

Fourth annual report of the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Training School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Children, to the corporators.

Contributors

Pennsylvania Training School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Children.
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FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OF THE

PENNSYLVANIA TRAINING SCHOOL

FOR

Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Children,

TO

THE CORPORATORS.



Philadelphia:

HENRY B. ASHMEAD, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER,

GEORGE STREET ABOVE ELEVENTH.

1857.

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PENNSYLVANIA TRAINING SCHOOL

Blind and Deaf-Blind Children

THE CORPORATION

Philadelphia

LEWIS & CLARK BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS

1000 MARKET STREET

1887

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Philip S. Justice,	James E. Rhoads, M. D.,
Wistar Morris,	Robert P. Smith.

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COMMITTEES FOR THE YEAR 1857.

Admission and Discharge.

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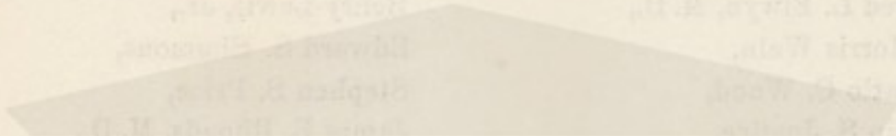
Female Visitors.

Miss Margaretta Morris, Germantown,
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Treasurer—ALONZO FOTTELL, D.D.

Secretary—KATHLEEN T. HENRY

COMMITTEES FOR THE YEAR 1887.

JAMES M. HENRY, RUFUS L. HENRY, EDWARD H. HENRY, JAMES G. HENRY, No. 120 Market Street, LEASE COLLIER, No. 2300 Broadway, S. MORRIS WEALE, No. 210 South Street.

HENRY HENRY, M.D., No. 211 Ash Street, STEPHEN H. HENRY, No. 100 Chestnut Street, ALFRED L. HENRY, M.D., No. 214 Walnut Street.

ALFRED L. HENRY, M.D., No. 214 Walnut Street.

ALFRED L. HENRY, M.D., No. 214 Walnut Street.

JOHN HARRISON, No. 128 South Fourth Street, PHILIP S. HARRIS, North-east corner Fifth and Chestnut Streets, WALTER HENRY, South-east corner Third and Walnut Streets.

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WALTER HENRY, No. 128 South Fourth Street.

WALTER HENRY, No. 128 South Fourth Street.

WALTER HENRY, No. 128 South Fourth Street.

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ANNUAL REPORT.

IN presenting this their Fourth Annual Report, the Directors of the Pennsylvania Training School for Idiotic and Feeble-minded Children, desire to acknowledge with devout gratitude to God, the blessing which has continued to rest upon their labors. The experience of each year strengthens their conviction that the work to which this Institution has been devoted, is not a visionary or impracticable one; and that the success which it will command, if properly sustained, will far surpass the anticipations of the most sanguine. The afflicted class, in whose interest it labors, are as numerous as the insane; and since it has been ascertained that their case admits of so large a measure of alleviation, the time, we are persuaded, must come when their claims upon the prayers and bounty of the benevolent will be more clearly and effectually recognized.

The late principal, Mr. James Richards, has been succeeded, within the last year, by Dr. Joseph Parrish. To his Report the Directors would refer as a document deserving careful perusal. It exhibits the condition of the family, the measures which have been taken to secure the comfort of the inmates, the development

of their dormant powers—and the encouraging success with which those measures have been followed.

The Report of the Treasurer will explain the fiscal condition of the enterprise.

It is hardly necessary to add, that this Institution greatly needs the increased aid of the benevolent, as well as more of the fostering care of the Commonwealth. With unshaken confidence, that neither of these will be withheld, and with the fervent hope that His abundant blessing will be vouchsafed, without whom nothing is strong, this Report is respectfully submitted,

In behalf of the Directors.

ALONZO POTTER,

President.

Philadelphia, Feb. 5th, 1857.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT.

PENNSYLVANIA TRAINING SCHOOL,
Germantown, Jan. 1857.

TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

GENTLEMEN :

In January, 1856, there were twenty-six children under the care of the Institution. On the withdrawal of James B. Richards, the former principal, eight were removed, two of whom it is believed, were admitted into public schools.

On entering upon my duties in May last, I found eighteen under treatment; twelve of whom were males, and six females. The following table will exhibit the increase since that time, and our present condition.

