiently to enable general subjects, *i.e.*, Religious teaching, arithmetic, geography, &c., to be taught by it, those subjects are taken up and grasped by the pupils quite as quickly and infinitely more accurately than by pupils taught under the "French" system. And it must not be supposed that a long time elapses before "German" system pupils attain sufficient language to enable them to be taught general subjects through it.

To show how soon this is the case I may give one or two samples of the general knowledge attained by children of different ages at "German" system schools. One, where the teaching was rather below than above the average, for it was too poor to allow of more than five teachers to eighty pupils, children of all denominations were received, and when they had been three years at school they all knew sufficient language and lip-reading to be in a position to be taught religion by their respective Clergymen, who came in at stated hours to give them regular instruction. While we were there the Roman Catholic Priest came in, and we saw him giving a

lesson to some of his flock. Children who had been only two years at school were doing simple sums. Another class was having a geography lesson. They understood both me and the German lady who acted as interpreter to my husband, and did the sums she suggested very well. Those in the next class above, aged fourteen, were having a lesson in history not connected with their own country—which lesson they were to write out the following day.

Then again at another school, which was decidedly a good one, the children who had not been two years at school were extremely quick with mental arithmetic. The teaching was by articulation almost exclusively (not by writing), and the sums not even written but given orally. Those in their fourth year at school were conjugating a difficult German verb, and the following day we saw this same class having a lesson on some story which had only been given them to read the day before. One boy, who lost hearing at two years old, related the whole from memory capitally, and nearly all were intelligent and quick in their answers. Pupils who had not been quite five years at school had a Scripture lesson before us, which they did very well indeed. The interpreter and I examined and cross-examined them, not only in the lesson, but in general knowledge of the Bible, and their answers were most satisfactory. She examined every class in our presence by articulation, and we proved the teaching to be most thorough, for while we were examining pupils the teacher (as in many other

of the German schools we visited) left the room for some time, so that we had the examination quite to ourselves. Arithmetic and geography were very satisfactory. Composition was but very imperfect in that particular school, though even then it was far beyond what we ever found pupils of the same age able to do in institutions conducted on the "French" method, and beyond, too, what most pupils of *any age* in such establishments could have done—while in some of the other "German" system schools we saw, the composition done by pupils in the higher classes, five or six years under instruction, was exceedingly good.

I have entered into these details in order to give some idea of the mental development of the pupils we saw in "German" system schools, and may add that our interpreter, who was well acquainted with the ordinary schools of her country, more than once gave it as her opinion, after carefully examining the pupils—and I may here mention that we were most particular in examining *all* the pupils, not picked ones only but all, bad and good, dull and bright, without any exception—that "they had done better in language, exercises and general attainments than children of the same age in primary (hearing) schools, and equal to those of the middle class in Germany" and this from our own experience in other countries we fully believe to be correct.

Moreover that this view is corroborated by others who have visited "German" schools for the purpose

of investigating the education, is apparent. Professor Jørgenson, the Teacher of the Royal Institution for Deaf Mutes at Copenhagen, reported of Mr. Arnold's school at Riechen, a school where the "German" system was carried out in its most thorough manner, that the pupils of the higher grades were able to "converse with ease and fluency, using as good language as hearing people of their age. They were well versed in geography, history, mathematics, natural history, and natural philosophy. Those of the high class were reading 'Wilhelm Tell,' by Schiller, rendering each sentence into prose, thus giving evidence that they fully understood the text." They were able to converse tolerably in French\*—and it is a fact that Mr. Arnold's two sons (hearing boys) were educated at his school with the deaf children of the same age, because they could not get so good an education at any school for the hearing in their neighbourhood. There is indeed no limit to the branches of study which may be successfully followed by pupils taught on the "German" system.

Not only their own language, but foreign tongues, may be acquired with fluency, and we know cases where three languages at least were so learned.

Can a system which can produce such results be in any possible way justly accused of dwarfing the intellect or impeding mental development? No. Surely language is the great means by which the

\* See an Article in the American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb, January, 1879. "*The Natural Method.*" By D. Greenberger.

powers of the mind are developed, whether in the hearing or the deaf. And what *is* language or speech? It has been defined by one of our English writers as "the conveyance of ideas from mind to mind in logical method."

It is that great gift of God to man which enables him to hold intercourse not only with those immediately around him, but with those who would otherwise be separated from him by distance and by time; which enables him to share the thoughts and reap the benefits of the experience of the good, the noble, and the great men of past ages, and by which their influence instead of being limited to their own immediate circle is handed down to future generations. And we maintain that this precious power of language is given to the deaf far more fully under the "German" than under the "French" system. Teachers of the latter often speak as if *written* language to "French" system pupils was the equivalent, and more than the equivalent, to spoken language in "German" system pupils, forgetting that the latter, in addition to their spoken language, have more command of written language, and use it much more easily than those taught on the "French" system, being able to write it grammatically and idiomatically.

Of course we must not compare pupils from "German" system schools who have not more as the maximum than about seven years' teaching, and on an average only five years, and leave school usually from thirteen to fifteen years of age, with those

“French” system pupils in America who have generally the advantage of many more years of education, and are much older when they leave the institution. Compare the former with pupils of the same age and who have had the same number of years teaching, on the “French” system—and our experience is that whether in England, Scotland, France or America, the latter will be far behind the “German” system pupils in written language—deficient, in fact, in that very power of conveying ideas from their own minds to the minds of ordinary hearing people.

We found too among the “German” system pupils that even those who having had but a very short time at school left when their education was but very imperfect, yet, having the key to knowledge—*Language*—were able afterwards to educate themselves by means of books in the same way as hearing people, and when we saw them they had a knowledge of, and delight in, the literature of their country far beyond what we had ever seen in the most highly educated *toto-congenitals* on the “French” system.

It may not be irrelevant to notice here the facility with which in “German” system schools anyone may thoroughly test for himself the exact amount of knowledge attained by the different pupils.

A stranger can ask questions of any kind he pleases, and can judge by the answers how far the pupils are proficient in the subject; but in schools on the “French” system, on the contrary, the attempt to find out by means of language the knowledge of

the pupils is but very very unsuccessful. If the visitor be unacquainted with signs, almost all the questioning has to be done through the medium of the teacher who receives your questions, signs them to the pupils, receives back from them in signs their answers, and then interprets them to the visitor, which must surely be looked on as in itself a very unsatisfactory form of examination. And if the visitor then desires to make the examination more thorough, and, therefore resorts to writing, the language of the pupils is so limited, and they have so little power of expressing themselves in it that it is impossible to find out by their written answers what amount of knowledge they really possess.

Teachers of the "French" system do to a certain extent feel and mourn over this want of language in their pupils, as may easily be seen by many passages in their writings. Take for instance the interesting articles by Mr. Patterson, of Columbus, Ohio,\* in which he says :—"Is it then a matter of wonder if he (the deaf-mute) should on his graduation day, with diploma in hand, fall far behind his hearing brother, of say twelve years of age, in the use of language?" "He thus passes through his school career like a meteor, and lands in the world in the confusion and smoke of broken English;" and again, "the mute develops but little of real conversational skill. True he picks up enough to enable him to talk glibly in the

\* See the American Annals, 1878, January and April numbers.

sign language, but even his best talk proves to consist of few and meagre ideas which scintillate into a thousand different signs, like the beams of the sun reflected from a piece of broken mirror." "He fares even worse when it comes to talking in English."

Yet with all these admissions, I question whether any "French" system teacher thoroughly appreciates the isolation of his pupils, even the most highly-educated ones, in the hearing world, apart from their immediate friends who have learnt for their sake signs and finger talking. Written language takes so much time, and even had they command of it, is cumbersome compared with spoken language or the manual alphabet. Those hearing persons who are unaccustomed to the deaf are shy of using it, and do not like to think that the small talk of conversation is written down; and the deaf themselves are chary in producing their tablets, because it calls general attention to them and they think it is a trouble to strangers to be asked to converse in writing.

We have met grown up people who were remarkably well educated and intelligent, yet who would not attempt more than the shortest and most meagre conversation in writing, and not unfrequently some who refused to attempt any conversation, because they knew we did not understand the manual alphabet or signs—whereas persons much younger, and on account of their age less accomplished people, taught on the "German" system, were only too pleased to enter into conversation, and would go out



of their way for the sake of another chat with us. Indeed we rarely came across an instance, whether amongst poor or rich, where they did not show pleasure at conversing with us.

That they do soon learn to think in spoken language is evident from the fact that they constantly talk in their sleep.

That speech is a real delight to them, even in the early stages, when it is yet very imperfect, no one who has spent many hours with them will deny, though I question whether people who have had no opportunity of seeing them have any idea of the amount of delight which it is. As soon as even a few words are mastered the little voices may be heard all over the house, calling to parents, brothers, sisters, teachers, servants—yes, even to their animal pets—and as the child gets older the eagerness with which it will rush up to talk about anything that has interested it, the delight of pouring out its thoughts and ideas can hardly be appreciated unless seen. Over and over again one has to say “Now you must really not talk any more, or you will not finish what you are doing,” or “I am too busy, you really must not go on talking to me,”—and the usual answer back from the deaf child is “Bye-and-bye, when you are ready, may I talk to you?” As autumn evenings drew in our own little daughter has often come to her governess with the request—“Please light the candles, I want you to talk to me,” and this in her playtime, when she might have amused herself as she pleased.

Precious indeed is the gift of articulate language to a deaf child—as precious as to a hearing one. Mind I do not say it is *perfect* as in a hearing child, but I do say that though it may not be fully perfect it is of as great practical use to a deaf as to a hearing child, and such a source of intense delight that it adds immensely to the enjoyment of its life—in fact that it becomes a part of that life—that the expressions of joy, of sorrow, of astonishment or amusement, burst forth as naturally from the lips of a deaf child that has been taught on the pure “German” system, as from a hearing one.

In conclusion then let me only add that we, who as parents daily witness this in the case of our own darling child—we who have seen the inestimable boon that it is to all classes, and the practical use that it is above all to the poor—earnestly trust that the result of this International Congress will be to extend to the deaf, far and wide, the benefits of the “German” system, so that they may no longer have withheld from them in any country that most precious gift—the use of speech.

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MY EXPERIENCE OF VARIOUS METHODS  
OF  
EDUCATING THE DEAF-BORN.



A P A P E R

READ AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AT MILAN,

SEPTEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup> & 8<sup>TH</sup>, 1880,

BY

SUSANNA E. HULL.



## MY EXPERIENCE OF VARIOUS METHODS OF EDUCATING THE DEAF-BORN.

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GENTLEMEN,—It is in no spirit of egotism that I venture to bring before you my own experience in various methods of educating the deaf; but in the hope that, in so illustrious an assembly, the convictions of an earnest worker will have due weight.

During the seventeen years I have devoted to the deaf, I have had no thought but their best welfare, I have now no desire stronger than to lead others to my own persuasion, that this is best secured by educating them according to the “German” method, by vocal speech, and lip-reading.

When I began my work in 1863, I had never seen a deaf-born child. I was ignorant that so vast a number of our fellow beings were deprived of the sense of hearing, and I had no idea that so many institutions existed for the amelioration of their condition. All I then knew had been gathered from a short account of Laura Bridgman and James Mitchell, in *Chambers' Magazine*. Very early in life my interest had been aroused by a vivid realization of the nobleness of Dr. Howe's effort to restore Laura Bridgman to social life; but no opportunity of following in his footsteps opened to me till the year of

which I speak. Then I heard through my father, a London physician, of the miserable condition of a young lady, who by a succession of fevers had been left lame, maimed, deaf, and almost blind. No one could be found to educate this unhappy child, and my father was appealed to for advice and assistance. The slumbering desire of my heart awoke, and I gained permission to attempt the task. My pupil retained a few words, chiefly nouns, and my first attention was bent on increasing her store of these. Ignorant as I then was of the science of phonetics, it was no light work to improve her pronunciation and increase her vocabulary: often a week was spent in gaining one new word, her imperfect sight added to my difficulties. The two-handed alphabet was the means of communication on my side; but vocal speech was the natural medium on hers. Slow as the progress was at first, undoubted success crowned my efforts. I abandoned my formerly chosen profession, and gave myself wholly to the education of the deaf. I now heard of the institutions already established, and visited one or two in England in the hope of gaining fresh ideas for my work. I found, however, that my pupils were already in advance of those in the public institutions so far as language was concerned. But I was assured that whatever I had accomplished with children, like my first pupils, deaf from fever, I could do nothing for those born deaf without signs,—conventional signs, as used in the institutions.

