

Statistics of the deaf and dumb : a paper read before the Medical Society of the State of New-York, June 25, 1852 / by Harvey P. Peet.

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PEET (H.P.)

STATISTICS OF THE DEAF AND DUMB,

A PAPER

READ BEFORE THE

Medical Society of the State of New-York,

JUNE 25, 1852.

BY

HARVEY P. PEET, LL. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE NEW-YORK INSTITUTION FOR THE INSTRUCTION
OF THE DEAF AND DUMB.



PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY JAMES EGBERT, 374 PEARL STREET,
1852.

STATISTICS OF THE 22ND AND 23RD
YEARS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

A PAPER

READ BEFORE THE

Affiliated Society of the State of New York

JUNE 25, 1852

HARVEY T. FERRY, M.D.

PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK SOCIETY OF THE AFFILIATED SOCIETY
OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY

NEW YORK

PRINTED BY JAMES W. BROWN, AT THE PRESS OF THE SOCIETY

1852

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A PAPER

READ BEFORE THE

Medical Society of the State of New-York,

JUNE 25, 1852.

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HARVEY P. PEET, LL. D.

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PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY.

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Washington, D.C.
NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY JAMES EGBERT, 374 PEARL STREET,
1852.

At the semi-annual meeting of the New-York State
Society of Physicians held on the evening of the 17th of
January 1854, the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved—That the thanks of this Society be presented
to Messrs P. Levy, L. D., President of the Institution
for the instruction of the Hebrews in this city, for
the able and interesting paper just read by him before
the Society, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for
publication.

Resolved—That a select Committee be appointed, con-
sisting of the President, Secretary and Treasurer of the
Society, to carry into effect the foregoing res-
olution, with authority to publish the paper in the event
of a copy being required in such manner as to insure
the greatest circulation, and that it be also published in
the Transactions of the Society.

Extract from the minutes
THOMAS H. N. Secretary.

RECEIVED BY THE NEW-YORK STATE
SOCIETY OF PHYSICIANS, JANUARY 1854.

I beg to forward to you, herewith,
a copy of the Resolutions passed by the New-York State
Medical Society at its late meeting, and under notice
those therein contained, and in accordance with the desire
of our own feelings we respectfully submit a copy of your
valuable paper to the consideration of our Society.
In the hope that you will comply with this request, we

are,
Very respectfully,
Your Obedient Servants,
ALAN C. CLARK,
THOMAS H. N. Secretary.
WILLIAM ROCKWELL,
JOHN C. CHURMAN,
JAMES M. ROCKWELL.

At the semi-annual meeting of the New-York State Medical Society, held in the city of New-York, on the last Tuesday of June, the following Resolutions were adopted:

RESOLVED—That the thanks of this Society be presented to HARVEY P. PEET, LL. D., President of the Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in this city, for the able and interesting paper just read by him before the Society, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

RESOLVED—That a Select Committee be appointed, consisting of the President, Secretary, and Censors of the Southern District, to carry into effect the foregoing Resolution, with authority to publish the paper, in the event of a copy being furnished, in such manner, as to insure its extensive circulation, and that it be also published in the Transactions of the Society.

Extract from the minutes,

THOMAS HUN, *Secretary*.

New-York, July, 1852.

DR. PEET,
SIR,

Inclosed, we forward to you, herewith, a copy of the Resolutions passed by the New-York State Medical Society, at its late meeting, and, under instructions therein contained, and in accordance with the dictates of our own feelings, we respectfully solicit a copy of your valuable paper for publication.

In the hope that you will comply with this request, we are,

Very Respectfully,

Your Obedient Servants,

ALONZO CLARK,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
THOMAS HUN,		
CHAS. S. J. GOODRICH,		
JOHN C. CHEESMAN,		
WILLIAM ROCKWELL,		

Institution for the Deaf and Dumb,

New-York, August 25, 1852.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, which has this day come to hand, inclosing a copy of the Resolutions passed by the New-York State Medical Society, at its late meeting.

I am happy if I have been so fortunate as to perform a service not unacceptable to the Society, and grateful for the favorable opinion expressed of the merits of the paper, prepared in great haste, owing to the delay in obtaining returns from the Census Office, in the intervals of professional labor, I herewith submit the manuscript to your disposal, in the hope that its circulation may contribute to awaken an interest in behalf of that cause to which I have devoted the best portion of my life.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

HARVEY P. PEET.

DRS. ALONZO CLARK,

THOMAS HUN,

CHARLES S. J. GOODRICH,

JOHN C. CHEESMAN,

WILLIAM ROCKWELL.

Committee.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE STATISTICS OF THE DEAF AND DUMB;
ON PRETENSIONS TO CURE DEAFNESS, AND ON
THE EDUCATION OF DEAF MUTES.

THE subject of this paper is one that commends itself more especially to the attention of medical men; for, besides the benevolence and spirit of scientific research that characterize them, many of the topics connected with the statistics of the deaf and dumb, form part of the general statistics of disease and mortality, now included in the designation of *vital statistics*, which belong appropriately to the province of medicine. It is a subject of no light importance, involving, in a peculiar degree, the usefulness, respectability, and prospects for both worlds of one in fifteen hundred of our own race and kindred—the happiness of one in three hundred families. At the same time, it is, as the few competent to judge have often found to their regret, a subject very imperfectly understood by those who have not made it a special study. None know and appreciate better than the medical profession the danger of forming conclusions from imperfect knowledge, or a superficial investigation. Nevertheless, we have found physicians, as well as men of other callings, though

not only professionally distinguished, but men of very uncommon general intelligence, and eminently well informed on all ordinary topics, yet putting forth, when they undertake to discuss the condition and mode of instruction of the deaf and dumb, opinions and assertions that would be ludicrous, if the errors they propagate were not dangerous. It seems proper, therefore, that the few whom their official or professional duties have made the guardians and advocates of the deaf and dumb, and have been led to make a special study of all that pertains to these unfortunate members of the human family, should not neglect any favorable occasions that may present for diffusing, especially among the more intelligent and influential classes of the community, correct information on a subject thus important and thus little understood.

I propose, *first*, to present some calculations respecting the numbers of the deaf and dumb, and some considerations on the causes of deafness; *second*, to say a few words on the frequent pretensions to cure this infirmity; and *lastly*, to speak of the efforts to ameliorate the condition of the deaf and dumb by education, taking the opportunity to correct some errors that have obtained, or are likely to obtain currency, by having been put forth on very respectable authority.