Number in May,	18
Admitted since,	20
	—
	38
Removed since May,	5
	—
Present number,	33
Of these there are,	
Males,	20
Females,	13
	—
Total,	33

*Recipients of State fund,	17
Private cases,	16
	—
Total,	33

There are from

Pennsylvania,	28
New Jersey,	2
Virginia,	1
District of Columbia,	1
Louisiana,	1
	—
Total,	33

Of those removed, there were,

Improved,	3
Stationary,	2
	—
	5

Of those admitted, there are,

Epileptics,	5
Scrofulous,	9
Unable to walk,	1
Afflicted with Chorea,	1
Paralytic,	1
Healthy,	3
	—
	20

Of those admitted, there are,

Mutes,	8
Semi-Mutes,	4
With defective articulation,	6
With correct articulation,	2
	—
Total,	20

* Since this Report was written, the admissions on the State Fund have increased to twenty, being the full number allowed by the State. [See the 6th section of the Act of Incorporation. Approved, April 7th, 1853.]

Whole number of	
Epileptics,	11
Scrofulous,	12
With deformed limbs,	2
Unable to walk,	2
Afflicted with Chorea,	1
Paralytic,	1
Healthy,	4
	—
Total,	33

Whole number of	
Mutes,	13
Semi-Mutes,	6
With defective Articulation,	10
With correct articulation,	4
	—
Total,	33

Twenty of our children can sing in concert—those who cannot utter words, being able to give expression to the sounds; seven can read short sentences; twelve spell; seven engage in elementary drawing and writing; five study geography, six arithmetic; five sew or knit; five engage in domestic work; three can assist in gardening, and sixteen take lessons in phonetics.

Of the thirteen mutes, five have learned to pronounce monosyllables, and three to form short sentences.

Of the six semi-mutes, three have improved.

Of the cases of defective articulation, six have improved.

All our mutes have the sense of hearing perfect.

Those classed as semi-mutes, repeat one or more simple sentences from habit, but do not apply them intelligently.

Two cases of defective articulation, have defective hearing.

Three semi-mutes, and six cases of defective articulation have improved.

These results are mainly attributable to daily phonological exercises, in which they engage with interest. Those who speak imperfectly, thus acquire a more ready command of sound, though their progress is not so remarkable as in those who have never spoken; it being more difficult to overcome the habit of imperfect speech, than to stimulate the passive organs to utterance.

There has been a decided improvement in some cases of epilepsy—while two have been almost entirely relieved. Time alone can determine the permanency of the change.

Without examining the pathological conditions on which this fearful malady is supposed to depend, or attempting a description of its different forms of development, I wish, in this connection, briefly to notice the important fact that idiocy and epilepsy, are frequently concurrent in the same individual, and that epilepsy almost universally results in mental imbecility. One-third of our present family of imbeciles, are epileptics; and so far as it is possible to trace the history of these cases, the feebleness of mind has been induced by the primary epileptic seizure. That such is very generally the case, is an admitted fact of etiological science.

The great object of this Institution should be, not only to improve, but to prevent mental imbecility. We will always have epileptics applying for admission; and we cannot serve the cause in which we have embarked, and turn them aside. The two affections are kindred in the chain of cause and effect, and should be treated

with reference to their connection with each other. I know that it has been the habit of the few existing institutions for "training idiots," to avoid as far as possible the admission of such cases of idiocy as are complicated with epilepsy—and perhaps justly so, under their forms of organization; but while it is a noble aim to develop the germ of intellect that is hidden beneath the physical infirmity of the idiotic child, it is a wiser one to embrace within the circle of kindly influence, and skillful care, the poor victim of both epilepsy and imbecility. The deaf, mute, sightless, insane, maimed, and idiotic of Pennsylvania's children, are the subjects of her bounty; but if they come knocking at the door of public charity, and say they are either of these, and yet have epilepsy, they are unwelcome claimants of her protection; and if received at all, are consigned to a secondary place, to be cared for only at convenient seasons. We need a separate department for this class of sufferers. Eleven of our present family are fit subjects for it, and many others in community are waiting for the Legislature to provide more suitably for their relief.

We are now styled a "Training School for Idiotic and Feeble-minded Children."

What is idiocy? and what feeble-mindedness?

