

APPENDIX.

A.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AT PARIS.

KENDALL GREEN, *Washington, D. C., October 2, 1900.*

GENTLEMEN: I have the honor to report that, as authorized by you, Professor Fay and I repaired to Paris early in August last to attend the International Congress for the Study of Questions of Education and Assistance of Deaf-Mutes, invited by the French Government to assemble in Paris on the 6th of that month.

Assistant Professor Hall, of our college faculty, met us in Paris and attended with us all the meetings of the congress.

The composition of this body was interesting and unusual. It consisted of two sections, one composed of deaf-mutes, and the other of hearing persons, mostly teachers. The former had upward of 200 members; the latter something more than 100.

The countries represented were France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Roumania, Norway, Great Britain, the United States of America, and Mexico.

The preliminary arrangements for the congress, which required much labor and attention during many months, were in the hands of a committee at the head of which was Dr. Ladreit de Lacharrière, an eminent medical man of Paris, who had been for thirty years the attending physician of the national institution for deaf-mutes in that city. Dr. Lacharrière was made president of the congress by unanimous consent as a courteous recognition of his arduous labors for its organization. He has never been a teacher of the deaf.

I will not undertake to give with any fullness an account of the proceedings of the congress, for Professor Fay has done this in the *American Annals of the Deaf*, of which journal he is the editor.

It will be sufficient for me to give you the papers presented to the congress by Professor Fay and myself, with a brief statement of the action of the congress in regard to methods.

The following paper, prepared originally in English, was read to the congress in French, and printed copies in English, German, and Italian were distributed among the members at the time of the reading:

WHAT IS SPEECH WORTH TO THE DEAF?

By EDWARD M. GALLAUDET.

No more important question than this commands the attention of educators of the deaf to-day.

For the last twenty years enthusiastic and, no doubt, well-meaning men and women have been urging with ceaseless activity, both in Europe and America, the universal adoption of the oral method, the abolition of all other methods, and the rigid prohibition of the use, in and out of school, of that language which is as natural to the deaf as speech to the hearing.

The cry of these propagandists accomplished its first notable public result at Milan in 1880, when the partisan congress of that year and place shouted frantically for "la méthode orale pure."

It is the habit of these promoters of oral teaching to assert that the value of speech to the deaf is inestimable; that it is worth far more than any other attainment possible to them; that no price is too great to pay for it; that with it the deaf may be fully restored to society; that they can become like "other people;" that they can enter schools and colleges for the hearing and engage in recitations therein without special assistance.

Some have even gone so far as to claim, and this in a bill twice introduced into the Congress of the United States and favorably reported by a committee, that "it has been clearly proven that deaf children can learn articulate speech and language by the use of the eye for all practical purposes as well as children who hear can learn through the ear, provided they have this training in infancy and early childhood."

And those who make this claim seriously promise to impart to all deaf infants committed to their care such facility in speech and lip reading as will enable them to receive their education in schools for the hearing. And they declare the general adoption of measures for teaching speech to deaf children in the days of their infancy will make it possible to discontinue all existing special schools for this class of persons.

It need hardly be said that no results have as yet been attained by the advocates of this extreme policy which entitle it to serious consideration.

Before undertaking to determine the value to the deaf of the speech which is really attainable, we must consider who are the parties to the controversy over methods—whose testimony is to be received and whose opinions are to be weighed.

And we soon perceive that while the judgment of teachers always deserves serious consideration and may often be of great value, no mistake could be greater than to regard instructors as the only persons whose views are to receive our attention. Indeed, it will generally be admitted that teachers are often quite unable to judge as to the practical value of the speech of their pupils.

Many times is the speech of deaf children quite unintelligible to visitors, although their teachers understand it readily; and on such occasions these teachers express surprise that the visitors fail to understand what they easily comprehend.

The natural enthusiasm of teachers for a method, the desirability of which they are anxious to demonstrate, often warps their judgment to such an extent as to render it of little value.

May we, then, accept the opinions of the family and intimate friends of the deaf as to the value of speech to them? Not always; and for reasons similar to those which compel us sometimes to question the testimony of their teachers. Their family and intimate friends soon come to understand their speech, even though it be almost unintelligible to strangers, and so are often incompetent judges of its value in the world at large.