Those who judge by the number of deaf mutes *they* have happened to meet, or rather the number who, as deaf mutes, have attracted their attention, are apt to suppose the number of this class of persons to be very small. When, sixty years ago, it was proposed to found an asylum for deaf and dumb

children, in or near London, some very intelligent men thought the plan chimerical ; because *they* had never happened to meet a deaf mute. Yet there must have been, at that time, several hundreds in London alone. And when, twenty-five years later, the establishment of the New-York Institution was under consideration, the same objection was urged, and only obviated by researches which proved the existence of no fewer than sixty-six deaf mutes in seven wards of the city, then containing a population of about one hundred thousand. Deafness, it will be easily conceived, is not one of those infirmities that, like blindness or lameness, attract notice at first sight. Deaf mutes, it may be said, rather lurk, so to speak, in the corners and hiding places of society ; and means must be found to call them out before we can get an adequate idea of their numbers.

Since the instruction of the deaf and dumb has begun to attract general attention, and to receive the aid of Governments, a period comparatively very recent, enumerations of this class of persons have been made in many of the countries of Europe, and in the United States in connection with the three last national enumerations. In our own State, also, the deaf and dumb have been, from 1825, always enumerated in taking the State Census, in the fifth year after the National Census.

The result of these enumerations goes to show, that the number of deaf mutes, in a given country, does not vary greatly from a certain proportion to the population of that

country. Whatever may be the causes of deafness, they are found so far constant that, in any populous district, the proportion of deaf mutes seldom varies as much as a fifth part from one period to another. And, though different countries, or differently circumstanced districts of the same country, may vary considerably in their respective proportions of deaf mutes, yet even this variation has its limits. A few extreme cases excepted, there is, I believe, no country inhabited by Europeans, or their descendants, in which, in a population of a million, there are less than three hundred and fifty deaf mutes, or more than about eight hundred.

Of the extreme cases that have been referred to, the most remarkable are presented by certain districts of Switzerland and the adjoining Duchy of Baden in Germany. The Swiss Canton of Berne contained, in 1836, no fewer than 1,954 deaf mutes in a population of 401,000—nearly one deaf mute in every two hundred souls. In that country, deaf-dumbness seems often connected with, or complicated by, the greater infirmity of cretinism, so prevalent in certain parts of Switzerland.

Throughout Germany, with the exception of Baden, where the proportion of deaf mutes is said to be as high as one in five hundred souls, this proportion, in any considerable district, only varies from one in 1,240 souls in Wurtemberg, to one in 2,180 in Saxony; and, I believe, there are no countries in Europe, in which deaf mutes have been enumerated, Switzerland and Baden excepted, in which the proportions

much transcend these limits, whether on the one side or on the other.

Prussia seems to represent nearly the mean proportion both of Germany and of Europe, having about one deaf mute in every 1,550 souls. And this proportion, being found nearly the average of all the countries in which enumerations of the deaf-mute population have yet been made, has been assumed to represent the general proportion in the whole human family—thus enabling us to estimate that, at a very moderate computation of the population of the world, there must be, at least, half a million of our fellow-beings bereft of the faculties of hearing and speech.

It must be remembered, however, that, with the single exception of the colored population of the United States, enumerations of deaf mutes have only been made among nations of the European race. Among the Asiatic, African, and Aboriginal American races, the results *may* prove quite different. A few years since, the Rev. Samuel R. Brown, formerly a teacher in the New-York Institution for the deaf and dumb, and then a Missionary in China, made particular inquiry for deaf mutes in that country, but never met one, and could only hear of one case. Blindness, however, was very common in the Celestial Empire. I shall by and by show that in our own country, deaf-dumbness is less prevalent among the African race than among the whites; while with blindness, the cases are reversed. It would not be surprising if the same peculiarity—greater liability to deaf-

ness and less to blindness—should hereafter be found to characterize the white race, when data shall have been obtained for comparing them in this respect with the other great divisions of the human family.

I may here add, that, from the returns of the late census, insanity is more prevalent than idiocy among the whites, and idiocy more prevalent than insanity among the blacks—another marked characteristic of the races, which I leave to the consideration of those who have made Physiology a study.

Speaking of the greater liability of one race than another to certain infirmities, it may be observed, that it would not be surprising if different families of the European stock should be found liable in different degrees to the loss of hearing; the Teutonic races, for instance, more than the Celtic. This, however, is a point that must be left to the result of future investigations. Few or no data now exist for forming a satisfactory judgment on it. But, as the *first* enumeration of the deaf and dumb in Ireland has recently been made—at the instance of Dr. Wilde, of Dublin, who will spare no pains to make the returns accurate and comprehensive, when the results are made public, they may, perhaps, by comparison with enumerations made in this and other countries where Teutonic races prevail, enable us to form satisfactory conclusions on this as well as on many other points of interest.

That a liability to deafness should run through a whole

race need not surprise us, for deafness certainly *runs in families*. And though, perhaps, only one in fifty or a hundred of deaf-mute heads of families may have deaf-mute children, still they are more liable to have such children, other causes being equal, than heads of families who have no family predisposition. Cases are recorded, though rare, in which deafness has appeared in certain families through three generations.

The inquiry respecting the liability of different races to deaf-dumbness is quite a novel one ; but greater attention has been paid to the question of the influence of climate and modes of living on the prevalence of this infirmity. Switzerland, where the proportion of deaf mutes is excessively great, is a cold, mountainous, and humid region : Saxony and Belgium, where this proportion is small, are comparatively level, dry, and fertile. Warm countries, as Tuscany, appear to contain, on the whole, a smaller proportion of deaf mutes than cold countries, as Denmark and Scotland ; but the difference is not great, nor very uniform. Still it is very probable that climate has an important influence on the prevalence of deafness ; though, among the many causes that may influence the proportion of deaf mutes in a given district, it is difficult to judge how much of the result is due to each.

Hence it is, that no satisfactory conclusions can be formed from the proportions found in districts of small population. It is only by collecting together a number of districts, similar

in climate, elevation, or other circumstances, so that while the influence we wish to investigate may run through the whole, or be manifestly deficient in the whole, the operation of other causes may nearly balance each other, that we can confidently pronounce on the effect of any one influence. Such a laborious comparison of census returns, to any extent, has never yet been made; but it is in contemplation to attempt it, in part, when we are in possession of the full results of the last United States Census. As yet, only a few general returns have transpired, and from these some conclusions may be formed not wholly uninteresting or un-instructive.