I believed the dictum of those so much more experienced than myself, and asked how to gain that knowledge. I was told that it was impossible without myself entering an institution. Nothing then remained but to teach *without* signs, or form them for myself. This to some extent I did, though I dropped them as soon as the spelled form had been learned.

I enter thus minutely into my first steps to show how utterly unprejudiced I was to any system, how ready to adopt anything that could be to the advantage of my pupils.

With regard to signs, I must add, that, on looking back, I date a decline in my success in teaching language, from the time of the introduction of those signs. With the signs "deaf-mutisms" in composition made their appearance: errors which had been unknown before. I am the more persuaded that these "deaf-mutisms" were due to the signs, because looking now at the question from the opposite point of view, I mark a steady increase of success in teaching language, and a disappearance of "deaf-mutisms," step by step as I have laid aside signs. I am certain signs will always injure language, and spoken language is as natural to the deaf as to ourselves when it is, as with other children, the only means of communication presented to them.

Two deaf-born sisters now came to me and, believing as I have been taught, that they were dumb! I made no attempt to gain vocal speech. Twelve months passed, and rumours reached me that in



France and Germany the deaf-born were taught to speak: that they had voices. Now, indeed, my interest was awakened. I had set before myself the goal of restoring my deaf children to home-life and society: what could more fully do this than vocal speech added to the language of books and writing?

Inquiry brought to my knowledge the Jewish Deaf and Dumb Home, then just opened in London by the generosity of the De Rothschild family. This was early in 1868. I applied to the director for instruction in the system; but could not consent to the conditions and restrictions under which alone he offered it to me. I was again thrown back on my own resources. I resolved that my pupils should speak with their voices, but how was I to accomplish my end?

Professor Melville Bell had shortly before published his Visible Speech Alphabet. I had already gained a knowledge of phonetics on another system under his instruction, and I now turned to Visible Speech. I studied the symbols, I saw they were adapted to my purpose. I went to Professor Bell and told him my conviction that here was a channel for conveying speech to the deaf-born. He entered at once into my plan, and his son, now Professor Graham Bell (inventor of the telephone), commenced teaching the system in my school.

Previous to this experiment, I had made a short trial of the old English plan of teaching sounds taught by Wallis and Braidwood, but the efforts of the teacher met with no success. Not so those of Professor Bell

and his son. My pupils learned to speak vocally ; those who had been born deaf even better than those who had become so through fever, and they could also read some few sentences from my lips. Here was the failure of my method at this time. I had speech, but I had not lip-reading, except as an accomplishment. This arose from the facts that Professor Bell strongly disbelieved in the possibility of lip-reading, and that I had noticed signs accompanying the dictated questions and sentences in the only school I had visited, which I then believed to have been on the pure " German " system. I therefore judged it right to continue the combined system into which I had fallen with my old pupils, but fresh ones were not allowed to acquire the finger alphabet. I was anxious, waiting, and watching.

Visitors from America and supporters of the London German school blamed my slowness to adopt lip-reading, but none could answer my doubts or convince me that *that* was the better plan.

At last Miss Rogers, of the Clarke Institution, Massachusetts, came, and gave me fresh hope. She told me facts from her own knowledge and observation and her faith kindled mine. It was not long before I went to America to see for myself, and from that time I steadily approached nearer and nearer to the pure " German " system I now teach, without finger-talking, without phonetic symbols, without signs of any kind whatsoever, and I rejoice every day more and more in witnessing its happy results.

With regard to teaching by phonetic symbols, such as those of Visible Speech, or any other written character, I would express a similar statement to that I made about signs.

Looking back I see them to be more hindrances than helps. By their use the thought becomes clothed in that of the written form, in place of the spoken sound, a process of the translation from writing to speech takes place, whereas the opposite is the natural course.

It was this discovery that made me abandon Visible Speech, and a fuller study of the subject has deepened the axiom in my mind "From speech and lip-reading to writing; have the word pronounced correctly first and then give the written form, but never reverse the process." The system I now follow is almost as much in advance of that I taught by the aid of Visible Speech as that was in advance of the "Combined" System. I have therefore to prove how I gained my present convictions, and in doing so I hope to meet the difficulties of some of those who are honestly opposing what they believe to be an impossible system. I can feel for their doubts and prejudices. I full well remember my own fears; and I also can say I never yielded a step save from conviction, founded on facts seen and realised for myself, or by those in whom I could place implicit trust.

The belief that the voice of the deaf must be harsh and unnatural is one of the greatest obstacles we have to overcome in arguing for the "German" system. In England many people have known or

heard of deaf persons educated under the method introduced by Wallis and Braidwood, whose voices are most harsh and disagreeable, and erroneously supposing this to be the same as the "German" system, they blame the "German" for a failure which is in truth the natural result of a degenerated "Combined" system into which signs and finger-talking have been introduced.

As I originally taught them, my pupils were examples of this. Those who heard them speak condemned their voices as harsh and unnatural. Taught now by the "German" system, the same people say they are not unpleasant and are easy to be understood. This I attribute to the constant use of the voice, together with my own increased skill and watchfulness in teaching.

So long as I taught articulation only as an accomplishment, writing or finger-talking being the more frequent means of converse, my pupils only used their voices when addressing me, and in certain of their studies, consequently, the greater part of the day the vocal organs were lying idle. Now we know that when from disease or disuse any organ has ceased to have its full natural play, the only way to restore vitality is constant persistent exercise of that organ under intelligent guidance and in imitation of the rightful movements and use of such organs.

When deaf children are ignorantly stopped from uttering sounds, because those about them cannot understand what they try to say, their vocal organs are necessarily in this condition of inaction and

consequent deterioration of power. What they need is constant use and diligent, careful drill. With this their voices soon become, if not quite natural, at least not disagreeable.

Constant watchfulness and skill on the part of the teacher, is essential, as well as practice on the part of the pupil. The teacher has, indeed, to become as an ear to the child, doing the work of correcting minute inaccuracies of pronunciation, tone, or quality, which the power of hearing does for others. He must be on the alert in the play-hour as much as in school-time to seize upon errors and correct them; and, to do this to the greatest advantage, he must have not only a thorough knowledge of the mechanism of speech, but also an intimate acquaintance with the anatomy of the organs whose play he seeks to direct.

A "Combined" system, in depriving the pupil of this required practice and constant care, injures the tone of the voice, and, as the deaf are only too ready to think themselves the objects of detractive remarks, persons so taught will soon find out that their speech is peculiar, and be driven to use their voices less, to depend on silent methods more, and to prefer the society of the deaf.

Another drawback to the use of the "Combined" system is, that in treating articulation as a separate study much valuable time is lost to gain an end which, as we have shown, will be futile after all. It is not only that such a number of minutes are absolutely deducted from the school-time, but that those minutes

are not turned to the best account, even for the subject to which they are devoted.

A child taught by the "German" system, constantly using his voice, and constantly noticing the mouths of others, acquires unconsciously many sounds that in study-hours had been difficulties. This is not the case with one taught on the "Combined" system. The study-hour over, all thought and use of sound is set aside; the eye glancing constantly at the hand, never looks up to the mouth. Both mind and organs, so far as vocal speech are concerned, remain passive till the next lesson comes round, when the old ground has to be gone over with ever-increasing tediousness to both teacher and pupil. Even though a certain amount of lip-reading be employed in a "Combined" system, the result will be the same.

Neither articulation nor lip-reading, taught as separate studies, will ever come easily and naturally to the pupil. There will ever be an amount of constraint in the use of them, and when the teacher finds that these methods, taught as he teaches them, are slower and more irksome than the finger alphabet, signs, or writing, he will gradually employ what he supposes to be the slower method less and less. The argument will be—"After all, our great object is to convey knowledge, and it cannot be wrong to give the preference to that method which is the readiest and most certain."

It was thus in my experience, and I have no doubt it would be so with all.

It was this question of conveying the largest amount of knowledge that held me back so long from lip-reading, and it is this which still holds back many English teachers.

My difficulties concerning lip-reading were first removed by the success I witnessed in the Northampton Institution, Massachusetts, conducted by my friend Miss Rogers. I saw that with her pupils, lip-reading did indeed take the place of hearing, and I felt it was the means I had so long sought, by which the deaf would be most fully restored to home and social life. Experience has more than confirmed this conclusion. Not only have I found lip-reading as rapid and certain as finger-talking, I have found it much more so. In using the fingers we are apt to shorten the sentence, or at least to clip it of those exclamations and poetic idioms that make the life of language. This is a great loss to the pupil, for it puts into his hands a poorer language than he finds in books, and when signs are added and still farther mutilate and distort the language, books, such as hearing children of like age delight in, become too often absolutely sealed writings.

We must remember that our great object is to give our pupils language, for this is the parent and offspring of thought, the only channel by which mind can meet mind freely and profitably. Everything that tends to increase language widens this channel. Lip-reading is no doubt the best means to this end. In talking naturally to our pupils, we employ every-day

language—idioms, exclamations, metaphors. They learn to think in language as we think; moreover, they are constantly picking up forms of expression without absolute teaching; and the trained eye of a lip-reader is indeed to him in the place of a hearing ear.

This desire to impart a large amount of “knowledge,” taken as an aim from the beginning, instead of an end to be looked forward to throughout the course, acts with equal harm on the “German” system itself.

It is urged that it is “impossible to do without natural signs,” that “Written language previous to speech is indispensable,” that to forbid these is “to make the commencement of the ‘German’ course *a waste of time.*” Why? “Because, without these, ‘knowledge’ must wait till the pupils have learned to talk as we do.”

Now we admit that the purest “German” system teachers point, perform actions, and use facial expression: without these, to teach at all would be impossible; but these are not signs, they are only passing illustrations which never usurp the place of the spoken word. We also use Writing as a valuable exercise in fixing the form of language, after it has been acquired through lip-reading, but never as a substitute for speech. We maintain that both teacher and pupil must fix a steadfast eye on spoken language as their single aim; that to introduce any other into the field till that has been acquired, is simply to impede the



pupil's progress, by casting a stumbling block in his way.

In maintaining this, we only follow the course of nature.

The child who hears learns first, in its mother's arms, to imitate the sounds she speaks, and gradually forms a daily increasing vocabulary. It would be the height of folly to propose to instruct an infant in physical laws, history, or grammar, the moment it commenced to utter sounds.

No! Years must elapse before school is thought of and regular instruction begun. Why then must "knowledge" be insisted on with the deaf, before correct speech has been acquired?

We are answered,—Because the deaf are no longer infants when they come to us—others of their age are learning at school, and to keep them back for a lengthened time, in order to teach articulation, is to deprive them of a portion of the already too short time for study.

To this we reply,—We deny, altogether, that the "German" system does shorten the school term. The time required for distinct speech, with children over six years, is not more than twelve months at the longest. In less time, with bright children, we are ready to commence language lessons,—such as a writer of the Sign school has pronounced "impossible in so short a time!"

At the end of this short time we are possessed of a perfectly natural means of communication on both

sides, there is nothing to unlearn, only a straight path to pursue, knowing no barrier, and opening ever more and more into fresh fields of knowledge. Again, it must be remembered that that year has not been wasted. The acquirement of lip-reading *essentially depends* on the accurate observation of the minute differences of vowel sounds; and these are much more easily acquired by the child, before he is burdened with a multitude of combinations, and the added task of thought for the meaning of the sounds. Writing, too, has advanced step by step with the sounds; and ease and readiness are gained in this before it is required for language lessons.

Kindergarten occupations in my own school fill up part of this time, and exactness of observation and imitation are thus acquired unconsciously by the child, but with the most beneficial results.

Last, but not least, there have been the constant gymnastic exercises, so essential to develop the child's physical frame, and counteract that tendency to lung disease, distortion of the shoulders, or ungainly carriage, so observable in sign-taught deaf-mutes.