Of more importance than the testimony of teachers, family, and intimate friends is that of casual acquaintances and strangers, but of greatest value in the settlement of the question before us are the opinions and evidence of the deaf themselves.

From these four classes of witnesses I shall bring forward opinions and statements of fact which I hope may carry conviction to the minds of many, if not all, of my colleagues of this congress.

But before adducing this testimony, I wish to take a little time to speak of those particulars in which and circumstances under which speech is, beyond all question, of great value to the deaf.

When a deaf person can, within a reasonable period of school life, acquire a power of speech and lip reading that will enable him or her to converse readily with strangers in social life, in business, and in travel, the acquisition is undoubtedly worth all it has cost.

Many of the advocates of the pure oral method do not hesitate to assure a confiding public that all deaf-mutes are capable of such success in speech. Were this true the controversy over methods would have long since come to an end; but unfortunately it is far from the truth, and so we find in all countries those who question more or less seriously the wisdom of banishing from schools for the deaf all methods except the oral.

In 1867 it was my privilege to make a careful examination of more than forty schools for the deaf in Europe. I was then a young man seeking instruction from my elders. The chief object of my investigation was to determine, if possible, the question I am discussing to-day. It was my good fortune to meet in 1867 nearly all the men prominent at that time in our profession, and, as was natural, I asked them many questions. It will be sufficient for the purpose of this paper to quote from one of these eminent men, "facile princeps" among the teachers of the deaf of his time, Moritz Hill, of Weissenfels. The day I spent with Hill in his school is a precious memory, and doubly so as I had for an interpreter my lifelong friend, Dr. Felix Flugel, the eminent lexicographer, still living in Leipzig.

Anxious to know Mr. Hill's opinion as to the practical value of speech to the mass of his pupils, I asked some questions, which he answered as follows:

"Out of 100 pupils, 85 are capable, when leaving the school, of conversing on commonplace subjects with their teachers, family, and intimate friends; 62 can do so easily."

"Out of 100, 11 can converse readily with strangers on ordinary subjects. Many others learn to do this after quitting school."

In the careful analysis I propose to make of this testimony of Hill's, I concede everything he claims, and shall not, therefore, have to take any account of the teacher's enthusiasm or natural bias for his own method.

First, I notice that 15 out of every hundred are not capable of conversing even on commonplace subjects with their teachers, families, and intimate friends. In speech they are failures. And yet do doubt they have spent many weary hours striving after the unattainable, and many other weary hours oblivious of the instruction their teachers were giving orally to their more favored schoolmates.

In the United States there are 10,000 deaf children in school. According to Hill, 1,500 of these are incapable of success in speech. To them speech is of no value, and the time spent in trying to acquire it is worse than wasted, and should be given to something of worth which is within reach of their faculties. The same proportion will, of course, apply to the deaf in Europe.

Let us now consider those who can "converse on commonplace subjects with their teachers, family, and intimate friends," and what speech is worth to them.

Hill says that out of 100, 85 can do this, this number including the 11 who can do more. Making the necessary reduction, we have 74 whose intelligent use of speech, and this "on commonplace subjects" it must be observed, is limited to the narrow circle of "teachers, family, and intimate friends."

I ask you, my colleagues, to consider what this means. What real conversation, of a stimulating or elevating sort, can these deaf persons hope for in the home circle or among their most intimate friends if they are to be held down forever to the deadly level of the commonplace?

And yet this 74 per cent comprises those who stand for the average successes of the oral method.

How much better off are they than others of equal intelligence who have spent no time in learning to speak, but whose "family and intimate friends" have gladly, for their sake, learned the manual alphabet, and possibly some signs, and by these means are able to have actual conversations with their deaf friends on any subject, often rising far above the level of the commonplace?

Speaking from a personal acquaintance with some thousands of deaf persons, I am fully convinced that comparing the lot of the 74 per cent we are now considering, cut off as they naturally would be from the use of signs and the finger alphabet, with an equal number educated without speech, but well taught on the manual method, the lot of the latter would be far happier and more successful than that of the former.

Let us see now what conclusions must be drawn, if my judgment be just, as to the value of speech to the 10,000 deaf children now in school in my own country.

Fifteen per cent must be set down as getting nothing from speech. Adding to these the 74 per cent we have just been discussing, we have 8,900 whose lives would be happier and more successful were they well educated on the manual method, than if they were educated on the pure oral method. And the same ratio would apply to the deaf of Europe. What then is speech worth to this large majority of the deaf?