The value of the enumerations of the deaf and dumb made in this country, before the last made in 1850, was greatly impaired, both by the scantiness of the particulars noted, and by the carelessness of the returning officers. The most remarkable instance of this carelessness is in the fact, that many white deaf mutes must, in 1830 and 1840, have been placed in the column appropriated to colored deaf mutes—(we have noted colored deaf mutes returned from certain towns from which no colored population was returned)—the effect of which was to propagate widely, what now proves to be a very erroneous idea, that deaf-mutes were far more numerous, proportionally, among the colored population of the Northern States than among the whites. The last census (in taking which, a line was given to every individual, noting the age, color, sex, etc., of each, opposite

his or her name) has set this right, and shown that, in fact, the proportion of deaf mutes, as I have already remarked, is much smaller among the free colored people than among the whites; the case with the blind being just the reverse. Among the slaves, the proportion of deaf mutes is still much smaller. There may be here some reason to distrust the accuracy of the census, as we can hardly imagine the master or overseer of a large number of slaves as ready and accurate in giving a description of each as the head of an ordinary family in giving a description of each member of his family; and the smallest proportion of deaf mutes returned among the slaves is in those States where they are owned in the largest numbers by few masters. Still, it would be quite consistent with the theory of the greater liability of the white race to deafness, to find the free colored, who have, in general, a larger admixture of white blood, more liable to that infirmity than the slaves. The difference between these two classes may be owing in part to this, and in part to the greater inaccuracy of the enumeration of the slaves.

Besides the influence of climate and of race, it has been held that a want of physical comforts, and of enlightened care in infancy, tends to increase the prevalence of deafness, as of other infirmities. It has been believed that deafness is more common, in proportion to numbers, among the poor who inhabit uncomfortable and unwholesome dwellings, and take comparatively little care of the ailments of their children, than among the more intelligent and better provided

classes. On this point, however, we have, as yet, little definite statistical information. The apparent great proportion of deaf mutes among the free people of color, used to be cited in confirmation of this theory, as this class of population are generally among the poorest and worst lodged; but, as we have seen, this has proved to be a mere error in the returns; and the fact that the smallest proportion of deaf mutes is returned from great cities, where poverty is found in the most miserable extremes, is certainly unfavorable to the theory under consideration. It may be, indeed, that the returns from cities are more inaccurate than from country districts; but we may also suppose that, in the great mortality among children in cities, and in unhealthy localities, deaf and dumb children, or those liable to become so, being, probably, below the average in soundness of constitution and tenacity of life, perish more readily than others.

In examining the returns of the census, so far as received, I will not weary you with the details of each State. The population of some of the States is too small to make their proportions of deaf mutes of much statistical value; and, moreover, in the several New-England States, these proportions are greatly affected by the fact that a large proportion of their deaf mutes were absent from the families to which they belong, being collected into one school at Hartford. A like circumstance affects the proportion in the middle States, though to a less degree. I shall, therefore, class the States in sections, so arranged as to place together those most alike in certain circumstances.

For the purpose of comparing the last census with the two former ones, I shall, for the convenience of availing myself of calculations previously made, class the States as—1, New-England; 2, the four middle States from New-York to Delaware; 3, the North-Western States, from Ohio to Iowa; 4, the Southern Atlantic States, from Maryland to Georgia; 5, the South-Western and extreme Southern from Florida to Missouri; 6, the extreme Western, which appear for the first time in the last census, in two divisions—first, Texas and New Mexico: second, California and the very newly settled territories. For the purpose of comparing different sections of the Union together, I shall presently make a different division of the States.

The annexed table exhibits the numbers, and proportion to the whole population of the same color, of the white deaf and dumb at each census, in each of the great sections of the Union just defined:—

TABLE I.

<i>Sections of the Union.</i>	1830.			1840.			1850.		
	<i>White populat'n.</i>	<i>White D. & D.</i>	<i>Propor- tion.</i>	<i>White populat'n.</i>	<i>White D. & D.</i>	<i>Propor- tion.</i>	<i>White populat'n.</i>	<i>White D. & D.</i>	<i>Propor- tion.</i>
6 New England,	1,933,338	1,074	1 : 1800	2 212,165	1,194	1 : 1854	2,705,772	1,504	1 : 1799
4 Middle States,	3,541,430	1,842	1 : 1923	4,465,154	2,029	1 : 2201	5,845,449	2,750	1 : 2125
6 Nth. Western States,	1,451,135	648	1 : 2244	2,938 307	1,057	1 : 2780	4,671,381	2,163	1 : 2160
Total, Northern States,	6,928,903	3,564	1 : 1944	9,615,626	4,280	1 : 2247	13,222,602	6,417	1 : 2060
5 Southern St's & D. C.	2,040,483	1,115	1 : 1830	2,240,991	1,252	1 : 1790	2,701,277	1,483	1 : 1821
8 Sth. Western States,	1,562,674	684	1 : 2284	2,332,604	1,150	1 : 2028	3,297,574	1,486	1 : 2220
Total, Southern States,	3,603,157	1,799	1 : 2003	4,573,592	2,402	1 : 1904	5,998,851	2,969	1 : 2020
Texas & New Mexico,	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	215,630	77	1 : 2800
California, Utah, Ore- gon, and Minnesota,	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	193,655	6	1 : 32276
Total of the U. States,	10,532,060	5,363	1 : 1964	14,189,218	6,682	1 : 2123	19,630,738	9,469	1 : 2079
Total Atlantic States,	7,515,251	4,031	1 : 1864	8,918,310	4,475	1 : 1993	11,252,498	5,737	1 : 1961
Total Western States and Territories,	3,016,809	1,332	1 : 2250	5,270,908	2,207	1 : 2388	8,378,240	3,732	1 : 2245

From this table it will be seen that the proportion of deaf mutes in each great section of the Union has remained tolerably uniform. In New England it has, within the twenty years, varied only between 1 : 1799 and 1 : 1854; in the Southern Atlantic States, between 1 : 1790 and 1 : 1830, in the Middle States, between 1 : 1923 and 1 : 2201; in the South-Western States, between 1 : 2028 and 1 : 2220. The greatest disturbance of the ratio has been in the North-Western States, where it was 1 : 2244 in 1830 : 1 : 2780 in 1840; and 1 : 2160 in 1850. This fluctuation of the proportion of deaf mutes in that section of the Union I am hardly prepared to account for. It may be owing, in part, to an unusual inaccuracy in taking the census of 1840 in those States; and in part to unknown causes, by which deafness may have been rendered more prevalent in that region, since about the year 1835 than between 1825, and 1835. This is a point that demands some examination.

There seems to be certain periods when deafness becomes in a small degree epidemic in a certain district. Hence we find an increase in the proportion of deaf-mute children, not, as I shall hereafter explain, at the census taken while these children are yet in early infancy, and the deaf-mutism of many of them yet unrecognized, but at the next succeeding census. At the third census, there is usually an ebb of the tide. The proportion generally decreases; and if the epidemic period be not repeated, settles down to the average or below it. Thus, in New Jersey, there was, in 1830, one

deaf mute to 1352 souls ; in 1840, one to 1953 ; and in 1850, only one to 2220.* The decrease in the North-Western States, between 1830 and 1840, may have been owing, besides the supposed inaccuracy of the census, to the great emigration into that region ; there always being a smaller proportion of deaf mutes in a population composed of recent immigrants than in a stationary population. And the increase at the last census I can only ascribe to one of those epidemic periods, probably occurring between 1830 and 1840, though not affecting the census till 1850.