I know this sounds improbable in the ears of many: that there are some who will say, "but I have tried, and found that speech sounds will not come so rapidly." So I thought and said, once; but under the able instruction of Mr. Kinsey, the Principal of our English Training College, and by witnessing the admirable results of his teaching in our Model School, I have learned where I fell short.

It was I that failed, not the System ! I have found that with stronger faith in it, utter surrender of the mistaken desire for speedy knowledge, and more patient drill in the first elements of sound, failure cannot come. Now, I never despair of any sound or of any pupil, though peculiarity of mental power or the effects of illness may make some children slower than others.

My former failure I attribute to the marvellous instinct of children, by which they gauge the mental capabilities of their instructor.

Is the teacher half-hearted, doubtful of success, disheartened by defeat,—the child has no courage to repeat his efforts, no will to overcome difficulties. Is the teacher confident, bright, undaunted,—the child is equally unwearied, and the much coveted acquirement comes, as the well-earned reward to both. I believe there is no deaf child who may not be taught to speak, and to speak well ; unless there be malformation, or added defect of brain power.

But does this apply equally to the rich and poor ? Is it possible to provide this education for all classes alike ? Others will enter more fully into this question. I will only say that there is no reason it should not be. There is every reason to make such an education of greater value to the poorer classes than to the rich. These have Home and ample means to fall back upon ; those have no future provision but their own labour, and employment is far more likely to be found by those who can converse as other men do, than by those

who require an interpreter, or demand an out-of-the-way means of communication.

But to make this feasible, one thing is indispensable, that is, well trained, duly qualified teachers.

More hindrances have been thrown in the path of the "German" system, by the well-meant efforts of persons but partially acquainted with it, than by the opposition of all the sign-schools together. Opposers simply disbelieve what they have not proved for themselves; but supporters, unacquainted with the system in its entirety, and failing for want of a more perfect knowledge, dishonour the system they profess, in the eyes of the world.

The establishment, in every country of the globe, of Training Colleges for Teachers, (such as that we now have in England) would be a most valuable result of our present Congress.

Many teachers are required, because our System demands many schools, consisting of small bands of scholars. Whenever possible, tutors and governesses should be employed to give home education to our deaf children, as to those who hear.

When we look at the home life, the social life, and, above all, the religious life of the deaf, at how much greater advantage are those who can freely converse with others by speech and lip-reading, compared with the disciples of the sign language, who must necessarily confine their intercourse within a circle,—the limited circle,—of those who have learned the same mode of converse with themselves.

Pupils of the "German" system can talk with brothers and sisters in the familiar language of the nursery, and take part, later in life, in the fireside chat or the discussion of passing topics. The special portion of their school-life over, they can be instructed by teachers unacquainted with the system, can receive Divine Truth from the lips of the ordinary pastor, and be solaced by his words in the hours of sickness and death.

Such, Gentlemen, is the conclusion to which experience has led me. I gave up "Signs" because I found they injured language; I gave up the "Combined" system because it injured the voice, as well as language; I gave up "Vocal Symbols" because they reversed the process of nature, and hindered ready command of speech. But I *rest* in the plan I now pursue,—with perfect satisfaction.

It is my earnest hope that the conclusion of this Congress will see the "German" system placed in the fore-front, as the best and most *natural* method of educating the Deaf.

SUSANNA E. HULL,

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# ON THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF.



## A P A P E R

WRITTEN FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AT MILAN,

SEPTEMBER, 1880,

BY

ARTHUR A. KINSEY.



## ON THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF.

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THE days in which a deaf and dumb person was looked upon as a being little, if at all, removed from the condition of the inferior animal world, unworthy of notice, and incapable of instruction or appreciation of Divine Truth, have happily long since passed away.

We of the present era of civilisation reflect with mournful feelings, perhaps not unmingled altogether with surprise, at the distressing ignorance displayed by the Ancients in their treatment of that afflicted class for whose benefit we are here present assembled.

The deaf and “dumb” are capable of most of the attainments within the reach of hearing persons ; in fact I may say all, with the sole exception of those which depend upon a clear perception and accurate analysis of sound, and we so far understand the exact physical status of even those born deaf, that many of us accustom ourselves to speak of them, and rightly so, as deaf only, not as deaf and dumb..

For centuries past the fact has been demonstrated that dumbness is not a legitimate consequence of deafness, but it is to be regretted that this knowledge has so very slowly produced those natural and important results which should have been the outcome, and



furthermore that such knowledge has so rarely been acted upon in a systematic manner, by those engaged in considering a means of education.

I do not propose to trouble you with the past history of the education of the deaf, but rather to deal with its prospective development upon the "German" system. (See Question 3, Section II. on *Teaching*.)

Before proceeding further I should propose to classify those for whom we are labouring, according to their physical and mental condition. I shall ask your consent to placing the simply deaf on the one side, and those deaf and otherwise afflicted on the other; in this latter class I include those suffering from defective brain power, imperfect vision, extreme constitutional weakness, or serious malformation of the vocal and articulating organs.

The first division it is proposed to instruct on the "German" system, the second on the "French."

At the present time the special schools in Germany do not reject those suffering other serious ailments in addition to deafness. All the deaf are admitted to the advantages of instruction regardless of other defect being unhappily present.

But the question which I desire to present to you is,—Should this continue?

Where time, money, and teaching power are limited, where pupils are in excess of school accommodation at the special institutions, would it not be wiser to teach those merely deaf upon the "German" system—those who would really profit by such instruc-

tion and put it to real practical and valuable use in after life—than to keep back such pupils for the sake of doubly afflicted ones, who, despite all effort and skill, would only be advanced to a certain attainment in spoken language of trifling and most uncertain value?

I beg you, however, not to assume that I am here proposing to educate only the bright and clever deaf in the oral language of their country—not at all.

We will accept the dull, the stupid, the obstinate—aye, even those whose case of apparent mental deficiency might well look hopeless—doubting not that a large percentage of such pupils would remain and become among the brightest triumphs of the “German” system.

The children that this method is incompetent to deal with should be cared for by other means not requiring so much capability on the part of the afflicted.

I beg now to direct your attention to the Question (No. 5, Section II.) whether the two states of congenital and acquired deafness cause any difference in the matter of teaching.

My opinion and experience is, that in either case, where the deafness is total or nearly so, and supposing the accidental deafness to have occurred in infancy, no difference whatever is observable.

I am fully aware that many teachers on the “French” method have held the view (and may do so now) that a *toto-congenital* deaf child cannot be

taught to use spoken language at all, much less as its sole means of intercourse with the hearing world. This, however, is an erroneous idea altogether, as most of you here well know, and I confidently ask you to support me in the statement, that such an opinion on the part of those teachers is based upon their inattention to what the "German" system has done the past hundred years, and is doing so pre-eminently well in the present day.

This false belief I take to have arisen from the fact that certain teachers, unacquainted with the practice of the "German" method, but being forced or induced to attempt teaching pupils to talk, have selected semi-mute and semi-deaf children upon whom to experiment, then finding, even in these cases, great difficulty in the work, and little success rewarding their labours, owing entirely to their want of knowledge and skill, have jumped to the conclusion that the instruction of the deaf-born in speech would be utterly impossible, where the practice had proved so difficult in the case of pupils partially deaf, or those who had acquired a certain amount of spoken language before loss of hearing.

It has been asked (Question 2, Section II.), What is the best age to admit a deaf child to school? This is a matter which depends very much on the constitution of the child.

Children, as we all know, differ much. This difference most frequently arising from the treatment and example exhibited in their homes. If it be

necessary to fix a time, I should not think it advisable to limit it too exactly, but allow some margin for variations in temperament, constitution, or capacity,—say from six to nine years of age.

In my allusion to the home life of children, I am reminded that parents or guardians of deaf children might do much for them in the way of preparation, if they did but know how. I beg respectfully to suggest to this learned assembly that certain instructions might be prepared and printed for circulation among such persons, for their guidance in the management of afflicted children.

Such a course may already be adopted here and there in the vicinity of some well-known institution, but I am not aware whether it is a general custom.

Although a deaf child may not be admitted to school until a certain age, there is no reason whatever that suitable teaching should not be attempted beforehand.

This must perforce be of the simplest nature, and in the direction of training the child's powers of observation and attention, of accustoming it to watch the motions of the speaker's face and mouth, not in attempting any knowledge of letters.

Many deaf children come to school able to articulate a few monosyllabic words more or less perfectly, but as we find in the majority of cases the ability is of the less perfect order, I cannot recommend at present that parents should be advised to attempt teaching articulation, unless they themselves are in some way

intimate with the process pursued in the schools. At the same time, I most earnestly urge that the voice of the deaf in the early years should in no way be checked, but rather that the child should in every way be encouraged to use it, after a natural manner and as frequently as possible.

In speaking of preliminary teaching, I naturally exclude all signs on the part of those surrounding the child; gestures as to a hearing one may be permitted, such as pointing, beckoning, and the interpretation of the emotions generally by means of facial expression.

Having here alluded to signs and gestures, I am led to the consideration of their use in conjunction with articulation.

This proceeding has, so to speak, been systematized in certain quarters, and is known as the "Combined" method. The theory of the method may be good. The practice of it, "German" system teachers know to be radically and irremediably bad.

Its supporters profess to select the best parts of two totally incompatible systems and to amalgamate them.

But what do they mean "by the best part"? Why, so far as the "German" system goes, merely articulation, which the "Combined" method professors imperfectly teach as an accomplishment little better than useless; this is tacked on to a language of signs, eked out by dactylology and script.

Under the "Combined" method we find the pupils being taught, as under the "French," an

artificial language of signs, arbitrary, methodical, and conventional, as they are differently termed.

This sign language is opposed in its construction to any language here represented. Whether any model exists at all on which it has been founded, I cannot say.

The sign language is perfectly unknown except to its own professors and experts, and this fact has been appreciated to the extent that a certain amount of language is conveyed to their pupils by means of writing and spelling on the fingers for the furtherance of communication with the outside world ; added to this in the " Combined " schools the pupil is taught during a fractional part of his day's tuition to articulate more or less intelligibly some few words and short phrases.

Just as Writing and Dactylology are entirely subservient to the sign language, so is Articulation, only in a far greater degree, subservient to the other three.

The result of the mixture is simply this. The pupil has a ready, though very imperfect and chance-like means of communication with his fellow pupils and teachers—he has a scanty and difficult method of intercourse with the hearing world, by means of writing and on some occasions the manual alphabet—whilst his articulation serves at times, when he utters by request the few imperfect words at his doubtful command, to surprise and not infrequently pain the unlearned of his hearers, damaging very seriously the " German " system. For they think to themselves

“if this be teaching the deaf to speak, 'twere better they remained silent.”

Unfortunately, every dabbler in articulation chooses to imagine that he or she is working on the lines of that great and good method, though not one of them apparently can bring himself to the little honesty of adopting even its name.

Now, to consider what constitutes the “German” system, or in the words of the question “The Pure Oral Method” (See Question 2, Section III. On *Methods*).

Its principles are simple and inflexible. It says you are to look on your deaf child from the first as on a hearing one, the difference in teaching spoken language being that you must, in the former case, appeal to the mind and brain through the eye instead of the ear.

Now, spoken language, it is needless to say, is not addressed by the hands and fingers, but by the vocal organs, therefore all the “German” system teachers’ attention is concentrated upon these, more particularly in the early years of education. I do not propose to trouble you for a moment with the process of such instruction, but merely to answer briefly and broadly what constitutes the “German” method.

It is this. All knowledge is conveyed from teacher to pupil by the spoken word, received by the pupil through the eye, and acknowledged by him in return also by the spoken word.

Written language follows and accompanies such

teaching precisely as it would do in a school for the hearing. The spoken word first—its written equivalent afterwards. Hands and fingers in a “German” school are used to wield easily a pen or pencil in a manner familiar to the outer world—not to motion and gesticulate with in a way but barely intelligible to one in every 1,700 of the population of a country.

Voices are used as destined by the Good Creator, not silenced by the prejudiced ignorance of man.

\* \* \* \*

In answer to Question 4, Section III., I reply:—The natural way of educating a hearing child is the natural way of educating a deaf one, allowing, of course, the substitution of another sense for the one lost.