In this connection I call to mind a visit I made some years since to the home of a deaf young man, then a student in our college at Washington, all of whose early education had been conducted on the pure oral method. His father was a man of wealth, and he had had as his private tutor one of the most eminent oral teachers of our country. The young man to whom I refer depended on speech and lip reading for his intercourse with his family, and I observed with much surprise that he took little part in the conversation at table or around the fireside. His friends made no attempt to help him understand the lively talk that was going on about him, and he sat much of the time silent and isolated. His neglected and forlorn condition excited my sympathy, and I could not help comparing it with that of many deaf-mutes of my acquaintance, whose friends communicate freely with them by means of the manual alphabet, giving them rapidly and freely all the "give and take" of the home circle.

These, I am confident, had far greater social enjoyment in their families and among their friends than the orally taught youth to whom I have alluded. As I saw him, his speech was of little worth even among his family and immediate friends.

In support of the opinion that this is true of many orally taught deaf persons, I will now bring forward the testimony of a witness whose appearance in this discussion will surprise many, but whose commanding intellectual ability and whose keen powers of observation no one will question. I refer to the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, the well-known British cabinet minister and member of Parliament.

Mr. Chamberlain spent the greater part of a day at the institution at Washington

in 1888, when I had the pleasure of exhibiting to him our methods of instruction in much detail, from the most elementary work of our primary school on through the highest classes of the college.

Three months later Mr. Chamberlain was called before the royal commission on the deaf and the blind in England and asked to give an account of his visit to the college and to state his views in general in regard to the education of the deaf. His testimony fills four and a quarter closely printed folio pages of the report of the commission, and shows him to have been an observer of remarkable powers. He speaks of methods and their relation to each other with the clearness and precision of an expert.

In answer to the following question, "Was the impression you formed from visiting that institution that the combined system was a good one for the deaf and dumb, and that it could be carried on with success?" Mr. Chamberlain replied: "At the time my attention was not specially directed to the question, which I think has been occupying you very much, but I have thought of it a good deal since. I am quite satisfied with the results I saw, and, thinking it over since, I confess I can not bring myself to believe that the oral method could possibly be satisfactory by itself. I am strongly in favor of the combined system."

To the following question: "Was your impression from what you saw at the Washington college that if the pupils had been taught by the pure oral method, they, in their intercourse with each other and with many of the outside world also, would still have recourse to signs?" Mr. Chamberlain replied: "I think it would be absolutely necessary for them to do so if they are to have any real enjoyment of life."

At the very end of his testimony two answers of Mr. Chamberlain's appear, which will be seen to be especially pertinent to this discussion, and which will, I think, commend themselves to very many teachers, and especially to the deaf themselves.

Question. "Suppose there are two deaf mutes, one who could speak orally only, and the other who carried on conversation by signs and the manual alphabet, which do you think would get on best in the world?"

Answer. "I would rather be the one who could speak by signs."

Question. "That is supposing you lived in a community of sign-speaking people?"

Answer. "No; what I should say is that one who spoke by signs would have a perfect communication with his intimate friends and relations, and that that was worth more than an imperfect communication with the outer world."

Turning from the views of the eminent statesman I have just quoted, let us consider the opinions of the educated deaf themselves as expressed in conventions, in their publications, and in other ways.

I am aware that certain teachers of prominence have declared that the views of the deaf in this discussion are of no value. This ground was taken in Germany a few years since; when a petition numerously signed by educated deaf-mutes of that country was presented to the Emperor praying that essential modifications might be made in the methods employed in the German schools. It seems to me hardly necessary to controvert so groundless a claim as this, that the intelligent educated deaf-mute is not capable of judging as to the value of the training he has received in school, for those who make it confess one of two things—either the training they have given their pupils is insufficient and crude or they themselves fail to understand the mind and disposition of those they have taught. As to the opinion of the deaf themselves (as expressed in their conventions), it will hardly be necessary for me to do more than allude to the fact, no doubt known to you all, that in these gatherings of the deaf, held as they have been in many of the prominent cities of Europe and America, a variety of methods in the education of their class is uniformly and almost unanimously demanded.