Among the causes that make deafness more prevalent at certain periods than at others are various diseases, as scarlet fever, small pox, and measles, in cases of accidental deafness ; while, in cases of congenital deafness, maternal anxiety, to which many cases are ascribed (with what degree of truth those who now hear me can judge), may sometimes become epidemic. At least, there are certain years in which the nervous system of women is rendered more than usually excitable, and shocks that may have a deleterious influence on the offspring are more common. This seems to be particularly the case in a country that is the seat of war. Many mothers in France have ascribed the infirmity of their congenitally deaf children to alarms received during the invasion of France by the Allies in 1814 and 1815, and its subsequent occupation. When we are able to make out a more

* The numbers in each case corrected by allowing for pupils then attending schools out of the State.

minute statement of the ages of our deaf-mute population than we yet possess, we shall examine whether a proportion larger than the average seems to have been born in time of war.

It should be added, that some of the diseases, that destroy the sense of hearing, may operate before birth. And it is possible these diseases may have certain periods of unusual prevalence.

Another cause which has been assigned for the birth of deaf-mute children, in many cases, viz., the intermarriage of near relatives, can only be verified by extensive inquiry into individual cases, and not from the usual returns of a census. The data we now possess are not sufficient to enable us to form any very satisfactory conclusions on that point.

Before examining whether the returns throw any light on the influence of climate on the proportion of deaf mutes, it is necessary to attend first to the influence of emigration. I have already remarked that a population composed chiefly of recent immigrants, generally presents a small proportion of deaf mutes. This is strikingly exemplified in California, and the recently settled territories of Utah, Oregon, and Minnesota, which only present six deaf mutes in a population of 193,000. And the table already given shows that while the Atlantic States, taken together, have one deaf mute in 1961 souls, the North-Western and South-Western together, have only one in 2245. But to show more clearly the influence both of emigration and climate, we will ar-

range the States, leaving out the extreme Western, in a somewhat different order. The six New England States may remain together, but the Middle States we will extend to the Potomac, by adding Maryland and the District ; annex Missouri to the North-Western section ; form a new section under the name of Central States, to comprise Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee ; and class together the remaining Southern and South-Western States, including Texas, as extreme Southern States :—

TABLE II. CENSUS FOR 1850.

	<i>White populat'n.</i>	WHITE D. & D.		WHITE BLIND.		WHT. INSANE.		WHITE IDIOTS	
		<i>No.</i>	<i>Proportion.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Proportion.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Proportion.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Proportion.</i>
6 New Eng. States,	2,705,772	1,504	1 : 1799	1,201	1 : 2253	3,796	1 : 716	2,368	1 : 1142
5 Middle Sts. & D. C.	6,302,066	2,961	1 : 2128	2,439	1 : 2584	5,308	1 : 1187	3,870	1 : 1630
11 Sts. N. the Potomac	9,007,838	4,465	1 : 2018	3,640	1 : 2475	9,104	1 : 990	6,238	1 : 1444
7 North Westn. Sts.	5,263,458	2,407	1 : 2186	1,645	1 : 3200	2,444	1 : 2153	3,314	1 : 1588
5 Central States,	3,241,803	1,881	1 : 1729	1,881	1 : 1729	2,517	1 : 1288	3,329	1 : 974
7 Extreme Sthn. Sts.	1,862,454	682	1 : 2731	731	1 : 2548	873	1 : 2110	1,301	1 : 1431

By comparing the New England States with the North-Western, and the Central with the extreme Southern, we see the influence of emigration, which, it will be perceived, is even greater in the case of the blind than of the deaf and dumb. In other words, a smaller proportion of adult deaf mutes, and of families containing deaf-mute children, are tempted to emigrate than of the general population ; and of the blind, a still smaller proportion.

And by comparing the States north-east of the Potomac, and north-west of the Ohio, with the extreme Southern

States, we see the influence of climate. In the former, the deaf and dumb are more numerous; in the latter, lying much more under the sun, the blind are more numerous. In the Central States, the relative influence of climate on the proportion of the deaf and dumb, and of the blind, appears to be balanced, for in those States the numbers of these two classes are equal.

And, though it is aside from the purpose of this paper, it may not be without interest to add, in passing, that insanity is proportionally more prevalent at the north, and particularly at the east, and idiocy at the south and west.

In the next table we have placed in contrast the white and colored races:—

TABLE III.

<i>Color.</i>	<i>Whole populat'n of each Color.</i>	DEAF & DUMB.		BLIND.		INSANE.		IDIOTS.	
		<i>No.</i>	<i>Proportion.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Proportion.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Proportion.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Proportion.</i>
Whites, . . .	19,630,738	9,469	1 : 2073	7,997	1 : 2455	15,156	1 : 1295	14,230	1 : 1384
Free Colored, .	428,661	145	1 : 2956	494	1 : 867	321	1 : 1335	436	1 : 983
Slaves, . . .	3,204,089	489	1 : 6552	1,211	1 : 2646	291	1 : 11011	1,040	1 : 3081
Total Colored,	3,632,750	634	1 : 5730	1,705	1 : 2131	612	1 : 5935	1,476	1 : 2461

I have already remarked on the probable greater inaccuracy of the returns with respect to the slaves than with respect to either of the other classes. In South Carolina, where the slaves far out-number the whites, there are returned, upon a slave population of nearly 385,000, only 15 deaf mutes, 56 blind, 9 insane, and 50 idiots. On the other hand,

in the adjoining State of North Carolina, where the slaves are less than one-third of the population, in a slave population of only 288,412, there are returned, slaves, deaf and dumb, 52; blind, 117; insane, 24; idiots, 138; in each case from twice to thrice the number, and from two and a half to five times the proportion, in South Carolina. It is not easy to imagine any other causes for this excessive difference between two adjoining States than the greater inaccuracy of the census, when it relates to slaves collected in large bodies on a few plantations.

Allowing for this inaccuracy, we shall find, as I have already remarked, blindness and idiocy more prevalent among the colored races than among the whites, and deafness and insanity less so. Why this should be so, and why the proportion of insane among the slaves should be so small as, after making every allowance, it must be, are questions I do not venture to discuss. Among those who now favor me with their attention, there are doubtless many well qualified to investigate such points, and in their hands I leave them.