From a theoretical point of view the most natural and effectual way of teaching a child its native language would be to use that, and nothing else.

The procedure and known success of the “German” method proves this to be the case practically so far as the deaf are concerned.

The “French” and “Combined” teachers, however, appear to think otherwise, for they interpose a means of communication which is a close secret to all but themselves and their pupils, and sometimes the secret is of such a ponderous and complex nature that they themselves are puzzled by its ramifications, for notwithstanding the universality which is claimed for signs, it is the fact that both teachers and pupils of one institution when brought into contact with



those of another, are often at fault to understand their respective signs. There is, in fact, no codified system of signs common to all institutions and countries.

The objection already taken to signs seems to apply with nearly equal force to a method of recent years adopted in some American institutions of representing written language by certain symbols instead of the Roman character.

Professor Graham Bell (of the Boston University, U.S.A.), whose fame is now world-wide as the inventor of the Telephone, having devoted some of his valuable time to the education of the deaf, thought to render the task of teaching them to speak easier by adapting his father's most ingenious and scientific system of Visible Speech to that end; but I contend, since the art of teaching the born deaf to speak was first discovered down to the present day, nothing has ever accomplished it except the process of the pupil's watching, feeling, and imitating the motions made by the vocal and articulating organs of the teacher.

Do not let instructors deceive themselves—this it is and this alone, which develops articulation. The manner of graphically representing the sound will be regulated by the nationality of the teacher.

Let him employ such letters from the first as his pupils will have to deal with in the mastery of their language, and not be lured away by a system of symbols, having no kind of currency in the written language of any civilised community.

Symbols and signs are metals absolutely base and

worthless, when tested by the communication currency of the hearing world.

The ingenuity of man does certainly seem to run riot in its dealing with the education of the deaf.

Any way rather than a natural one, seems to be the principle most persistently adopted in certain quarters.

From the day when the illustrious Abbé de l'Épée elaborated his system of artificial signs with exact provision made for every change of a highly inflected language down to the introduction of Whipple's Natural Alphabet and Bell's Visible Speech, the educational path of the deaf appears plentifully bestrewn with obstacles.

The practical German mind, however, having been fortunately guided in the first instance to a right beginning, has never wavered in its course of directing the education of the deaf in an easy and natural channel leading straight to the desired goal.

It has been asked (Question 6, Section II.) how many pupils may be thoroughly taught upon the "German" method. The answer is,—During the preliminary process of developing articulation and lip-reading, so as to establish a ready means of communication between teacher and pupils, the number of the latter should certainly be limited to ten, and even here hard, active, and skilful work will unquestionably be required, to accomplish satisfactory results.

When this ready means of intercourse has been attained, and the pupils are fairly launched on their way to idiomatic language, then the numbers of pupils

to a teacher may be enlarged, care, of course, being taken to grade them, as it is termed ; towards the last stage of instruction a teacher may lecture to a class of as many pupils as can conveniently read from his lips. Defining the number somewhat, I may mention that I have several times in Germany seen audiences of seventy and upwards listening with their eyes and profiting by the discourses which were addressed to them, and in one case, as I well remember, by a pastor, an absolute stranger to all but four of his congregation : for it happened to be a confirmation service.

And here I am led to the consideration of the length of time necessary to educate the deaf. (Question 4, Section II.) I think a fair margin should be allowed in fixing a period, more particularly for the duller pupils.

And I would like to ask,—Why should the deaf be granted a less time in which to complete their education than their far more fortunate hearing fellow creatures ? Yet such is the case in some countries, notably my own. Worse than this, we have not one single State school for the deaf throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain.

At least eight years should be allowed for a deaf child's education in a state or charitably supported school, with an extra two years freely granted whenever deemed necessary by those responsible for the teaching.

Now, in these eight or ten years of education it may be asked (Question 8, Section III.), What amount

of knowledge in different branches of study would be gained? Such an interrogatory is somewhat difficult to meet, depending as it does so much on the matter and manner of the instruction afforded.

European schools, for instance, do not aspire to such a very extensive standard of acquirements as do those of the United States of America; but on the other hand, if they do not profess to instruct their classes in nearly all the branches of a collegiate course, they do at least expect their pupils at the end of eight years instruction to be on a par with hearing companions a year or so junior.

The "German" system works to the end that the finished scholar leaves with a real command of both idiomatic and written language, a sound knowledge of subjects usually comprised in a secondary course, and with the potentiality of acquiring further knowledge in any branch of the sciences that may be desired or requisite.

Now, with your kind permission, I should wish to say a few words upon the constitution and working plan of a school for the deaf. (Question 1, Section II.)

I propose, in the first instance, to decrease very materially the numbers usually found in such schools, the huge "Internats,"—"Exile" schools as they have been not unjustly termed.

For many reasons, which I have not the space to enter upon in this paper, the deaf should be segregated as much as possible. At present, in the

majority of instances, the reverse is the practice. This question seems so very important that I gladly leave it in abler hands, trusting that it may be fully discussed during the course of this most important Congress.

A school should, at the outside, comprise thirty pupils, with three teachers and three class-rooms.

The construction and arrangement of buildings forms no part of my paper, but I much desire to call attention to the necessity of plenty of light in the class-room, which should be so arranged as to fall on the teacher's face. I refer here to the earlier stages of instruction, which should always be made as simple as possible. "From the easy to the difficult"; "From the known to the unknown," are golden maxims of the "German" method. Following out this principle, as the pupil gradually acquires the power of lip-reading under favourable conditions, we proceed to introduce such difficulties as will have to be encountered in the outside world. Amongst other matters, beards are sometimes supposed to present an obstacle to lip-reading. If this were so, then most of the teachers in Germany that I know have one and all cleared the obstacle most successfully, even when carrying the additional penalty of a heavy moustache.

I also strongly recommend in class-teaching (See Question 2, Section I.) a circular arrangement of desks and seats, enabling every member of the class to be in a position to lip-read from any point in the circle; thus, no matter who speaks in the class, every

one can watch the speaker's mouth. In only two schools of the many I have stayed at have I noticed such a practice.

During the first year, each pupil requires a considerable amount of individual teaching, for it is in this stage that the all important work of establishing a ready and precise method of communication between teacher and taught is to be accomplished. This being done, instruction gradually settles down to ordinary class-teaching.

The question whether pupils should usually sit or stand (Question 8, Section II.) is a matter entirely dependent on the lesson and stage of instruction. Too much sitting is bad, so likewise is too much standing. In the early years of a deaf child's instruction the best plan appears to me to continually vary the position—now sitting and writing in a book, now standing and speaking, writing at the board, walking to objects, pointing to them, carrying them, naming them, and so on. I can call to mind a school for the deaf in Austria, of considerable reputation, where the (to me) barbarous practice was in force of making the pupils and teachers stand all through the morning and afternoon session, unless engaged in a drawing lesson.

Having alluded to Drawing (See Question 7, Section III.), I should wish to enter a protest against drawing being made an important and integral part of the education of the deaf.

Drawing teaches them no part of language, and is in no way to be considered as an essential part of an education which will fit them for intercourse with the hearing world. Every hour spent on drawing lessons in school is so much taken from that instruction which is of vital importance.

At the same time, I am the last to counsel that the deaf should be deprived of any amusement good for them. Let, then, drawing be considered as such, or as an accomplishment, and I rest content.

Great good is considered likely to accrue to the deaf in some institutions, by the teaching of drawing systematically, as it is supposed that the pupils on leaving may learn and follow the businesses of engraving, lithography and the like. I would wish to call your earnest attention to the fact that such work tends to an excessive strain on the eyesight; and this being so, the deaf, already doubly dependent on the sense of vision, should be jealously guarded against any pursuit likely to interfere with its effective use.

I cannot but think that drawing lessons in some institutions on the "German" system are merely an excuse for a relief-hour. If this be so, I do not object so much, as it may be often convenient towards the close of the day's work to engage a class in drawing, in consequence of the teacher's absence. There are, however, certain institutions where the visitor's attention is specially directed to the excellence of the pupils' drawing. My contention is that such children's power

of drawing is far in advance of their power of using or understanding language.

The pupils of the late lamented Inspector Arnold, of Riehen, would never have attained to their excellent proficiency in speech had he considered that drawing heads from the antique was one of the principal subjects of a deaf child's education.

Having just previously identified a class with its teacher, I should desire to point out the importance (which I feel so many of my more experienced colleagues will readily admit) of not restricting a class to any one instructor (Question 7, Section II.), but allowing it to receive teaching from each member of the educational staff of the establishment. This practice is very essential for the acquirement of good lip-reading. Visitors and others should also be pressed into the service of speaking to the pupils and listening to them in return.

One master, no doubt, should be responsible for the general progress of a class throughout a certain period—a year for instance ; but need not devote every hour of the teaching day to his own class. Change is most beneficial for both pupil and instructor, and is often a relief to the latter.

A grave mistake exists in certain schools where attempts have been made to teach articulation, that such instruction is very exhausting in its nature, and tends to impairment of health in the teacher ; in fact, I was gravely told by an instructor in a large internat



on the other side of the Atlantic, that he had wrecked his constitution by such teaching in the short space of five years.

When we reflect on the multiples of five years during which well-known teachers in Germany have been imparting spoken language to a succession of pupils, without injury to health, we must conclude either that the constitution of the teacher was in fault, or his system of instruction; and I am bound to say I feel convinced it was the latter.

With regard to the question of text books, manuals, and the fitting time for teaching grammar and other subjects (Questions 5 and 6, Section III.) I should desire to express the opinion that good text books are very requisite, especially in the present large institutions. Personally, I should prefer to see a teacher dispense with them, and instruct from his own knowledge and memory, but this would only be possible in small schools and classes. Then as to the teaching of grammar, &c., the first object of the teacher of the deaf on the "German" system is to construct a medium of communication between himself and his pupils; having succeeded in this, the next immediate object is to place them in possession of language, both spoken and written. When this is really accomplished it will be time to introduce special branches of study, as religion, history, geography, natural history, and systematic arithmetic; finally a knowledge of the rules regulating the construction

of language itself, viz., grammar; but if this latter were never given in school it would matter very little, so long as language had been correctly taught in the first instance.

To answer beforehand a question which I anticipate from sign system teachers, as to the time when a sufficiency of language will be acquired to enable the special branches to be proceeded with; also to meet the probable objection, that religious instruction should not be delayed a single day,—I may point out that language with the hearing is day by day growing as our stock of ideas increases, and we learn new words and phrases to express them. This happens from our earliest childhood to the zenith of our intellectual manhood. When, as children yet at the mother's knee, we both listened to, talked of and comprehended a vast amount of information on many subjects, more particularly religious ones, these subjects were not classified, but simply included under the one head of "language". So too with the deaf taught on the "German" system.

In the process of instructing in language a very large amount of general knowledge is conveyed in the first three years.

If in the course of a lesson we speak of a leaf, a shrub, a plant, varieties of flowers and of trees, explain and make comparisons, again show the heavens, the stars, the moon, the sun, clouds, sky; direct attention to the elements, and explain that God

is the Creator of all,—we do not dignify such instruction by speaking of it as “Religion,” “Botany,” and “Astronomy,”—but merely as Language.

Referring to the study of Grammar, I cannot refrain from calling your attention to the noteworthy fact that the country where the deaf are habitually taught to use spoken language is in the unhappy possession of a Grammar which may fairly be considered as beyond the grasp of an ordinary intellect.

In conclusion, I think the first and last duty of a teacher of the deaf is (where time is in any sense an object) to place his pupil in full communication with the hearing world, both by means of spoken language and that of books and journals.

Let special studies be cared for, after this great and all-important work has been accomplished. Let the deaf pupil on leaving school show the value and completeness of his training by following unaided, or with the assistance of some hearing companion, any congenial branch of study or science which time had forbidden him to indulge in, during his apprenticeship at spoken and written language.

These remarks are addressed, not at my “German” system brothers, but at those engaged on other methods in my mind far less satisfactory, and I think are not uncalled for, when I remember the words addressed by the head of a National College for the deaf and dumb, viz., that he “had felt diffident about conferring a degree on a young man upon

his graduating, who was not competent to construct a grammatically correct sentence in his own native language."