I have taken pains during the past few years to come into personal intercourse with many hundreds of the adult deaf in Great Britain and Ireland, in France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, and Germany. I have found among them many of great intelligence and keen powers of discrimination, and their testimony has been most decided that to the average deaf-mute, those included in the 74 per cent we have been considering, the practical value of speech was small.

In an address given in London three years ago, I brought forward much individual testimony from educated deaf-mutes on this point, which I will not now repeat. I will only quote from a letter recently received from a deaf-mute of deserved prominence in Germany, one who has been designated by the German minister of education as a council member of this congress.

This gentleman, having been educated in an oral school, and able to speak and read from the lips with more than average facility, writes to me as follows in answer to certain questions:

"I think speech can never be of real worth to the deaf, because a great many of

them can not pronounce perfectly well. The German teachers have long known this, and have made many proposals for another system of education, but without any effect until now. Some teachers have written to me that they could not but give the palm to the excellent results of those schools which have adopted the combined system, over those German schools that make use of the oral method alone. The most of the German teachers are convinced that the pure oral method is an insufficient method of teaching. It is true that deaf-mutes, educated by the pure oral method, generally give up trying to speak with strangers after leaving school, and they look for friends among the deaf. Thus we see the impossibility of preventing the exclusiveness of deaf-mutes by teaching them orally. Most of the teachers of the deaf in Germany are not deaf, and have, therefore, little knowledge of the inner feeling and thinking of the deaf. This I regard as a calamity in our schools."

That the best educated deaf persons in Germany entertain, generally, the views I have just quoted from a representative of this class, I know through personal acquaintance with many.

At the International Congress of Instructors of the Deaf, held in 1893 at Chicago, an instructive paper was read by a highly educated deaf man on "The orally taught deaf after leaving school." In preparing his paper the writer had interrogated many orally taught deaf persons as to their experience in adult life. He gives in full a letter, the statements of one which may be taken as typical of the condition and disappointments of many. I give only portions of this letter.

"Had your questions been presented to me twenty years ago, when I first left school, I should probably have drawn a more rose-colored picture. Now I can only say that while I consider oral teaching valuable, and worthy of pursuit by all the deaf, it does not and can not work miracles. No deaf person can be fully restored to society, except by the removal of deafness. It is an insurpassable obstacle to general conversation—a heavy incumbrance everywhere.

"With respect to the orally taught I have felt deeply of late that their position was an extremely anomalous one. They stand between two classes, having affinities with both, but really belonging to neither. As one lady—herself a fine oralist—said, 'We do not fit in anywhere. We go among the hearing, converse with them to some extent, and are kindly received. We go among the deaf and dumb, talk with them as far as we can, and are welcomed with courtesy. But the fact is that each class has a language of its own, and in neither case is that language perfectly intelligible to us. We are simply mongrels.'

"Now these are strong statements, and would terribly shock my good teachers. But they are the result of hard and bitter experience, and I can not soften them without doing violence to my conscience. * * * A number of others feel just as I do."

I could bring forward much additional testimony from intelligent orally taught deaf persons to prove that to very many the practical benefits of the speech laboriously acquired in school are far less than the assurances of their teachers led them to anticipate. I will not, however, take time for this, but will pass on to consider Hill's declaration that "out of 100 (orally taught deaf-mutes) 11 can converse readily with strangers on ordinary subjects. Many others learn to do this after quitting school."

Here again I will give the largest reasonable consideration to Hill's claim, and admit that those who improve in their speech after leaving school so as to be able to converse readily with strangers will be as many as those who learn to do this while in school. This will give us an aggregate of 22 per cent of all the deaf who may expect to attain a full measure of success in learning to speak and in reading the lips of others. And in estimating the value of speech to these I will attach no great weight to the fact that Hill claims no more than that these can converse readily with strangers on ordinary subjects. Nor will I do more than suggest that in this 22 per cent will be found those we term semi-mute and semi-deaf, whose speech has therefore been acquired by means not greatly different from those by which normal children learn to speak.

For the sake of the argument I will fully concede that 22 per cent of the deaf may attain a perfection in speech fully compensating for the time and money expended, and that to these speech is worth all it has cost.

This conclusion will be accorded full consideration in the closing summation of the present discussion.