The proportion between the sexes of each class under consideration is a subject of some interest. Among the population at large, the males exceed the females, in the ratio of about 25 to 24; but, among the deaf and dumb, the males are to the females nearly as five to four. Similar results have been presented by European enumerations. Among the blind and idiotic, the disproportion of males is still greater, being as four to three; but, among the insane, the sexes are

nearly equal. I may add that, even in countries where the total female population exceeds the male, the male deaf mutes have been found far to out-number the females. For instance, in Saxony, by a census taken in 1832, there were, in a female population of 801,599, only 522 deaf mutes ; while in a male population of 756,554 there were 643 deaf mutes. I am not aware that any theory has yet been formed to account for the greater prevalence of deafness, and some other infirmities, among male children. So far as there is a constitutional difference, we should suppose it in favor of the stronger sex ; and the greater exposure of boys to the weather and to accidents hardly begins early enough to have any material effect on the proportion of deaf mutes, since more than half the cases of deafness, of which the causes have been recorded, were congenital ; and, in about three-fourths of the remainder, the loss of hearing occurred before the age of three.*

I will detain you upon but one other topic connected with the census returns—the ages of the deaf mutes returned. This is a point of considerable importance, going to show that probably one-half or more of the deaf mutes, under ten years of age, were unrecognized or overlooked.

I have not yet obtained a statement of the ages of the general population, according to the last census : but it will be sufficiently accurate for my purpose to assume that the

* For the number of deaf mutes, blind, etc., of each sex, in each State, the reader is referred to a table published a few weeks since in the *National Intelligencer*.

proportion of the different ages does not differ materially from the proportion of the same ages in 1840.

In the table which has been obligingly furnished me from the Census Office, the deaf and dumb are classed as under ten; of ten, and under thirty; of thirty, and under seventy; and of seventy and upward. There must be a serious error in the number returned as over seventy, for one-half of the whole number over that age are returned from two States, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania; and I know of no causes to collect aged deaf mutes in those two States. The effect is to make the number of deaf mutes in Massachusetts over seventy years, more than one-tenth of the whole; and in Pennsylvania, one-eighteenth. Such proportions, being four times as great as the proportion of persons of seventy and upward, in the general population, are utterly incredible. I can only account for this result by supposing that some of the assistant marshals, in each of the two States, have erroneously returned, as deaf and dumb, a number of old people who had merely become deaf by old age. The proportions of deaf mute septuagenarians in the other twenty-nine States do not but little exceed the proportion of persons of the same age among the whole population; but as the error just considered may have had some influence in the other returns too, we must accept very cautiously the favorable view of the comparative longevity of the deaf and dumb, which is presented on the face of the returns.

I will, therefore, include in one sum the deaf mutes be-

tween thirty and seventy, and those over seventy. Computing the general population of the same sex, and age, as in like proportion to the total of that color, as it was in 1840, we have :

TABLE IV.—WHITES.

1 MALES.

	<i>Population.</i>	<i>Deaf Mutes.</i>	<i>Proportion.</i>
Under 10,	3,174,500	888	1 : 3,570
From 10 to 30,	4,092,100	2,634	1 : 1,550
Above 30,	2,762,000	1,638	1 : 1,700
2 FEMALES.			
Under 10,	3,029,800	720	1 : 4,200
From 10 to 30,	3,987,600	2,082	1 : 1,930
Above 30,	2,584,000	1,400	1 : 1,750

(N.B.—71 males and 36 females were returned from Illinois, whose ages were not given.)

From this table it appears that the proportion of deaf mutes returned as under ten is, with each sex, considerably less than half as large as the proportion between ten and thirty. This result is nearly uniform in every district of considerable population, wherever enumerations of deaf mutes have been made, whether in America or in Europe. To put the point in a clearer light, we will compare the present number of deaf mutes, over ten, with the whole number returned ten years ago :—

White deaf and dumb, present number over ten	7,754
Do., do., whole number returned in 1840	6,682
	<hr/>
Increase	972

If the ages of the 107 from Illinois, just mentioned, were known, this difference would be found still greater, at least 1,150.

The present white population, over ten, is estimated at	13,426,200
Whole white population in 1840	14,189,200
	<hr/>
Decrease in the ten years	763,000

In other words, while the white population of 1840, in growing ten years older, has *decreased*, by the excess of deaths over immigration, more than three-quarters of a million, or nearly an eighteenth part, the number of deaf mutes surviving from 1840 has apparently *increased* by one-sixth. It is impossible to ascribe any part of this increase to immigration from abroad, for we have just seen that the immigration of persons born before 1840 has fallen short, at least three-quarters of a million, to balance the loss by death, to the whole white population who were living in the United States in 1840; and, we have before remarked, that the tide of emigration does not bring with it a full proportion of, deaf mutes. Moreover, in 1850, the whole number of deaf

deaf-mutes returned as of foreign birth was only 567, less than half the increase, and this includes those under ten and those who were in the country in 1840.

From these data, it may safely be assumed that the whole number of deaf-mutes who were living in the United States in 1840 must have decreased in 1850, by the excess of deaths over immigrations, at least, one eighteenth part. And, as we find in 1850 about 7,832 deaf-mutes over ten (allowing for those in Illinois), we find, by the rule just laid down, the number in 1840 should have been 8,292, instead of the returned number, 6,682—a difference of 1,610, or 24 per cent., which, as the general proportion of deaf-mutes to the whole population has but slightly varied, can only be ascribed to the imperfectness of the returns where young children are in question. Allowing a proportional deficiency in the returns for 1850, we shall have :

Number of white deaf-mutes returned	.	.	9,469
Add 24 per cent.	.	.	2,272
			<hr/>
Approximation to the real number	.	.	11,741

This estimate may be rather too high, for if we add the whole 2,272 to the number now returned as under ten it will make the proportion of deaf-mutes under that age 1 : 1,600, whereas the average proportion between the ages of ten and thirty is only 1 : 1,740. Allowance must, indeed, be made for the probable greater proportion of deaths among deaf-mute infants than among children of better constitutions,

and better able to make their ailments known ; but allowance must also be made for the number who, between one census and another, became deaf by disease or accident ; practically, indeed, these last ought to be included in estimating the future numbers of deaf mutes who will require provision for their education. Still, to keep on the safe side, we will only suppose the number of deaf mutes under ten ought to be as large, in proportion to the population of the same age, as the number between ten and thirty, which would give 3,566 white deaf mutes under ten, instead of 1,608, and make the total of white deaf and dumb, 11,377. To this should be added an increase of, at least, six per cent. since June, 1850—making the probable present number 12,060.

Applying the same correction to the numbers returned from our own State, we shall have :

White deaf mutes returned under 10,	181,	a proportion of 1 : 4,285
Making this proportion equal to the next, we have 499,	“	1 : 1,770
Deaf mutes returned between 10 and 30,	726,	“ 1 : 1,770
Do., do., do., over 30,	390,	“ 1 : 2,290
<hr/>		
Whole number returned	1,297	“ 1 : 2,351
Number corrected as above	1,615	“ 1 : 1,888

Only ten colored deaf mutes were returned in a colored population of 47,397. Colored deaf mutes, I need hardly say, are in this, and other Northern States, as much entitled to the means of education as the whites ; and several are, or have been, in the New-York Institution.