I trust and believe most sincerely that the efforts put forth at this Congress will be productive of great good to a class which merits the fullest sympathies of the world at large, and whose affliction is distinctly within the range of man's ability to alleviate.

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CASTLE BAR HILL,

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ADVANTAGES TO THE DEAF

OF THE

“GERMAN” SYSTEM

IN AFTER LIFE



A PAPER

WRITTEN FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AT MILAN,

SEPTEMBER, 1880,

BY

B. ST. J ACKERS.



## PAPER BY B. ST. J. ACKERS.

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IN the first place let me thank those who have called together this most important International Congress for having allowed me, although not a teacher, to contribute a paper in connection with the Education of the Deaf. To those to whom I am unknown it may be well to state that I have never been connected with the profession nor have I ever been in any way pecuniarily interested in any school or institution. The interest awakened in my wife and myself was through an only child having lost hearing when very young. Before that we had, in common, alas, with the great bulk of mankind, never devoted any special attention to the condition or education of the deaf. Finding how bitterly opposed the advocates of speech and signs were to each other in England, we determined to see for ourselves in other countries how far the advantages of the one system surpassed the other beyond the school career and after institution life had been ended; for the "German" system had not been long enough at work in England for the effect on its pupils in after life to be apparent.

In order to avoid the chance of confusion I define the terms used in this paper as follows:—

"German" system.—That which is based on articulation and lip-reading.



“French” system.—That which is based on a system of signs.

“Combined” system.—That which is based on a system of signs with a certain amount of articulation taught as an accomplishment.

It may be well to note here that when, in 1872, we set out on our tour of inspection, which included England, America, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, France and Scotland in the order named, we naturally leant to the system most prevalent in our country, viz.: the “French” system of signs.

From the above it may seem not unnatural that I should be asked to give the result of our enquiries as an answer to the first of the special questions in the programme of your Congress, viz. :—

“Will the deaf mutes taught by articulation forget when they leave school the chief part of the learning acquired there? And will they, when conversing with hearing people, prefer using gestures and written language to articulation? If this reproach has any truth in it, to what must this state of things be attributed, and by what means can it be remedied?”

My answer is that the deaf, *toto-congenital* as well as others, who have been properly “taught by articulation” do not “forget, when they leave the school, the chief part of the learning acquired there,” nor do they “prefer using gestures and written language to articulation.” You will notice

that I have emphasized the word “by”—“*by* articulation.” On this rests the whole difference between the pure “German” system, with its excellent results; and the many degrees of the “Oral,” or “Articulation” system, which is really the “Combined” method, with its disappointing results. It is this teaching articulation instead of teaching *by* articulation—teaching articulation, *i.e.*, as an extra, as a subject, as a lesson, instead of making articulation the channel through which all other knowledge should be imparted—which is so often mistaken for the pure “German,” or Speaking, system.

I have examined many schools on so-called “Oral” systems, or which have professed to give all the advantages to be obtained from the “German” system, where articulation was taught only half an hour a day; and we saw some schools where this “extra” lesson was given only on alternate days.

Compare this with all the knowledge the school-room can afford imparted through articulation, and all intercourse at play and at meals carried on in the same way, and you will then see that to those taught under the “German” system speech and lip-reading are their natural language, the language of their country, of hearing persons and of themselves. What wonder then that they should use it in after life? The wonder, indeed, would be if they did not. Whereas those to whom articulation has only been an extra, will never treat it as their natural language. It will be as a foreign language so taught is to

hearing children. What wonder then that the deaf, thus instructed, should in after life prefer to be ranked as deaf-mutes and use gestures or any other method rather than the lame, halting speech, which to them has always been unpleasant—a task—and in which they have never felt at home. Add to which, under these systems, lip-reading, or the art of understanding the speech of others, is little cared for.

The “reproach” mentioned in your question to which this Paper is an answer is wholly undeserved by the “German” system and those educated under it, but is richly merited and applies with irresistible force to the many degrees of “Oral” and articulating methods which have signs or manual alphabet as their base, and which are practised by those inimical to the system in its purity. Teachers and advocates of these systems bring the failure of their pupils to keep up, or to use, speech in after life as an argument against much time in the education of the deaf being devoted to speech; whereas when rightly acquired it is the most precious gift the deaf can receive, as proved by the fortunate pupils of good “German” system schools.

As a striking instance of the above may be mentioned the case of the School Board for London who have yielded, except in one school, to their Inspector’s views, as published by him in 1879, as follows:—  
 “During thirty years of practice on both systems I have found that articulation and lip-reading can only be used as the sole medium of communication for

educational purposes in a very few instances—not more than five per cent.”

This well-known English teacher has thus, throughout the schools for the poor in the metropolis of England, caused the practical rejection of the “German” system, which he does not understand, has never tried, and the results of which he has had no opportunity of seeing, because his own system of “Oral” teaching has, as he tells the world, so signally failed.

And now, with your kind permission, I purpose to illustrate the foregoing by a few examples taken from among the many we saw for ourselves of persons who had been educated at schools and institutions for the deaf in various countries. We saw lads and girls, young men and young women, middle-aged men and middle-aged women. We saw them as apprentices, workmen, masters, or those who had no profession, either at home, at their work, in their houses of business or in society.

In our intercourse with teachers of the “French” and “Combined” systems we had been repeatedly assured that all the successful cases we should meet with of old pupils able to converse and lip-read would be those who had partial hearing or who had learned to speak before loss of hearing—in fact, the semi-mute or the semi-deaf. To prove the truth or otherwise of this almost universal assertion, we visited *only toto-congenital* cases; and, to make the test more severe, we took care never to enquire where we could

see any old deaf pupils until we were ready to go and see them, lest they should have been prepared to receive us. This again we did to meet objections urged by teachers of the "French" and "Combined" systems. We are glad for the sake of the incredulous that we took these precautions, though, as we went on and found how unnecessary they were, we often felt ashamed of ourselves for having been so suspicious. The contrast was most marked between those taught under the "German" system, with whom we conversed by word of mouth, and those who had been taught under the "French" system, unable to converse with us who were unacquainted with signs and the manual alphabet, and whose attempts at writing were most difficult and in many cases impossible to understand owing to the language of their country being to them a foreign language. That the language of their country will ever be thus, even to the most highly educated, if taught on the inverted order of the sign language, will be admitted by even the staunchest supporters of those systems. Dr. E. M. Gallaudet acknowledged this to me, and said that I might mention that even one so highly gifted by nature and education as his own mother never, even in later years, could be said to have lost in her writings all "deaf-mutisms."

The result of our personal intercourse with the deaf who had been taught under the "German" system was encouraging beyond anything we had dared to hope; true, we never met with anyone whom

we could not have told from a hearing person, but we saw men and women of all ranks, and under a great variety of circumstances, and we were able in all cases to understand their speech and to be understood in return by their reading from our lips. We saw, in fact, persons able to get through the world comfortably by means of speech and lip-reading. For instance, amongst those we visited were some apprentices ; one was not a good specimen, for he stammered, as did also the hearing members of his family, yet we could understand him, and he readily read from our lips. His master said, quite crossly, in reply to the delight we expressed at the lad being able to make himself understood by speech (it was one of the first cases we had seen), "He speaks a great deal too much ; he is always talking with his fellow apprentice."

Take another instance. We saw a dressmaker who had the leading business in one of the smaller German capitals. She was rather shy of talking about herself at our first interview. This came to the knowledge of her lover, who begged we would pay his betrothed another visit, which we did, escorted by him. The meeting was most amusing : he took her roundly to task for having appeared to so little advantage in the morning ; and, after some lively sparring—rattled off between them just as though both, instead of one, had been hearing persons—we chimed in, and had a long and very pleasant conversation with the deaf dressmaker. She assured us, and this was confirmed by enquiries

we made, that in following her occupation the only means of communication between herself and those who employed her were articulation and lip-reading; she never had recourse to writing; finger-talking and signs she did not understand.

A happier, brighter and more contented woman than this dressmaker no hearing person could have been.

We were much struck with the marked contrast between those able to use speech and those unable to do so. Those able to use speech were so much more like hearing persons, so much more able to mix with others and hold their own in the world. They also seemed so much brighter, happier and more intellectual. This applies to those who had been at school an equal time, but not taught on the same system, and not to those exceptional cases of bright intellect and long school culture which are to be seen in some of the American sign schools, who have enjoyed two, three, and even four times as much school life as the majority of pupils on the "German" system are allowed.

Now we will pass to an instance or two to shew that it is not necessary that the deaf should remain long at school, however desirable it may be that they should do so, nor is it by any means necessary that they should have exceptional ability in order to use and keep up speech in after life. We were assured by the director of a large school, where there was an average of sixteen pupils to each teacher, that he had

had pupils only able to remain four years at school, and whose speech he feared would have been lost, who had come to see him in after years, not only with their speech not lost, but much improved ; and this we saw for ourselves in many instances. Nor is this really to be wondered at, when it is remembered that those taught on this system have but one means of communication, and that is language.

The following case is inserted here to shew that the education given on the "German" system is good, is valued, and made good use of in after life. We saw a poor woman living with an aunt. She had left school some twelve years, and lived in a part of Germany where one of the many *patois* prevailing in that country was spoken. When we first arrived at the house the aunt was out, and we saw the deaf woman, and an old woman who said she lived in the same house. On our enquiring from her if she were in the habit of talking to her deaf companion, and whether the latter understood her well, she answered both questions in the affirmative, and we soon saw for ourselves that this was the case, as they talked together easily in our presence. By-and-by the aunt came in, a regular old gossip, and chattered away as fast as possible, and when talking to her niece spoke with equal rapidity, yet the latter appeared to have no difficulty in understanding her. My wife, though a very fair German scholar, was several times at fault, by reason of the dialect spoken, as was even the German lady who acted as my interpreter ; more



than once, when such was the case, they asked the deaf niece, who interpreted the *patois*—indeed she seemed equally at home in speaking German to the ladies and the *patois* to those around her. She was a seamstress, was able to go out to houses and take her orders ; was quite independent, going marketing for herself, and doing all the shopping for her aunt, and shewed us, with evident satisfaction, her book-keeping and accounts. A hearing woman in the same neighbourhood, who kept a small linendraper's shop, and was mother of a deaf girl, told us she had never known any of the old pupils who had not kept up their speech after they had left school, though she was acquainted with many, and had had good opportunities of judging.

Not to weary you with cases I will only add one more of the very many one might mention, viz. that of a working tailor. The man was not in when we went to see him. He was in court giving evidence against a thief who had stolen a hat from his master's shop. We had not to wait long, however, before he returned ; and very pleased his master was that through his deaf workman's testimony the thief had been convicted. We found that this *toto-congenital* deaf workman had given all his evidence *vivâ voce* in open court, and had stood the test of examination and cross-examination without any other means of communication being used than word of mouth.

The cases hitherto mentioned have been all taken

from one class of life, because I have been most anxious that it should be appreciated how specially good and practical the "German" system is for the poor.

We saw, however, as before mentioned, persons of varied stations in life. We met ladies in society. We saw merchants who were able to carry on their business by word of mouth and correspondence. And in several cases we met with persons taught on this system who were not only proficient in their own tongue, but had acquired sufficient knowledge of other languages to enable them to travel for business or pleasure in foreign countries. It will be seen that our journeyings led us to visit many of all classes who had left school, some many years, and the result of our investigations conclusively proved—I am speaking of the majority, and not of exceptional cases on either side—

1st. That even the *toto-congenital* deaf taught by articulation do not forget when they leave school the chief part of the learning acquired there.

2nd. That they do not, when conversing with hearing or deaf people, prefer using gestures and written language to articulation.

3rd. That the reproach mentioned in the question to which this paper is an answer only applies to pupils and teachers of spurious and imperfect forms of articulation teaching, not to the pure "German" system.

In conclusion, let me urge that this system is of

such practical value to the poor, and to those who have to make their way in after life, that it cannot be too generally adopted.