I will now ask attention to a very delicate matter in connection with the oral education of the deaf, which I approach with a good deal of hesitation. And I wish to say in advance that to the question I am about to raise I do not propose to give any answer or to express an opinion. I shall simply speak of some things to which my attention has been directed and leave others to determine whether they settle the question or not.

This is my query: Is there anything in the process of the oral education of the deaf which has a tendency to impair the moral sense of those who engage in it, either as teachers or pupils?

Many of my colleagues no doubt remember the serious criticism made by the deservedly distinguished Edward Walther, of Berlin, on certain teachers in his valuable work, *Handbuch der Taubstummensbildung*, published in 1895, in which he says of some who make extravagant claims as to the achievements of the oral method: "Since it is hardly possible that they deceive themselves, their object must be to deceive others."

This serious indictment made a profound impression on my mind, and has led me to take note of many incidents which have come under my notice within the past five years, one or two of which I will now relate.

At a certain convention of instructors in my own country there were present a number of orally taught pupils who had been brought there to be exhibited. One of them was found one day making signs, and on being asked if signs were allowed in the school from which she came replied: "O, yes! but Mr. ——— told us we must not make any signs here and I forgot." The same girl was found a little later to have enough hearing to understand spoken words without seeing the mouth of the speaker, and when asked if she had always heard as much replied: "Yes; but Mr. ——— told me I must not let it be known here that I heard."

Are not these injunctions to conceal facts of a piece with what often occurs when the speech of deaf children is being exhibited and visitors are led to conclude that those before them were born deaf, when in fact many of them, and these generally the most fluent speakers, either possessed some hearing, or had acquired speech before becoming deaf? Is it not common for oral teachers to assure their pupils that if they exert themselves to succeed with speech, they may avoid being recognized as deaf persons, may appear "just like other people;" in short, that they may deceive others?"

The limits of this paper will not permit the mention of many similar incidents which have come under my notice, and I will dismiss the question I have raised with the remark, that if in their sincere enthusiasm to impart the great boon of speech to as many deaf children as possible, some oral teachers plant seeds of untruthfulness in the minds of their pupils, a very high, even a ruinous price, is being paid for an accomplishment which is found in many cases to be of comparatively little practical value.

I will now, Mr. President and honored colleagues, present the conclusions I have endeavored to reach.

During the thirty years which have passed since my memorable interview with Hill, of Weissenfels, I have met with great numbers of orally taught deaf-mutes and have visited many oral schools. Nothing has led me to doubt the correctness of Hill's quoted statements. What he said in 1867 is, in my opinion, true to-day. Making the best I can for the cause of oralism from his percentages, I conclude that for 22 per cent of the deaf speech is worth what it costs; that for 15 per cent it is of no use, and that for the remainder its value is by no means as great as the public has been led by the ardent supporters of the pure oral method to believe. More than this, when I consider the testimony of the deaf themselves and that of the many parents who have confessed to me their great disappointment at the results of the oral teaching of their children, I feel satisfied in concluding that for at least 50 per cent of the deaf, so far as attempts to teach speech are concerned, "the game is not worth the candle."

Under these conditions what should be the policy of true friends of the deaf as to methods? Can the course of those who insist on a single method be approved? Assuredly not.

Nothing is more clear to the intelligent and unprejudiced observer of deaf children than that their mental and physical capabilities are far from being the same. It is impossible to force all to the standards and requirements of a single method.

The method must be adapted to the child. And so it follows, logically and naturally, that for the best development of all the deaf, a combined system must be employed. I do not say "the" combined system, for many combinations are possible, suggested by differing conditions, some of which may be preferable to others, but all of which are more effective of results than any single method.

It is well known that in my country the great majority of the deaf are being educated on a combined system. It is, perhaps, not so well known that in the combined-system schools more than half the pupils are taught to speak, and that in most of them all are given the opportunity to acquire speech.

I hope I shall not be regarded as boastful when I express the belief that the American schools for the deaf are to-day, as a whole, organized and conducted on a system calculated to secure "the greatest good of the greatest number," and that

any defects that may be found are incidental, due to local causes, and easily removable.

In conclusion, I will venture to express the belief that the time is not distant when European teachers, generally, will conclude what many have already discovered, that the value of speech to many of the deaf has in the past been greatly overestimated, and that a broad system of education, using all means that have been found of service, is far more fruitful of results than any single method can possibly be.