Applying the same test to our own State that has just been applied to the numbers from the whole Union, we find that, in 1840, the number of white deaf mutes returned was 1,039. In 1850, there were returned 1,117, above ten years of age—an *increase* of one-thirteenth part. The whole white population in 1840 was 2,378,890; the estimated number above ten, in 1850, is 2,176,400, a decrease of more than one-twelfth part. If there has been a similar decrease, by excess of deaths and emigrations over immigrations, among the deaf and dumb—in order that there may be 1,117 deaf mutes over ten now, there should have been 1,220 deaf mutes in 1840, instead of the returned number, 1,039. And, making a proportional correction on the whole number returned for 1850, we shall have 1,521 white deaf mutes in the State; a smaller number than was just obtained, by estimating the proportion under ten to be as great as the proportion between ten and thirty, instead of a larger number, as in the case of the whole Union. From the number of applications for admission into the New-York Institution, I am inclined to believe the last estimated number, 1,521, is, to say the least, not too high.

The causes of this great deficiency in the number returned as under ten years are, the difficulty of determining, in the first year or two, whether the child hears or not (in fact, the conviction that the child is deaf is, in many cases, only forced on the parents when it proves, at the usual age, unable to learn to speak; and in the case of children who have become

accidentally deaf, yet retaining the ability to utter a few words, the unwillingness of their parents to class them with the deaf and dumb.

Whatever may be the numbers of deaf children, or of those destined to become such, in our State, under the age of ten, the returns of the number above ten may be assumed to be tolerably correct. We find then, in the State, including two colored, 728 deaf mutes between the ages of ten and thirty. The number actually in the New-York Institution is 243 ; but of these, 27 are from abroad, leaving 216 from our own State. Judging from the ages of the general population, the number who are between the ages of twelve and thirteen, the proper age of admission into the Institution, should be, on the average, about one sixteenth part of the number between ten and thirty, or, in the present case, forty-five. To educate the whole, there should, then, be forty-five admissions into the Institution annually. And as the average continuance in school should not be less than six years, (for though the less promising portion are restricted to five, others are allowed seven years,) this would give 270 pupils from our own State, instead of the present number of 216. There is then, evidently a deficiency ; but it is very far from being as great as was hastily estimated in a paper read before this Society in February last, and published in its Transactions, to this paper I shall again refer.

It is to be observed that the deficiency in the number who ought to be in school, is owing, in part, to the number who

continue less than five years, the terms of many promising pupils being shortened by the unwise interference of their families, who desire their assistance at home. It is probable, therefore, that the whole number of deaf mutes in the State who are not sent to school at all, is considerably less than the difference between 216 and 270. And of this number, whatever it be, a proportion are disqualified from physical or mental disorders, from being received into an Institution.

I have, at present, no data to determine exactly how large a proportion of the adult deaf and dumb of the State remain without education. But as the New-York Institution, for several years past, has never refused any suitable applicants, it may safely be affirmed that, of those under the age of thirty-five or forty, none now remain uneducated, more or less, except by the indifference or neglect of their parents or guardians. Of such cases, there must be too many. And I would earnestly appeal to every man of intelligence, benevolence, and social influence, to aid in dispelling the ignorance, or awakening from the apathy of such parents and guardians. An increase of applications beyond our present means of support, would prompt a new appeal to the Legislature, which, to their honor be it said, judging from the experience of many years, it may be confidently predicted, that body will never refuse to grant when necessary.

I am most happy to say that, in most of the other Northern States, as well as in our own State, legislative justice and benevolence have provided for the indigent deaf and dumb

means of education sufficient for all whose friends can be induced to part with them long enough for them to be educated. In the South and South-West there is still a large deficiency ; but the cause has in that section of the Union, made a decided progress within a few years ; and we are encouraged to hope that the period is not remote when the means of education will be freely provided for every child in our favored country, whether able to hear and speak, or, by a dispensation of Providence, deaf and dumb.

The returns of the American census throw no light on a point of considerable importance, the proportion between cases of congenital and of accidental deafness. These cases have however been distinguished in some European enumerations, and the records of our American Institutions present a sufficient number of cases to form pretty extensive deductions. Out of 1060 deaf mutes who have been pupils of the Asylum at Hartford, the infirmity was congenital in 537 cases ; the result of disease or accident in 469, and in 54 cases it was unknown whether the deafness was congenital or not. Attempts have been made to ascertain the proportion among the pupils of the New-York Institution, but the list is as yet too incomplete to be cited. We have reason to believe that the result will not vary greatly from that observed at Hartford ; and the experience of other American Institutions has been similar.

In Europe, the cases of accidental deafness, seem much fewer than in our own country. In nine or ten of the Euro-

pean Schools, there were found, in the aggregate, 334 cases of congenital, to 204 of accidental, deafness ; and the census of the deaf and dumb of Belgium, taken in 1835, gave 1484 congenital to 407 accidental cases.

The diseases to which the loss of hearing has been ascribed are very various. Of the 469 cases at Hartford, above mentioned, the disease was not specified in 108, external injuries or accidents were assigned in 22, and the remaining 339 were ascribed to nineteen different diseases, or classes of diseases.

The most prolific diseases in the list, are

Scarlet Fever, . . .	91 cases.
Spotted Fever, . . .	48 “
Typhus Fever, . . .	15 “
Fever not specified, . . .	32 “
Ulcers,	55 “
Inflammation in the head	31 “
Dropsy,	15 “
Measles,	16 “
Whooping Cough, . . .	14 “

To other diseases, as small-pox, lung fever, yellow fever, palsy, fits, scrofula, erysipelas, mumps and rickets, are ascribed from one to six cases each. As these statements were very often obtained from ignorant persons, and in many cases there had been no medical attendance, perfect reliance cannot be placed on them. Still, after making every allow-

ance, it will be seen that scarlet and spotted fever, ulcers, and inflammation of the head, are far the most frequent causes of the loss of hearing among children. Among the pupils of the New-York Institution, so far as the facts have yet been ascertained, fevers have caused proportionably much fewer cases of deafness than in New England, and a greater number has been assigned to colds, gatherings and inflammation in the head.

In this connection, I am led to speak of the attempts to cure deafness. Of course it does not become me, especially in such a presence, to pronounce on the possibility of relieving this infirmity by medical means, or on the best remedies to be employed. My object is merely to relate *facts*, and the results of experiments made by medical men who have specially studied this subject.