The line of difference has never been intelligently drawn. The law, I believe, defines what an idiot is *not*—as "a person who can measure a yard of cloth, count twenty correctly, and tell the days of the week." And a distinguished French philanthropist, who has devoted years of labor upon this class of children, tells us what an idiot *is*, in the following words. "The type of an idiot is an individual who knows nothing, can do nothing, and wishes nothing; and every idiot approaches more or

less to this maximum of incapacity." In other words, he is an individual, without individuality, a human being, without the attributes of humanity, and is certainly unfitted for school-room duties. I prefer however, not to use the word idiot. I hope it may soon become obsolete. All that need be conveyed by it, is expressed by the term imbecile. The true etymological meaning of imbecility is, *want of strength*. And there can be no more simple and expressive term than this, as applied to the children under our care. Some of them can do more than "count twenty, and measure a yard of cloth," and hence are not idiots in law; while none of them are of so low a type as to measure *down* to the standard expressed in the second definition. Yet all of them want strength. They are sent to us to be strengthened,—first in body, then in mind; hence the foundation of our Institution must of necessity be hygienic. We have to provide for cases where the muscles and tissues of the body are shrunken and flabby; the joints feeble, and spines crooked. We have heads preternaturally large and small, pointed chests, spongy bones, and deformities of various kinds, either, or all of which forms of degeneracy may be the *birth-right* of the possessor, or the result of acute disease. Such affections, complicated as they are with a variety of nervous disorders, are not to be cured by applicances for mental training alone. The body is to be *trained*, the joints and muscles must be strengthened by calisthenic and gymnastic exercises;—a temple must first be prepared for the mind to dwell in, before it can be developed. That this may be done, even under discouraging circumstances, may be known by the following brief record of cases.

Case 1.—A boy aged fourteen, admitted June 2d. He could not utter an intelligent word, or make known a single want. He could not walk, or even sit erect; but with body bent forward, and hands outstretched, he tottered unevenly from place to place, apparently without an object; often sitting alone upon the ground, moaning silently as if from some hidden sorrow that was struggling for utterance. He was unable to feed himself, and in going up or down stairs would crawl upon his hands, exhibiting signs, and uttering cries of constant fear. No one could look upon his atrophied limbs, vacant eye, driveling mouth, and stooping form, without being moved with pity. And yet, after fourteen years of seclusion at home, and a residence of only seven months in our Institution, he sits and walks erect, finds his own bed, and his place at table, feeds himself without assistance, and participates in the enjoyments of his associates. The feeble spark of intellect that has so long been buried, begins to kindle, and, like the flickering of a distant light, now and then animates the vacant eye with attentive desire, and brightens up the drooping countenance with an expression of interest in what is being done for his benefit.

Case 2.—A girl aged nine years, admitted June 12th. From a poor widowed mother's care, she entered our family with but a feeble prospect of improvement. In addition to long-neglected filthy habits, and a perverse disposition, she could not articulate a single word, or exhibit an intelligent sign. She knew not even the sound of the bell for meals, and was incapable of helping herself at table with the slightest degree of propriety. She had never used a knife or fork. Her head was always bowed, and it was impossible to arrest her

gaze for a single moment. She possessed a full share of physical activity, yet it was displayed in wayward antics, that were equally eccentric and unmeaning; and when left to herself, it was her delight to be kenneled with the dog, or stroll away through the grove and lie among the bushes, and leaves, gathering decayed sticks, and berries for food. Half a year has now gone by, and this poor child is comparatively confiding in her disposition, less offensive in her habits, and is beginning to talk. Her smiles, so long imprisoned, are now disenthralled; and in times of play, her laugh rings merrily through our halls, and she comes trustingly, day by day, to the side of her instructors, inviting them to "look here" as she points to the beautiful in Nature, or exhibits in herself, some newly discovered sign of her own existence.