To the rich, who can be kept at school as long as desired, who can continue their education after having left school, who have no necessity for battling with life, who are not desirous of mixing much in general society, and who have those around them who will for their sakes learn their peculiar means of communication, such as signs and the manual alphabet, it matters comparatively little on what method they are taught. Amongst the great variety of systems we have seen, there is not one incapable, under such exceptional circumstances, of turning out pupils happy and intellectual, though dumb as well as deaf, and, therefore, much restricted in their intercourse with the great mass of mankind.

Those, however, who are not rich form the vast majority of the deaf, and, therefore, the vast majority of schools should be on the system best suited to their needs. That the "German" is that system, giving as it does to the deaf not only speech but the power to use and understand speech, I trust this paper, whatever its defects, may have helped to prove. If my wife and I have not had the special training which the writers of most of the other papers have had, at least we have had no prejudices of education, profession or caste to get rid of; prejudices which are often met with in the minds of those who, on subjects outside their profession, have clear

and impartial judgment. We, at any rate, had nothing to gain or lose by our investigations, except the truth. Our object was to find—(1) What was best for own child. (2) What was best for the majority of the deaf.

We came to no doubtful conclusion, and so sure were we of the result, that we started “The Society for Training Teachers of the Deaf and for the Diffusion of the ‘German’ System in the United Kingdom,” of which I have the honour to be the Honorary Secretary, and whose Acting Secretary and Principal are writers of papers at this great Congress. True, things move slowly in England; the State gives us no help, and we have lately had a succession of bad harvests, but we will not rest until in our own land at least the deaf poor have the blessing of the system best suited to their wants.

May the result of this International Congress be, as I feel very hopeful that it will, the spreading, by GOD’S blessing, of a like benefit far and wide throughout the civilized countries of the world.

B. ST. JOHN ACKERS.

PRINKNASH PARK,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.



ON THE HEALTH OF DEAF-MUTES.



A P A P E R

WRITTEN FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AT MILAN,

SEPTEMBER, 1880,

BY

E. SYMES THOMPSON, M.D.



## ON THE HEALTH OF DEAF-MUTES.

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WE are assembled here in the hope of mitigating that greatest of earthly trials, total deafness. That we may gain from the experience of the past some suggestions for future guidance, I propose to call your attention to the question, whether the health of Deaf-Mutes differs materially from that of others, and by what means we may improve it. (See Programme, Section IV., Question 4.)

Even to those who have no special knowledge of this subject, it cannot be surprising that the health of the deaf and dumb is in general far from satisfactory.

Let us inquire into the reasons for this. The congenitally deaf, whether from consanguinity of parents or not, frequently inherit besides deafness other constitutional defects. Many are strumous: many suffer in early life from rickets (rachitis), epilepsy, water on the brain (hydrocephalus), or other head affections. They are also specially prone to diseases of the scalp, to a discharge from the ear, giving rise to the peculiar and offensive odour, so often noticed in school-rooms where they are taught. They are also very subject to chilblains. And many, who show none of these defects, grow up stunted and feeble, and die in early manhood of consumption, or some other deteriorative disorder.



Those who become deaf in infancy or early childhood,—in consequence of scarlet fever, measles, meningitis, convulsions connected with dentition, or other acute diseases,—owe their defective hearing in most cases, less perhaps to the special virulence of the disease than, to the vulnerability or feebleness of their constitution.

We have, therefore, in both classes of cases an antecedent probability that the deaf will be found to be below the average in health and longevity.

A hearing and speaking child is able to explain causes of discomfort as they arise, and thus get them removed. With a deaf child, an unusually observant parent or attendant is needed to detect and remedy such ailments before they have had time to lead to established evil. As the eye, when devoid of sensation, becomes inflamed from the lodgment, beneath the lids, of irritants which would not be allowed to remain for a moment in a healthy eye, so the child, unable to explain what is wrong, is subject to the hurtful influence, until real injury results.

We come now to consider the question—What circumstances are there (besides those just alluded to) peculiar to the state of deaf-mutism that tend to the deterioration of health, or to the development of disease?

This subject needs to be looked at with some detail.

First and foremost we must consider the differences as regards the respiratory act.

Deaf-mutes breathe, as a rule, mainly through the open mouth. The nose thus becomes useless for respiratory and almost useless for olfactory purposes, and thus the appearance of the countenance is entirely altered. I will not now describe the changes that result from mouth-breathing, to the ear itself, further than to say that there is in consequence a closure of the eustachian tube, with secondary injury of the tympanic cavity.

One object of the sense of smell is to give warning of the presence of noxious matters in the air ; and on the principle that "Fore-warned is fore-armed," we are thus, if breathing be conducted through the nose and the nasal membrane is in healthy action, able to escape from or to remove the evil influences around.

The sense of smell is rarely active in deaf-mutes. Both taste and smell are sometimes destroyed by the same illness that destroys the hearing, and in mouth-breathers these two senses are always deficient.

Air entering directly through the mouth into the respiratory passages is apt to be too dry, for it is one of the objects of the complicated arrangements of the nose to supply to the inspired air that degree of aqueous saturation best suited for respiration.

The infractions of the nasal organs serve also to catch the suspended particles of solid matter, which, if allowed to enter the bronchial tubes, set up irritation, and, as will be shown, are a fertile source of chronic disease.

The contact of dry unsifted air irritates the

pharyngeal mucous membrane, and sets up chronic catarrh, which spreads upwards to the nose and downwards to the windpipe and lung.

From the nasal it extends to the ophthalmic mucous membrane, and from the pharynx through the eustachian tube to the tympanum. Granular sore throat, tumefaction of the nasal membrane, conjunctivitis and tympanic obstructions are hence developed.

We will now inquire what are the special pulmonary defects most often met with among deaf-mutes.

Dr. Buxton, whose large experience is well known, informs me that among adult deaf-mutes chronic cough, with copious secretion, is exceedingly common. The sound of the cough is usually hoarse and abnormal, and the expectoration is removed with some difficulty.

It has not been my lot to take medical charge of any institution for the deaf, but in a large out-patient practice at two of our London Metropolitan hospitals, a considerable number of deaf-mutes have come under my care.

At the Brompton Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest the number of deaf-mutes has been considerable. Out of a total of 20,000 patients seen by me at the hospital, the proportion of deaf-mutes was much larger, probably two or three times as large as among an almost equal number of out-patients at a General Hospital (King's College Hospital), with which I was connected.

It is pretty generally admitted that the deaf are specially prone to pulmonary diseases, and that much of the high mortality of deaf-mutes is traceable to disorders of the respiratory and circulatory systems: and it might therefore be naturally expected that a Chest Hospital would afford a better opportunity of investigating such cases than could be furnished by a General Hospital.

The cases seen varied of course in character, but a considerable number of them (I greatly regret my inability to furnish Statistics on this subject) were cases of chronic bronchial disease analogous to that found among millers, stonemasons, and those engaged in other dusty occupations, and I think it probable that further observations will lead to the conclusion that the mouth breathing, to which allusion has been made, is instrumental in the production of this state. Particles of dust, which should have been kept from the lungs by the nasal membrane, have gained uncontested entrance to the bronchial tubes, and have set up chronic change, leading eventually to destructive disease.

The cases were almost without exception marked by deterioration, the pulmonary disorder being due to defective vitality, and chronic atomic tissue change.

These deaf patients had, for the most part, grown up under circumstances little calculated to develop a healthy constitution, and in many cases they fell victims to disease which would not have proved fatal to those of average constitutional power and vitality.

The flat chest, narrow shoulders, imperfectly expanded lungs might be traced in many of these poor people to a combination of unfavourable circumstances, such as inherited feebleness, defective hygiene, neglected physical and mental training, and insufficient food. What wonder then that they failed to hold their own against so many evil influences ?

In hospital practice I never met with a patient educated under the "German" system. This cannot be a matter of surprise, as the "German" system has not hitherto extended in England among the poor.

May we not trust that this reproach will be speedily removed, now that evidence is attained amongst us proving conclusively the vast superiority of this system, not only for the rich who can command long-continued and highly-skilled training, but especially for the poor ? By this means the poor are fitted to earn their own living, and to take their place in the race of life amongst those who can hear as well as speak, and with whom the deaf are no longer debarred from holding converse, and entering almost on equal terms upon the fight for existence.

We pass now to our third inquiry. Do deaf-mutes die young ?

Mr. J. Copplestone, in his work "How to educate the Deaf and Dumb," writes :—"In all returns of deaf and dumb the numbers above the age of fifteen rapidly diminish." "This," says the Census Report, "can be accounted for only by their mortality being at a higher rate than that of the general population."

“ Notwithstanding this statement we have not yet met with any Assurance Table in which a higher premium is required for the assurance of deaf-mutes than for other persons. Whether this may be considered as indicative of the want of accurate information on the subject, or whether deaf-mutes are treated as exceptional cases and are specially arranged for, we cannot determine. The fact has, however, for many years been well established, that disease and decline are the natural results of that constant restless irritation from an imprisoned mind which arrests healthy development of mind and body.”

It is not to be wondered at that no Assurance Table should be accessible, for the number of deaf-mutes desiring to assure their lives must be too limited to suggest the need for a special Table for their benefit. It may be mentioned, however, that in one instance brought under my notice a higher premium was charged, on the ground, mainly, that a greater liability to street accidents existed for those whose ears could not warn them of approaching danger.

In America, where the railway lines are to a large extent unprotected by railings, the deaths from accident among the deaf and dumb are in excess of the English mortality.

On referring to the Census Returns (1871) we find that 40 per cent. of the deaf and dumb are between the ages of five years and twenty ; 50 per cent. between twenty and sixty ; and 7 per cent. from sixty upwards. After the age of forty-five a rapid diminution occurs

in the number ; and the number of those who attain the age of seventy is very small.

The late Dr. Peet, of New York, writing for an American publication, says :—“ The difference against the health of deaf and dumb children and youths, as compared with the general population of the same ages, is but too distinctly accounted for by the prevalence of pulmonary disease among the former, the result of the scrofulous habit which characterises so many of them ; and which is often the remote or immediate cause of deafness. The period of greatest danger being once passed, they often attain a good old age. Taking seventy deaths (in a ‘ sign ’ school), sixty-seven were from disease ; of these twenty-five were by pulmonary disease.”

The Maryland Census of 1850 showed that the deaths by consumption, between the ages of ten and thirty, were 136 out of 1,071, only one sixth ; while among the deaf and dumb of the same ages their proportion appears to be more than one third.

Professor Porter, of Hartford, United States, ascertained that of eighty-four deaths by disease among the former pupils of that school, of which the causes were known, forty-one were from consumption or kindred diseases.

Sir William Wyld states that of 217 deaths of deaf-mutes in Ireland, seventy-seven were from consumption.

The Rev. Samuel Smith, of S. Saviour’s Church for the Deaf and Dumb, in Oxford Street, London, writes to me (25th March, 1880) as follows :—“ In reply to your inquiries I am able to state as the result

of my observation during nearly twenty-five years' work amongst the adult deaf and dumb of London, that very few attain any great age, and that a very large proportion of those who have died have been taken away by disease of the lungs. I know of no public statistics of the subject, and I do not keep any special records of such cases, though if I had time to go over my diaries, I could, perhaps, obtain a good deal of information on the subject."

Having shown that the state of Deaf-mutism tends to the deterioration of health, the development of diseases of the lungs, and the shortening of life, we will now endeavour to show that methods by which the free use of the lungs, by varied and regulated speech, may be secured, should be encouraged in every way, not for educational purposes alone, but to raise the standard of health among these afflicted ones, and thus render their infirmity a useful stimulant to the activity of body and mind.

Dr. Müller remarks, that, as many of the deaf at the age of from fourteen to sixteen become consumptive, exercise of the vocal organs is of advantage to expand and strengthen the chest.

Mr. Kinsey, principal of the Training College for Teachers of the Deaf on the "German" system, at Ealing, says that lung disease may in all probability be avoided by teaching articulation at an early age, and adds that if the lungs have been idle from birth, and mouth respiration indulged in up to the tenth year, "the seeds of mischief are already producing fruit."



The late Mr. Arnold, of Riehen, was of the same opinion, and he cites the case of a pupil troubled with difficult and painful respiration, which disappeared after a few months' exercise in speech.

Mr. Schönthiel, Head Master of the Jews' Home for the Deaf and Dumb, in London, mentions that by means of the "German" system they are saved from premature death, brought on through insufficient action of the lungs.