The natural desire of parents and relatives to restore a deaf child to hearing and speech, certainly the *best*, and regarded by uninformed people as almost the *only* means of social intercourse and moral and religious cultivation, has ever been a fruitful source of quackery. It may be safely affirmed that there is no child deaf by disease or accident, or whose deafness is hoped to be curable, on whom twenty different remedies have not been tried, most of them absurd, some very painful, and some even dangerous. But the success has been far below the average in cases of empiricism. You all know that multitudes of cures, due solely to the recuperative powers of nature, have been ascribed to the

last quack remedies that happened to be employed; but in cases of deafness so marked as to occasion dumbness, recovery, spontaneous or otherwise, hardly happens once in ten thousand times.

Nor hardly has better success attended the efforts of the profoundest science and the most enlarged experience. Obstructions in the auditory passages may be cleared away; the tone of the nerves and of the system generally may be improved; and by these and other means partial deafness is often relieved. But, as the internal parts of the ear lie beyond the ken of the physician, attempts to remedy the diseases or malstructure of those parts must be made very much in the dark, and the result, in a great number of instances reported, has been, one case here and there more or less relieved, to some hundreds in which useless suffering was inflicted.

I believe post-mortem examinations to ascertain the immediate causes of deafness have been rare in this country, and comparatively few such are recorded in Europe. Dr. Itard, the late able and most distinguished physician of the Institution for the deaf and dumb of Paris, who perhaps made more such examinations than any other man, believed that in most cases of profound deafness, the cause was paralysis of the auditory nerve. In other words, in most deaf mutes, the nerves of hearing are *dead*, and MEDICAL MEANS HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE DEAD.

Still there are generally to be found men who have full

faith in the mysterious operation of certain remedies of their own, which, like a charmed gun, shooting in the dark, shall hit the mark; and there are still seldomer wanting men who have a much juster confidence in human credulity. Between these two classes, the anxious parent will never want remedies, and flattering promises of cure to his deaf child; till the most tenacious hope and patience being at length wearied out by constant failures, he at last returns to the point which for the good of the child, should have been attended to long before, the means of alleviating its misfortune by education.

Still I am far from affirming that means may not yet be discovered to cure deafness in many cases. Though cauterization of the external glands, highly stimulating injections of the ear, perforation of the tympanum, injections of the eustachian tube, electricity and magnetism have all been tried, and with very rare exceptions, have all signally failed, it is not for me to say that the resources of surgical and medical science for the cure of deafness have been exhausted. If profound deafness has hitherto been cured in one case in ten thousand, why may not means be found to relieve it in one case in a thousand, or even one in a hundred? The benefit to be attained is certainly worth research, and effort and risk, if the risk be not too great.

All I ask is that the parents and friends of deaf-mute children may be warned against *empiricism*, whether in village herb doctors, or in the more imposing and widely

advertised practioners who, by assurance, address, and knowledge of human nature, sometimes get into fashion in our large cities. About a year since a physician of some notoriety, who had been for some ten years professing to cure deafness in some cities in Great Britain, came over to this city and contrived to have his advent heralded, as a piece of news interesting to the cause of humanity, in some very respectable papers. The number of letters of enquiry from the more prudent class of parents of deaf-mute children at a distance, which this announcement drew forth, showed the interest which had been excited and the hopes that had been awakened. In some cases, children were taken from school, to the serious interruption of their progress, to be placed under the care of the great English doctor. He has now had ample time and opportunity to prove what he can do; and if a single deaf mute has been benefitted by his means, I have yet to learn the fact

In view of these facts, I would respectfully suggest that a committee be appointed from among the members of this society, whose business it shall be to examine into the causes of deafness and means and prospect of cure. A report from the proposed committee might have a salutary influence in allaying this feverish anxiety of the parents and friends of deaf-mute children; and induce them to pay more attention, than they have yet done, to the far more important and infinitely surer means of remedying the misfortune of the deaf and dumb, by making their other senses, and especially

that of sight, supply the probably irremediable loss of the hearing.

The Medical Society of the State of New-York has already testified its benevolent interest in the deaf and dumb by publishing, in its transactions, papers, prepared by one of its most distinguished members, Peter Van Buren, M.D., upon the deaf and dumb and upon Deaf and Dumb Institutions. The paper published in the transactions for February, 1852 (page 75), has attracted my attention; and finding in it inaccuracies and misconceptions, which, from so respectable a source, may mislead others, and thus have an ill influence on the cause, I propose to make a few comments upon it, and thus conclude a paper already, perhaps, too long.

While the excellent spirit displayed by the writer of the article in question is highly gratifying and commendable, he will excuse me for saying that his opinions and assertions appear to have been put forth, in some cases, either upon too slight investigation or from defective sources of information. Two of these, viz., that there are in this State 700 to 800 deaf mutes, of a suitable age to receive instruction, while but a fraction over two hundred are actually brought under instruction (page 83-4); and that "the congenitally deaf are, *by far*, the largest proportion" (page 80). I have already presented the means of correcting. From the context, however, the writer seems to have intended, by "the congenitally deaf," not only those properly so designated,

but those who have lost their hearing so early in infancy as not to have acquired or retained any knowledge of articulate speech. Taken in this sense, the inaccuracy is very excusable.

It is, indeed, "especially true" that, in the case both of "the congenitally deaf" and of those who have become deaf in early infancy, "the language of pantomime is the most convenient and reliable mode of communicating" with them, and far the best medium for developing their mental faculties and moral and religious feelings. But it is a remarkable, though, as I have had occasion to know, a common confusion of ideas, to speak of this "language of pantomime" being "founded on the manual alphabet."

The language of pantomime, or of natural signs, is, in its origin and its essence, wholly independent of the manual alphabet, and can, by cultivation, be made to answer all purposes of communication without any aid whatever from the latter. But, in practice, in conversing with educated, or partially educated, deaf mutes, the manual alphabet is much used as an auxiliary to signs, usually for spelling proper names of persons and places, and certain words for which no sufficiently short and convenient signs are in use. This is generally the extent to which the deaf and dumb use the manual alphabet in conversation among themselves. But, in conversing with their hearing and speaking acquaintances, who have learned to spell with the fingers, but are but imperfectly acquainted with their signs, they use the

manual alphabet as the principal means of communication. Here, however, the tediousness of spelling out every sentence, letter by letter, (not to speak of the imperfect acquaintance with the correct forms of our language on the part of so many deaf mutes), usually induces the formation of a peculiar dialect, composed of the principal words of a sentence, spelled on the fingers, while the particles and other secondary words are supplied by gestures or left to the imagination. It is this broken dialect, which cannot be called a language, composed sometimes of more signs than words, sometimes of more words than signs, that appears to have impressed so many intelligent men with the idea of the manual alphabet being an important part of the system of instruction, and the foundation of the language of signs. I desire to repeat distinctly that this broken dialect is not a language. It is neither the language of pantomime, vernacular to the deaf and dumb, and the great lever in their instruction, nor a reproduction, by manual spelling, of our own vernacular language of words. It is used between deaf mutes and their hearing and speaking acquaintances, just as, on a frontier, a jargon comes into use composed of words and phrases from two distinct languages.