Case 3.—A boy aged thirteen, admitted August 17. At home he was almost helpless, and yet exceedingly obstinate; could express but few wants, and supply none. No force of command or persuasion, could induce a prompt effort of mind or body. The lethargy of years had made the weight of existence burdensome to others, if not to himself. He was brought to us after more than a thousand miles of travel, a mere shred of humanity—a perfect example of imbecility, scarcely able to walk, speak, or help himself in any way. If spoken to, he would instantly cover his face with his hand, hang his head, and refuse recognition. If assisted to exert himself, he would immediately cease when left alone. He would neither come when called, or go when directed; but sit alone in the dark, or in the rays of a burning sun, without apparent emotion, or effort to remove. But, from being one of the most obstinate and unpromising

boys in our family, we have not at this time, one more willing and amiable. He now feeds himself, is cleanly in his habits, tractable in disposition, and though yet feeble in body and mind, there is cause for encouragement to hope that a few more years will find him able to support himself.

These cases are presented as the most striking examples of improvement in those of a low grade; though we might present instances of a more rapid advancement from conditions not so low. One of these will be qualified in a few more months, for the primary department of our public schools.

The earliest evidence of mental sensation in the first case, was at the sound of the word *mother*. It had often before been repeated to him, but without eliciting any evidence of his comprehending its meaning; but on one occasion a torrent of tears broke forth immediately on its being audibly pronounced to him, and ever since, he has evinced more susceptibility to mental impressions.

The second, was heedless of any effort to arouse her affections for some months. Her family came and went, from time to time, without affecting her; but recently the name of *home*, pronounced by a sister's voice, awakened her feelings, and she wept bitterly. She soon began to give her attention to objects, and is now almost a new creature.

The third was awakened from his long slumber, by music. At first it alarmed him; he would start, and cry with fear at the sound, or even sight of an accordeon. Three months passed before he could accustom himself to an instrument of music; but now, he sits quietly beside the player, keeps time with his hands, and will even

dance as well as he knows how, in answer to musical sounds.

The great means of access to these children, is through their affections. Love is the magnet that attracts them. Like begets like. Bestow upon them the affection their helpless condition demands, and they will instinctively find a way to reflect it back again; and when this is done, you have possession and command of all that they are. Having gained their confidence, the task of moulding their character commences; it cannot commence before. No person should engage in instructing them, but for the love of it; and no one will love it, unless he has heart enough to delight in the society of the unfortunate, for the sake of doing them good. He must have head enough also, to prompt him, day by day, to new plans and suggestions to meet the ever-varying developments which are displayed in their temperaments and characters. He must be sufficiently patient to endure their slow progress, and sufficiently hopeful to be encouraged with the slightest evidence of improvement. He must have perfect command of himself, and never exhibit undue emotion, or excitement. If he is impulsive, he will be irregular in his treatment; and losing self-control, will lose control over them. He must be uniformly cheerful and happy. Sadness to-day, and glee to-morrow, will act upon the minds of these children like exposure to extremes of climate in quick succession, will act upon their feeble bodies. They need uniform kindness, and steady firmness. Beginning with faithful nursery care, they are next prepared to enter the gymnasium, and are gradually interested in its sports. It will be slow at first perhaps, but perseverance will lead to success. The third case herein cited, was three months learning

to ascend four rounds on the ladder, but when he had learned it, he thought he had done something wonderful; and so he had; for he had not only become familiar with the ladder, but had learned to call it by name; and in climbing but a few inches above the level of the ground, and being able to balance himself there, his attention was in a degree arrested, and he was thus also able to balance his mind. And then, the feeling of self-satisfaction at having performed a feat which was to him extraordinary, induced self-confidence, which being strengthened by the approval and gratulation of his instructors, grew into self-respect, and in reaching this point, he obtained his first great conquest.

The question now presents itself, how may the good of such an institution be extended? Those who have preceded me in the work, both in this country and in Europe, have fully demonstrated the problem, that imbeciles even of a low grade, may be elevated and enlightened. The day of trial has passed;—the time for extension and growth has fully come.* The Legislature has hitherto wisely appropriated means to make the experiment in our own State; and now, having proved it, they will doubtless do all that a generous benevolence, and a matured judgment may dictate, to embrace within the scope of their bounty, a much larger number of epileptics and imbeciles.

The greatest public need of the age in the department of philanthropy seems to be such legislative provision as is herein suggested. Our present building was erected for a private residence, and is not furnished with the ordinary conveniences of modern architecture, and much less with the peculiar appliances requisite for the treatment of such a household as ours. We need more land,

and a properly arranged building, large enough to accommodate from one hundred and fifty, to two hundred persons, containing a—

1. Hospital department for the sick and helpless.
2. A gymnasium for the improvement of all.
3. A school for the more advanced.
4. Shops for light mechanical employments, and
5. An agricultural department, for the instruction of such boys as may be made self-supporting.