Dr. Hirsch, of Rotterdam, points out that "the articulated language presents the greatest advantages. It expands the chest, brightens the intellect, and the countenances of those who speak are much nobler than of those who express themselves only by signs."

Mr. J. Burton Hotchkiss, now a Professor in the National College for Deaf-Mutes at Washington, U.S.A., himself a semi-mute, wrote in July, 1870 :—  
 "The mute being deprived of his voice, loses the strengthening effect a constant use of it has upon the lungs, and is thereby rendered more liable to lung disease. Hence health, strength, and long life, depend upon the cultivation of the voice. After my first year at Hartford, I was several times attacked by lung fever and kindred complaints, and now, with the knowledge that the years bring, I attribute it in a great degree to an almost total disuse of my voice, and a failure to substitute any exercise that would have the same expanding action upon the lungs. And I find that I have never enjoyed better health than since my resumption of speech, but it is perhaps too much

to attribute it all to this cause. And yet I cannot but believe that, so far as my lungs are concerned, I do not ascribe too much to a happy habit into which I have fallen of reading aloud to myself some pages daily. This habit I carried to excess while in college, and no doubt afforded some amusement to the professors by my oratorical declamations, but it was almost the sole means by which I preserved my speech during the years I was surrounded by deaf mutes only. I would say to all semi-mutes, 'Go ye, and do likewise!'" And yet I am told by Mr. Kinsey, that this Mr. Hotchkiss would not, when he saw him a few years ago, learn to lip-read, possibly because there was no one to teach him, and he shirked the tedious business of trying to teach himself.

As evidence of improved vitality in those being taught by the "oral" system it is said that "whereas chilblains were common to all the inmates of the Glasgow Institution in the winter season, *now* they only attack those who are being taught by the 'Silent' system; the other pupils, although similarly circumstanced as to food, &c., remaining free from this annoyance."

In a pamphlet on "Teaching the Dumb to Speak," by James Patterson Cassells, M.D., M.R.C.S., London, he writes:—"It develops the brain and the intellect, awakens the emotional elements of our nature, manifesting this in the increased love of home, and in the *intelligent expression of the child's face*; gives to the person so taught a degree of status nearly equal to his more fortunate

fellows, because his friends and companions have no new language to learn in order to communicate with him ; gives him also the ability of earning his living in the ordinary marts of labour, and, therefore, a greater degree of independence—of gaining knowledge by increased and unfettered intercourse with those who associate with him ; domesticates him ; improves his general health and hearing, if there be any of it left ; *and, lastly, it lessens the chance of affections of the lungs, and thereby prolongs life.*”

Dr. Buxton informs me :—“ Among the very large number of deaf persons whom I have known, including some who were pupils in Braidwood’s Private Academy at Hackney, before the London Asylum was founded, and some of Dr. Watson’s earliest pupils in that institution, the longest-lived amongst them have been (1) Those who had been taught articulation on the Braidwood-Watson principle with so much success as to be able to use it regularly in their own home circles ; and (2) Those whose domestic relationship had been with the hearing, not the deaf, and whose whole life was marked and impressed by (so to speak) hearing influences, not deaf ones.”

Speaking at the Conference of Head Masters, held in London, in July, 1877, Mr. Howard, Head Master of the Yorkshire Institution, Doncaster, said :—“ As regards the health, he believed that the play given to the lungs in exercising the voice, and the increased amount of oxygenation thereby engendered, gave to the blood of the pupil a stimulus which promoted its

more vigorous circulation, and tended to ward off many of the complaints to which the deaf and dumb are liable. Since the introduction of oral gymnastics, *i.e.*, exercises of the voice, shouting, &c., into the Doncaster Institution, the number of cases of chilblain, which previously often partook of the nature of large open sores, had considerably diminished."

In a work on the Deaf and Dumb by the late Mr. Joseph Toynbee, F.R.S., published in London, in 1858, we read:—"The influence of the use of the vocal organs upon the general health has, I think, scarcely been sufficiently considered in the education of the deaf and dumb. Sir H. Holland, with his usual acuteness, has placed the subject in its full light. He says, 'Might not more be done in practice towards the prevention of pulmonary diseases, as well as for the improvement of the general health, by expressly exercising the organs of respiration, that is, by practising according to some method, those actions of the body, through which the chest is alternately in part filled or emptied of air? Though suggestions to this effect occur in some of our best works on consumption, as well as in the writings of certain Continental physicians, they have hitherto had less than their due influence, and the principle as such, is little recognised or brought into general application. In truth, common usage takes, for the most part, a directly opposite course, and under the notion or pretext of quiet, seeks to repress all direct exercise of this important function in those who are presumed to

have a tendency to pulmonary disorders.' To this, I may be allowed to add, in reference to the deaf and dumb, that in those cases where the organs of speech are not used, *i.e.* where the lungs and the muscles of the chest and heart are not duly exercised by the act of articulation, the general health always suffers."

"Sous le rapport hygiénique, l'articulation a encore l'avantage de contribuer beaucoup au fonctionnement régulier des poumons, et son influence est salubre sur les enfans sourds-muets, qui souvent ont un temperament plus au moins lymphatique." *Address of M. Houdin, President, Congrès National (re Deaf and Dumb) de Lyon, Septembre 28ième, 1879.*

Again, Professor Lewis B. Monroe stated at the Convention of Teachers of Visible Speech, U.S.A., 1874, "That pulmonary complaints were very common among deaf-mutes. He saw every reason why this should be so, when he considered that they were deprived of an important incentive to the use of the lungs—the power of speech. Few persons who were laughing, singing, and shouting all day long were conscious that these very exercises of the lungs were among the most healthful forms of physical exercise that could be practised. He would give such physical training as would expand the chest and give vigour to the respiratory muscles. . . . "

He remarked that:—"Very many deaf-mutes were awkward in their movements. He was convinced that this awkwardness was, to a greater or less extent, an expression of inward misproportion. There was an

incomplete and one side development of mind which manifested itself in corresponding eccentric motions. One means of bringing about a right mental balance would be the practice of graceful physical exercises. The child should be taught to stand and sit properly, and to carry the body in a becoming manner."

The exercises best fitted for the development of the chest, throat, and nasal passages, are all very simple if properly and regularly attended to.

For lung exercise in school, large india-rubber bladders are used, having wooden mouth-pieces fitted to them; these bladders are to be inflated at first with six or eight expirations of breath; finally, as the capacity of the lungs becomes larger, by stronger and more continued use of the respiratory muscles. The bladder is inflated by one, or at most two expirations: preliminary exercises are made use of in some cases of extreme weakness of respiratory power, *e.g.* blowing feathers, pieces of paper off the hand, &c.; also puffing at a light worsted ball suspended by a string. These latter exercises (except the ball) may be used for nasal expiration.

The best considered course of calisthenics possible for a deaf-mute taught by the "French" system, though of unquestionable value, would yet be far inferior to the practice of articulation, &c. under the "German" system.

It is the constant use of the larynx in speaking, shouting and laughing, necessitating a much larger amount of respiratory action, which is so beneficial. *Vocalisation*, calisthenics, drill, and vigorous out-door

games directed by the teacher or assistants (out of school) are most important factors in the success of the "German" system.

In "French" system schools, the children are usually left while at play to find games for themselves, and are apt to huddle together in the playground, playing at inane games of their own devising. If the teacher is present, he probably silences any noises they may make.

In a "German" school, on the other hand, it is deemed an essential part of the curriculum, that the teacher should superintend the games, and interest the children in them, until they are able to play unaided such games as are usual in other schools; and instead of discouraging the use of the voice, shouting and laughing are encouraged, for the value of such exercises is recognised in giving power and flexibility to the respiratory organs, and in aiding vocalisation by the free use of the voice.

Such exercises serve, too, to promote the healthy development of the chest. Thus deaf children are soon taught to play with nearly as much spirit and success as their hearing brothers.

It is sufficiently apparent from the preceding statements, how essential it is that the deaf should have the advantage of—

I. *Calisthenic exercises*, to give grace and ease to their movements.

II. *Gymnastic exercises*, systematically arranged and supervised, to develop the various parts of the muscular system, and,

III. Best of all, *vigorous out-door games*, such as are appreciated by all English youths, and which serve to give that pluck and hardihood which is an essential part of true manliness. Among the Germans, the gymnasium takes the place of the cricket field: the Germans are generally superior to the English in gymnastic exercises, but markedly inferior in games and sports, or in any trial of strength, such as running, walking, swimming and rowing.

For the deaf it is even more important than for others, that recreation time should be spent as much as possible in the open air, that every advantage may be secured for those who, as has been shown in the earlier part of this paper, are unequally "handicapped" in the race of life.

From the foregoing remarks, supported as they are by the opinions of men whose experience qualifies them to speak, and whose names must command the respect of the Congress, but one conclusion can be drawn, viz.: that there are maladies and morbid conditions to which deaf-mutes are especially prone, calling for special therapeutic and hygienic precautions (Section IV. Question 4), and that, foremost amongst the conditions calculated to improve the health and prolong life, must be placed the removal of the *dumbness*, and the practice of the vocal and respiratory organs, as secured under the best "German" system modes of education.

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SPEECH AND LIP-READING  
FOR THE DEAF.

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A TEACHER'S TESTIMONY  
TO THE  
“GERMAN” SYSTEM.

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A PAPER

WRITTEN FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AT MILAN.

SEPTEMBER, 1880,

BY

DAVID BUXTON.



## SPEECH AND LIP-READING FOR THE DEAF.



To bring before an assembly like the present one any contribution to its Proceedings which shall be of real practical value, it is necessary that one should speak only of what he knows, what he has seen with his own eyes, or has actually accomplished with his own labours. Within these limits I hope to restrict myself.

Before I come to speak of the experience gained during that service to the Deaf which has absorbed two-thirds of my whole life, it may be expected that I should say something on a subject to which I am known to have given some attention—the Statistics of Deafness. (See *Special Question 5*, end of Programme.)

I wish I had anything new to tell you, on this head. But the present time is most inopportune. The numbering of the people of Great Britain and Ireland occurs decennially, in the first year of every decade. The last enumeration took place nine years ago; the next will take place a few months hence. Not till 1851 was any “Census of the Deaf and Dumb” ever taken in Great Britain at all. Since then it has been made at ten-year intervals; and the fourth such Census is to be taken in the spring of the

ensuing year. In the meantime, whatever may be our opinions and our apprehensions, neither "those who hope the best nor those who fear the worst" (into which two classes a great English author [Swift] said the whole human race might be divided) can obtain any adequate or justificatory evidence to sanction conclusions differing from those based on the Census Returns of 1871, until the Returns of 1881 are published. These will be of inestimable value. The significance of the declared total will be of relatively small importance in comparison with the value of that additional factor in the computation which will enable us to estimate together the several Returns of 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881.

Still, we shall not get as much help as we desire from the British Census, because it deals only with the totals. This, however, is not the case with Ireland. There, the figures are supplemented by special details, with an unstinted and admirable copiousness which makes us wish that the same kind and amount of information were equally obtainable from accredited official documents in other countries. Yet it is possible to blunder, even there. That, of course, goes without telling; for the country is Ireland. But how readily the error is detected first and corrected afterwards I will show you by a singular example. In one district of the country the number of children returned as "dumb" was so excessive and improbable that further inquiry was made, through the verifying agency employed,—the Constabulary of the

country,—when it was discovered that the rural enumerator had put down as “dumb” every infant who was too young, not only to speak but, to perform any other act of volition whatever.

Still, even scanty information, when it can be depended upon, is better than doubtful estimates and guess work. A comparison of mere totals will tell us a good deal ; and the record of another ten years’ progress in the life of a great nation, in respect of its deaf population, will, when contrasted with those of ten, twenty, thirty years before, give us abundant matter for reflection and enquiry.

What are the changes which occur ? Is the direction of their action uniform or contradictory ? What are the causes which produce them ? Are they constant or variable ?—subject to influences within human control, or altogether independent of it ? These are questions which must occur, and which have occurred, to the minds of those who, duly impressed with the sense of its profound importance, have given their serious attention to the facts and figures which bear upon this subject.