What the deaf and dumb need for the purpose of intellectual and moral development, is a language which they can learn without long and laborious instruction. Children who hear learn a language of spoken words spontaneously. Deaf mutes can, only by resolute, persevering, and long con-

tinued mental effort, acquire a language of visible signs for words. And it makes no difference in their favor if the visible signs be taken in the movements of the organs of speech, instead of positions of the fingers, or characters on paper. In either case, the convenience, grace, unction, and life of the language are gone.

But in the pantomime as used among themselves, or by those practiced in communicating with them, they find a language which they learn rapidly and spontaneously, and employ with the clearness, convenience and celerity necessary for social enjoyment. For them, pantomime, in which the soul looks forth through the eyes and gestures, is the only *living* language. All languages of words are to them *dead* languages, and must ever be.

Hence it is that our deaf mutes learn written language slowly, and use it imperfectly. Can we do better in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, than they do in English? Yet these languages present far fewer difficulties of vocabulary or of structure for us, than our written languages do for the deaf and dumb.

From these remarks, it may be understood that the writer of the article I am considering is quite in error in supposing that the use of the manual alphabet, by the Abbé de l'Epée, "marked a new era in the history of mute instruction." Manual alphabets had been used by teachers before him, and his own was mainly borrowed from Bonet, a Spanish teacher, whose work on this art was published as early as

1620. This, however, is wholly immaterial. That which formed the distinctive merit of the method of De l'Epée, and marked his appearance as "a new era in mute instruction," was the development and improvement which his labors gave to the language of signs. To De l'Epée it is due that this language, such as I have defined it, has taken its proper place, *as the best instrument of instruction, of intellectual and moral development, of social enjoyment, and of religious cultivation for the deaf and dumb.* It must be remembered, however, that with us this language is a *means*, not an *object* of instruction. Our pupils learn it spontaneously, by intercourse with each other, but we aid them in expanding and improving it.

The limits of a paper like the present will not permit me to speak at length of the imperfections of the method of De l'Epée, and of the improvements that have been made in the art since his time, in France, by Sicard, and especially by Bébien, and by others since ; and in our own country, by the revered Gallaudet and others. I will only observe that the assertion of the paper under consideration, that, since the mode of instruction, "as at present pursued," "was publicly introduced into France, no perceptible deviation has been made,"* is singularly at variance with facts ; and in the inference that no improvements have been made in our art, for nearly a century past, eminently unjust to both French and American teachers of the deaf and dumb.

* p. 78.

We are, I trust, not less zealous in seeking improvements, or less ready to adopt them when fully tested, than the members of any other profession. Our present practice is a great variation from, and judging by the results, a great improvement on the practice of De l'Épée, and even of Sicard—renowned as the latter was in his own day. We are seeking, and hope to find, still further improvements, and have not, I believe, yet reached the point where human skill not being able to go farther, an art deteriorates from the mere love of change.

I fully agree with the respected writer of the article in question that the term at present allowed is too short. The deaf and dumb, with all their disadvantages, are actually allowed a shorter term of instruction than is given in our common schools to children possessed of all their senses, and when they come to school, already possessed of the great key to knowledge, language, to acquire which costs years of arduous labor to the deaf and dumb. The Directors of the New-York Institution, appreciating this fact, have lately resolved to found in the Institution a High Class, in which the opportunity of higher improvement will be offered to the better portion of our pupils for two or three years longer. If this experiment succeeds, the proposed High Class may be extended in its scope, and will thus obviate the necessity for "a university or college" for the deaf and dumb, proposed by our respected writer. If it fails, the fact may be taken as a conclusive indication that such a "university or college" would not be supported.

The suggestion for the establishment of "infant or primary schools" for the deaf and dumb, is the last feature in this paper which I have time to notice. When we reflect how widely scattered this class of population are, there seldom being more than from one to three or four in any single town of average size, it is manifestly impracticable to found "infant and primary" schools that would be productive of any extensive good. There would have to be nearly as many schools as pupils, unless it is proposed to board, as well as teach, the little children, which, for obvious reasons, I regard as very undesirable in the case of very young children who yet need much of that care which none can give as well as a mother.

But it is most true that the early education and training of deaf-mute children, before they reach the proper age of entering the Institution, is too much neglected. Efforts have been made to remedy, in some degree, this evil, by publishing and widely circulating brief and plain directions to parents and friends of deaf-mute children for their early management, and for the first steps in their instruction. The advice, moreover, has been repeatedly given, and I would here again repeat it, that where the parents have not the leisure or ability to begin the deaf and dumb child's education at home, it should be sent, along with its brothers and sisters who hear, to the district or primary school, where it may at least easily acquire the habit of order, the ability to imitate letters correctly with a pen, and the names of many

common objects, which can be explained by pictures, or by merely pointing to them.

I have much pleasure in admitting the claims of the medical profession on the gratitude of the deaf and dumb. An eminent physician of Dublin, Dr. Orpen, was the founder of the school for deaf mutes in that city. It was a distinguished physician of Hartford, Dr. Cogswell, who, urged by parental solicitude as well as characteristic philanthropy, was the first mover in the establishment of the American Asylum. And the foundation of the New-York Institution was due, more than to any other single man, to the late Dr. Samuel Akerly. And, in proportion to the benevolence, energy, and justly great influence of the profession, it is important that its members should be well informed on all topics which may come before them, or attract their sympathy and labors.

I have, therefore, been induced to offer these remarks on a subject that has in its various bearings been with me the study of a life time, and on which, however, I still find something new to learn. If I shall have prompted any members of this profession to a more thorough and accurate investigation of a subject which, as I have remarked in the beginning of this paper, is by most men, even of uncommon intelligence, very imperfectly understood, my labor will not have been in vain.

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parental solicitude as well as characteristic philanthropy,
was the first mover in the establishment of the American
Asylum. And the foundation of the New-York Institution
was due, more than to any other single man, to the late Dr.
Samuel A. Knapp. And in proportion to the benevolence,
energy, and justly great influence of the profession, it is im-
portant that its members should be well informed on all top-
ics which may come before them, or attract their sympathy
and labor.

I have, therefore, been induced to offer these remarks on
a subject that has in its various bearings been with me the
study of a life time, and on which, however, I still find some-
thing new to learn. If I shall have prompted any members
of the profession to a more thorough and accurate investi-
gation of a subject which, as I have remarked in the begin-
ning of this paper, is by most men, even of uncommon in-
telligence, very imperfectly understood, my labor will not
have been in vain.