This can only be effectually done by Legislative aid; yet we hope for something from a generous public. When it shall be done, the Institution for Imbeciles will be a proud memorial of the wisdom and benevolence of Pennsylvania legislation.

In closing this Report, I cannot but refer to the remarkable immunity of our family from acute disease. Though our children are of very delicate organization, we have not had a single case of alarming sickness during the last eight months, and not an accident worthy of note has happened to any of them.

To the subordinate officers of the house, I am grateful for the fidelity with which they occupy their respective departments; and take pleasure in thus acknowledging the valuable services of Dr. Isaac N. Kerlin as my Assistant, and of Mrs. Sarah Inslee as Matron.

With grateful acknowledgments to the merciful Providence, who has thus far watched over us for good, and the humble hope that He may continue to regard us as the objects of His care, I respectfully submit this Report.

JOSEPH PARRISH,
Superintendent.

Germantown, January 1, 1857.

DR. *Alexander Fullerton, Treas., in account with the Pennsylvania Training School for Idiots, &c.* CR.

<p>1856.</p> <p>To balance from last year,</p> <p>“ Cash from State Treasurer, for State Pupils,</p> <p>To Cash from private pupils,</p> <p>“ dividends on stock,</p> <p>“ legacy of Jasper Cope,</p> <p>“ donations and life subscriptions,</p>	<p>757 66</p> <p>1,991 10</p> <p>4,888 14</p> <p>295 44</p> <p>500 00</p> <p>220 00</p> <hr/> <p>\$8,652 34</p>	<p>1856.</p> <p>By orders drawn, viz. in favor of</p> <p>Salaries,</p> <p>Incidental expenses,</p> <p>Household “</p> <p>Furniture,</p> <p>Repairs,</p> <p>Ger mantown Water Company,</p> <p>Balance,</p>	<p>1,352 22</p> <p>439 87</p> <p>4,913 00</p> <p>297 00</p> <p>1,065 41</p> <p>150 00</p> <p>434 84</p> <hr/> <p>\$8,652 34</p>
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1857. To cash on hand, \$434 84

The Treasurer also states that he holds Certificates of Stock, the property of the Institution, viz.:

Bonds of city of Memphis for \$1000, worth					\$ 750 00
Certificates of Pennsylvania State loan, viz.:					
No. 2,247 for 2,796 19					
" 2,619 for 200 00					
" 3,352 for 100 00					
" 2,191 for 216 29					
			3,312 48	cost	
1 share Pennsylvania Central Rail Road,				"	2,905 65
Loan of city of Philadelphia, \$1,300,					45 00
3 shares Germantown Water Company,					1,199 75
					150 00
					<hr/> 5,050 40
Germantown estate, January, 1856, to which add the amount paid by committee on Re-					
pairs, viz.: \$1,065 41, during this year,					21,013 14
					<hr/> \$26,063 54
Errors and omissions excepted,					

ALEXANDER FULLERTON, *Treasurer.*

January 1, 1857.

JANUARY 8, 1857.
Examined and found correct.
S. MORRIS WALN.

APPENDIX.

The following extracts of cases are taken from reports of similar institutions both at home and abroad, and are presented as confirmatory evidence of the practicability of the work committed to our hands, and of the great success which has attended it, under judicious and liberal auspices.

“A boy who was for a long time speechless; no body could make him utter a syllable, and it was supposed that he had no vocal powers whatever, yet he listened with evident delight to the music and singing of the other pupils, and one night he burst out singing one of the chants which had been used in the course of the day. The power of utterance had been carefully improved, and he could now speak very tolerably. Several had manifested considerable skill in particular operations, and many who in the first instance were apparently helpless and hopeless, were now engaged in duties connected with the Asylum, which, but for their help, persons must have been paid to perform.” *Asylum for Idiots, Colchester, England.*