We already possess considerable knowledge of the most fruitful causes of deafness, both congenital and post-natal. How far are we succeeding in arresting the action and effect of those causes ? As regards consanguineous marriages, and intermarriages among the deaf—is the knowledge of what unions ought to be avoided, and the prudence which avoids them, extending ? or not ?

Then, as to diseases which result in deafness. Are they becoming more amenable to medical treatment? Or, is their subjugation to more highly developed skill, even yet, only limited and partial? Have we stopped them short at the point where they would destroy life, only to leave them still more rampant with the malignity which destroys hearing? In a word, Have we fewer *dead*, but more *deaf*? And is this inevitable? Can we hope to push back the invader further still, to a limit where he shall have no power over either life or hearing? Then, indeed, will science, and the skill which is its offspring, have achieved for humanity a noble victory. But, if the first result of improved medical treatment is, though but temporarily, to save life at the expense of hearing, and, while diminishing the general death-rate, to add to the number of the deaf,—the applicants for admission into our institutions will not diminish, nor will the necessity for their instruction, on the best systems and with the utmost possible advantages, call less loudly for public benevolence and support.

Reviewing the whole subject, we are justified in concluding that some causes may be modified, that some will disappear—(as “spotted” fever has done in the United States),—that some will vary at different periods,—like meningitis, for example, which has been so prevalent as to have become the subject of a special inquiry among the medical men of Germany,\*—and

\* See a Paper read at the Paris Congress, September, 1878, by M. Hugentobler.

that the spread of sounder knowledge of the Laws of Health and Disease will tend to diminish the number of the Deaf, as was found when the British Census of 1871 was compared with that of 1861. But against all this we must set one fact of growing magnitude and significance. The deaf are now led, as a consequence of existing customs and of the circumstances of their education, to associate together in after life, and to mate with each other in an increased and increasing degree. From this we cannot but anticipate that those possible—I was going to say, but as we now know them to be, the actual and certain—consequences of such unions will affect in a very marked manner all future enumerations.

On this ground then, amongst many others, I advocate that system of teaching and training the deaf which separates, not congregates, them ; which promotes small schools, not large ones ; the employment of hearing teachers, not deaf ones ; of teachers trained and highly competent, not unqualified and inefficient ; which gives the pupil the speech of his country, not the “signs” of his class ; and which, finally, sends him out into the world, confident and well-instructed, to find his duties and companions there,—not a system which leaves so many of them, timid and ill-instructed, to turn back and associate with others like themselves.

Here it may be said—for it has been said—that for me to lay down and maintain such a position as this is highly inconsistent. Well, gentlemen, it is



really hardly worth spending the little time it occupies to answer such an objection, ever so briefly. The question is not whether the speaker is inconsistent, but whether his testimony is true. The man who can most securely plume himself upon his consistency (if nothing more) is he who learns nothing, but remains fixed and immoveable from first to last. Those, on the contrary, who are ever learning, and constantly applying their additional acquirements to practical ends, are often open to the cheap and ready charge of inconsistency; but they have their compensation, for it is to such as they that the human race has often owed its greatest obligations.

Besides, there are those present who can testify that I never was the direct opponent of the "German" system. I always believed and said that Speech for the Deaf was the best thing conceivable. Placed, however, as I was, I had to work for the best thing attainable, yet never shutting my eyes to the superior end, and only waiting for the proof that it was possible. That proof I have received. I have seen the possible accomplished. The ideal of my conceptions and my hopes is realized in successful "German" teaching, and in that alone. I see that the deaf, taught upon any other system, are *both* deaf and dumb; taught upon this system, they are *not* "deaf-and-dumb." And you who hear these words know, better than anyone, the infinite world of difference which is involved in this distinction.

And now, with your permission, I desire to address myself to some of the questions proposed in the official programme which accompanied the invitation to this Congress.

My opportunities of observation have exceeded those of most of my countrymen: but I will not unduly trespass upon your time, as many of the questions have received special answers from those with whom I have the honour to be associated.

#### PROGRAMME.

##### SECTION I. QUESTIONS 1—3.

*Answer:*—The whole of the first series of questions is governed by the enquiry,—“Should a school be a boarding or a day school”? (Question I.) As I think that teaching should be by speech and not by signs, it follows, that contact with those who speak should be assiduously promoted, and association with the deaf as earnestly and systematically discouraged. Schools should, therefore, be small; assimilated in all respects to the manner, tone, and spirit of a school for hearing children. The pupil’s mind is like a ball which, wherever it rolls or wherever it falls, comes into contact with *something*. Let that “something” be—hearing influences; habitual association with those who speak; who are always speaking. In

large boarding schools of the deaf and dumb, the contact is with the deaf alone. The healthy elevating process just described is completely reversed: and this procedure is as much to be deprecated as the former is to be promoted, with a watchfulness which never tires, and a perseverance which never flags.

## SECTION II. ON TEACHING. QUESTION 2.

*Answer*:—No definite answer is possible. I said at the Conference in London, in 1877, “As soon as a child can learn *anything* it should learn *something*.” (*Proceedings*, page 16.) This is the principle—“a rough and ready principle,” it has been called—which applies to *all* teaching, irrespective of system or of class. But the different degrees of health, development and capacity, found in children of the same age, prevent its formal reduction to any fixed rule. Some children are more capable of receiving instruction at three years of age than other children are at the age of six. Only—and this is most important—let the education be, from the first, of the best kind, and on the best principle. It would be better to give little instruction, or even none at all, than such as must be *unlearned* when the pupil goes to school. Every teacher of experience can testify that this work of up-rooting that which should never have been allowed to grow, is the most harassing, most difficult, and most disheartening of his tasks.

## SECTION II. QUESTION 7.

*Answer:—*The pupils should change masters, but the masters should also change classes, from time to time. Teachers should not remain always with pupils who are on precisely the same level as their predecessors. Nothing so thoroughly breaks down that elastic spirit which is the life of all good teaching as enforced detention at one and the same grade. Neither body nor mind can be maintained at its full stature, if either nurses or teachers are constantly *stooping*, to adapt themselves to the stature, physical or mental, of the children in their charge.

## SECTION II. QUESTIONS 8, 9.

*Answer:—*It is of the most vital importance, to keep the minds of our deaf pupils interested and their attention alive, to avoid weariness of their lessons. To this end I would adopt little changes, frequently, but of course judiciously. Let the children change their postures and positions; let the class-room itself be changed, occasionally, and the teacher also. The lessons and amusements will naturally change.

## SECTION III. ON METHODS. QUESTION 7.

*Answer:—*Art teaching is useful in this respect (*i.e.*, in the sense of the previous answer), but it should always be in due subordination to the proper purpose of education, which is not to make good artists, but to train good citizens.

## SECTION III. QUESTION 1.

*Answer* :—To what I have already said in this paper I desire to add that “ Signs ” are not a language, though they are sometimes said to be one. They are but a substitute for language, and a bad substitute. They are also said to be a means to an end, but are too often acquiesced in and adopted as the end itself. They do not open the door to the world of written and spoken language; they turn the key inside, and the poor mute soul is confined within its own small intellectual world—for life.

## SECTION III. QUESTION 2.

*Answer* :—In the “ Pure Oral ” method—which, in this paper is always spoken of as the “ German ” system—speech is the first and chief means employed. In the “ Mixed ” system it is only one amongst others. But, let this never be forgotten, to degrade it is to kill it.

## SECTION III. QUESTION 8.

*Answer* :—The surer and, in the end, the more extensive “ knowledge ” is to be obtained on “ the method of articulation,” because such knowledge is acquired through language, the infallible and always available means to further acquirement. It follows that the time so spent is *best* spent, however long it may be.

## SECTION IV. SPECIAL QUESTION 2.

*Answer*:—After this result,—a full knowledge of language—has been attained, and not until then, there is not only no reason why a deaf pupil should not go to an ordinary tutor for instruction in classics or other higher branches of learning, but it is the proper, and the only proper, course to be adopted. I have known cases in which it has been adopted, without difficulty, and with marked success.

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A sentiment of the late Sir Arthur Helps,\* primarily applied by him to philanthropic action in another direction, appears to me to be peculiarly appropriate to education, and especially to the education of the deaf. “Human nature,” he says, “is a thing to which we can put no limits, and which requires to be treated with unbounded hopefulness.”

No wiser maxim for our guidance was ever penned than that. Approach the Deaf in that spirit—teach *them* in that spirit, and they will rise up to thank you, their benefactors, in accents like your own. But it is only this spirit of “unbounded hopefulness,” kindred to the “faith which can remove mountains”

\* *Friends in Council*, vol. ii. p. 328.

of difficulty, which can accomplish such a task. Yet see what notable achievements it has already made! It is in this same spirit of "unbounded hopefulness" that Discovery and Skill have made their most important conquests. They have promoted the commerce of the world by shortening tedious routes, and removing obstacles to navigation as old as the creation. Surely there is, here, an analogy most instructive to ourselves. When I began my work as a teacher of the deaf, every Eastern voyager went to India round the Cape. Waghorn had not tracked the overland route; de Lesseps had not cut through the Isthmus, and joined the Western to the Eastern seas. A parallel change has taken place in the work we are considering, so far as my own and some other countries are concerned. I began to teach on the "Sign" system. I "went round the Cape." There was no Suez Canal then. There is now. And by that superior route I mean to go, as I most strenuously and earnestly urge its adoption upon you. It goes straight to its destined port. Other systems stop short of it. And it is our duty—our solemn bounden duty—to the deaf children whose needs have called this remarkable assembly together, and to Him who is the God and Father of us all, that we should do the best we can, by the best means which are available, and with the best efforts which we can command. To do this is not only to follow at our humble distance in the blessed steps of our Great Exemplar, "Who went about doing good" to the deaf who were brought to Him for sympathy and help,

but it is also to help forward the fulfilment, in one of its lesser meanings of the prayer which He Himself has taught us—"Thy kingdom come."

DAVID BUXTON, Ph.D., F.R.S.L.,

*Secretary of the Society for Training Teachers of the Deaf, and Diffusion of the "German" System in the United Kingdom; Vice-President of the London "Conference (1877) of Head Masters of Institutions, and of other workers for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb."*

298, REGENT STREET,  
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THIS Society has been established to promote the teaching of the Deaf, on the "German" system. Its purpose is to train Teachers, Governesses, and Relations of the Deaf, so as to make them thoroughly acquainted with this system both in theory and practice; to instruct Children by the same method; and, by diffusing a knowledge of the system and of its manifest advantages, promote its extension as widely as possible, and make it available for every class in the community.

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ADDRESS of the PRESIDENT, The LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, at a Meeting of the Society for Training Teachers of the Deaf, and Diffusion of the "German" System in the United Kingdom, held in the Library, Lambeth Palace, June 28th, 1877.

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"DEAF NOT DUMB:" A Lecture, delivered October 12th, 1876, before the Gloucester Literary and Scientific Institution, by B. ST. J. ACKERS, Esquire (Barrister-at-Law), of Prinknash Park, Painswick, President of the above Association. Published by request. London: Longmans, Green & Co. Gloucester: E. Nest. Price 6d. Also,

"VOCAL SPEECH FOR THE DUMB:" A Paper on the Education of the Deaf and Dumb, "German" System. Read April 25th, 1877, before the Society of Arts; with Discussion. Re-published by permission. To this Paper was awarded the Silver Medal of the Society of Arts. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1877. Price 1s. 6d.

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"THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF, ON THE 'GERMAN' SYSTEM:" A Paper read in the Education Department of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, at the Twenty-second Annual Congress, Cheltenham, 1878, by ARTHUR A. KINSEY, Principal of the Training College for Teachers of the Deaf, Castle Bar Hill, Ealing, London, W. London: W. H. Allen & Co. 1879. Price 1s.

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"THE 'GERMAN'—SPEECH AND LIP-READING—SYSTEM OF TEACHING THE DEAF:" A Paper read at the Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, at Sheffield, August 22nd, 1879, by DAVID BUXTON, Ph.D., F.R.S.L., Secretary of the Society for Training Teachers of the Deaf, and Diffusion of the "German" System in the United Kingdom. London: W. H. Allen & Co. 1879. Price 1s.



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