“A very clever lad, now removed to Earlswood, who had made beautiful models of ships, was an excellent fencer, could glaze windows, &c., was on his reception at Essex Hall as sullen and apparently as helpless an idiot as he ever saw. He could scarcely utter an articulate sound, was disagreeable in temper, fond of solitude; but now they might place him at their own tables, and he would not disgrace them. When he (Mr. Sidney) had the honor, on the 3d of July last, to exhibit this boy's ship model to Prince Albert, he was asked if he meant to say that that beautiful model was made by a poor idiot? He assured his Royal Highness that such was the case; and that when he first knew him the boy could not tell the difference between a dog's tail and his head. (Laughter.) There were six mat makers, who earned between £70 and £80 a-year for the institution. One of these lads when admitted was in a most distressing condition, mentally and bodily, but was now a well-behaved, pleasing young man, and was earning between 12s. and 14s. a-week at mat-making. They had also one rope-maker, 8 tailors, 4 gardeners, and 6 house assistants.”—*Ibid.*

“Maria was received into the Institution of the Abenberg, at the age of seven and a half years. She was in a state of atrophy; her skin was cold, hung loose like a sack, and was covered with an eruption; she could not walk; her joints were soft, and unable to support her weight; she could not speak a word, but would make a howling noise for hours together; ate everything that came in her way; destroyed all that could be broken, and gave no attention to anything that passed before her; at times she would beat and even bite herself; during several months she never slept at night. After six months she was able to stand alone, and at the end of a year could walk very well; her voracious appetite is overcome, and she now eats properly; the nervous excitement is subdued;

she is obedient and friendly: converses very well; plays with flowers and animals, calls them by name, and enjoys the blessing of sleep of which she had long been deprived."—*Rep. of Com. on Idiocy, Conn.*

J. C., a girl of 15 years of age, has been under Dr. Wilber's care a little more than four years. When received, she was mischievous and vicious, very nervous, and could not speak distinctly. She could not be left alone with other children, from a propensity to injure them. She knew some of her letters, but could not be taught to read or write by any ordinary methods.

She now reads well, writes a handsome hand, is remarkably proficient in Geography and Grammar, and has made good progress in addition and subtraction. She sews very neatly, and is very capable as an assistant in household matters. Her nervousness is no longer troublesome, her waywardness has entirely disappeared. In respect to moral training, she seems more advanced than most of the other pupils. She manifests a remarkable familiarity with Bible History, and with the events in the life of our Saviour. When requested to repeat the Lord's Prayer, she did so with a reverence, an impressiveness, and an evident understanding of its petitions, which exhibited in a very favorable light, her intelligence and thoughtfulness; and as I listened to this once vicious and wayward idiot, thus uttering, in our Saviour's own words, her petitions to the throne of heavenly grace, I was more deeply impressed than ever before, with the adaptation of that sublime prayer to every human want."—*Ibid.*

"A young man of 18 years of age, who from infancy, had been always peculiar and deficient in his mental manifestations, and was entirely dumb. From want of proper culture and direction of the vocal organs, he could make only the guttural sound of the trachea; did not move the lips when attempting to utter sounds; was extremely filthy and brutish in his habits, disobedient and sluggish in the extreme.

His physical health was perfect, his muscles were largely and well developed. His perception was good, and he understood what was said to him but could not apply his knowledge; his hearing was perfect. Having been left unrestrained from childhood, and having attained to an age when the evil habits he had acquired had become fixed, and his animal appetites being his only source of enjoyment, I received him with great reluctance, expecting that he would make very little improvement.

He has now been with me a little more than a year. It was nearly three months before I succeeded in inducing him to utter a correct vocal sound. I moulded his lips with my fingers; put blocks and rings of various sizes and shapes into his mouth; taught him general and special imitation; and finally succeeded in concentrating sufficient nervous energy on the muscles of the lips and vocal organs to enable him to master all the vowels, and by dint of perseverance, patience, and drilling, he finally acquired the ability to pronounce the consonants and many of their combinations. By a rigid course of discipline his filthy habits were overcome.

He now reads in Webb's First Reader, and is rapidly learning to speak the names of surrounding objects. His ideas of form, of color, and of numbers, are now very good, and he is acquiring a general knowledge of Geography, Arithmetic, and Natural Philosophy. He can write well from a copy, can draw very creditably and is apt at almost any kind of labor. No one would imagine that this well behaved young man, could have led such a mere animal life one year since. He will be capable, under proper superintendence, of being highly useful in any department of labor, and had he been under suitable training when young, he would have been, I think, entirely cured of all his deficiencies.—*Ibid.*

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