



INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB, BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO.

**The Belleville Institution.**

*Correspondence in Deaf Mute Journal, New York*

Acting under an inspiration, begotten by a perusal of a copy of the *Deaf Mutes' Journal*, the writer of this article deemed that a description of the above named Institution for the Deaf and Dumb might not come amiss, and, while filling a portion of your columns, it would at the same time prove of interest to your many readers, giving them an insight into the workings of this Canadian centre of deaf-mute education, and distributing the knowledge that, in the respect of looking after the so afflicted, the Ontario Government merits the approbation of all right-thinking people.

The particular building which we propose to deal with is situated on the shore of the Bay of Quinte, (Kantaj) and is built on ground elevated some fifty feet above the water level. In architectural treatment the building partakes of the 13th century gothic style, and in plan it presents a parallelogram with all its faces broken. This breaking of straight lines permits the introduction of angles and gables, and enables the architect to exercise his taste, and present to the eye a structure pleasing in all its lines; a gratifying success has been made of the principal facade in this instance. A main central tower, supported on each side with a wing, forming an annex at each end, forms, from its length as well as its height, a conspicuous figure in the landscape, presenting at the same time an object of enquiry as to its purpose, to the many travellers, who, by boat, compass the distance between town and town, city and city, as they exist and flourish on the stretch of land lying between the prominent cities of Toronto and Montreal, and adjacent to the waters of lake Ontario. The Bay of Quinte is but a fresh water estuary or arm of lake Ontario, and divides Prince Edward County from the mainland thereby rendering it a peninsula. It is of various widths, and about 90 miles in length. It has recently been connected with the main waters of Ontario, at its upper end, by means of a canal intersecting the ground at that extremity. The scenery along the bay is equal at many points to that of the famed Hudson River, and, at the right and left, as well as directly opposite our objective point, it presents a most picturesque appearance. Many islands dot its waters. The site selected for the Institution could hardly have been bettered, in so far as the health of its inmates are concerned,—its position as a landmark, and its ease and access both by water and rail. Some 80 acres of land are attached to the Institution, and the farmer and his assistants find their time fully occupied in the cultivation of grain and root crops. The

vegetable portion is under the immediate care of the gardener in addition to the ornamental, but his success in the latter line is limited, owing to the nature of the soil and its proximity to the rock substructure. The large expanse of ground to the front of the building has many trees of stunted growth interspersed thereon, through which serpentine roadways lead up to the front.

The afflicted people for whom our good and liberal government so freely provides number at this writing some 222 souls, and their education, bodily wants, and requisite superintendence, necessitate the employment of some 21 persons. This is inclusive, from Superintendent and teachers, down to the farmer and assistant. The inmates (mutes) range in age from 7 years to 18 years for females, and from 8 years to 21 for males. The bright intelligence and engaging manners of the pupils, especially the girls, renders sympathy for their silence a most acute feeling, and it leads to the hope that silence, in the near future will through the instrumentality of electricity, effect at least an amelioration of their condition. By the bye, has Mr. Edison ever paid any attention to the matter? Could he not be induced to attempt an auriphone with a sensitive (for want of a better word) web, with attachments, leading into and in contact with the tympanum? A something on this line might effect the most desirable requisite. Such an instrument, unlike the newly fledged emanation from the press, would surely fill a long felt want. Such an invention, giving hearing and consequently speech to tens of thousands of human beings, would be a God inspired and directed work, and those tens of thousands would bow their hearts in daily thankfulness to the Almighty, who permitted a creature of his, using the powers, the gift of the Creator, to become instrumental in the making of the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to speak.

But we digress. The girls, in mental capacity, are fully the equals of their co-inmates, the boys, and are not many points behind their more boisterous and hoydenish sisters of the wagging tongue in their mental attainments. The employed silent teachers, demonstrate that the assertion is not strained. The curriculum followed, is that of the public schools, in so far as possible, with the additional classes in articulation. Perspective and object drawing secures attention, so also does fancy work, at the hands of the female pupils, while others, under careful and judicious superintendence, make, alter and repair, the various garments, the requisites of male and female attire.

In this way then is head and hands cultivated. In this way is the Institution saved a large expenditure, and by such system are the girls fitted, in a measure

to combat the evils of poverty, and rendered able and, I trust, willing to earn their own livelihood should circumstances call on them to so do. Nor are the girls the only recipients of mechanical instruction.

The boys, who make the admirable boots and shoes for the Institution of officer and inmates, demonstrated to the writer's personal observation that they also were fitting themselves for a wrestle with the world's buffeting purveyors on that line. Nor are their efforts limited to the wants of the Institution. Those young shoemakers improve themselves in shaping the leather required for the 700 inmates of the Asylum for the Insane, situated at Toronto and Mimico. In this way again, are the head and hands directed to exert their usefulness, and the result a formation of tradesmen able to cope with the fellow man and place themselves as willing workers in the fight for disfranchisement as wage earners in this prolific land. Others again, who have a taste for carpenter's and joiner's work, become assistants to the capable man who holds that position at the Institution.

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" is not the motto of the Institution. Could many of my readers witness the quiet play of the girls and their happy faces they would at once conclude that their tasks were no burden to them, and though away from home and kindred, they were rejoiced to and were pleased with their surroundings.

But, with all the care of officers and teachers, nature will have its outbursts, and pious indeed is the warning of a child biding adieu to its parents, the heartstrings are pulled with emotion, the eyes shed their tears, and the souls are irremissible. May we not justly conclude that, in the absence of hearing, the feelings become, at times, more acute than they would if the senses all had play and speech were freely indulged in. Who is it that doth not remember—and feel thankful for that memory—the kind and loving utterances of a parent, a wife, a husband, a brother or sister, or that of some dear and honored friend, when bidding us a fond and perhaps a last adieu. We reflect on those words, we treasure them in our heart's core, and oftentimes they become to us a "beacon of light, warning us against self-indulgence or urging us to beware of the broad and crooked path of sin, thus leading our minds to the converse path, that of "the way the truth and the life." Of this comfort, those devoid of hearing, therefore speech, are largely deprived.

But we forget (I'll remember) our subject, "play." Come with me in spirit and imagination to the football ground, witness the effort of that lad. Ho rashes,

bounds and jumps, endeavoring to move the ball in mid air, and direct its course to his opponents goal with his head. He misses, it wobbles a foot or so to rise, and the ball speeds on its way before it reaches the ground it receives a lateral kick, its course is turned and another foot acts on its cuticle. High it is met, a grand rush from all sides is made, two, three or four of the testants are forced to make lawn of their bodies, they rise with rapidity the ball is back again, so that later on his opponent the hip, so over he goes and the lad who follows at his heels pitches on top, rolls over, and back up and after the ball, faster than you can describe. A foul arms are usually elevated, some gesticulation follows, the point is admitted and arranged, the ball is kicked off, and all are at once more. Who says this is not a Yes play with a spirit, and devoid that intemperance and uncalled for exhibition of temper, which we occasionally seen displayed on the ground. Here, the object is play, bruises, hurts and falls are accepted contingencies of the game. Each bears his mishaps as best he can, each one knows that a hurt obtained not due to willfulness or design on part of the giver, and therefore no wistles are not created nor ill temper at a mishap indulged in. This control is a pleasing attribute of mine at all times, and is a something which those more fully endowed should at all times endeavor to attain. The Bay of Quinte affords an ice field to compare for the indulgence of ice skating, and what we may here term concomitant—ice-skating. On the larger boys are permitted to induce their inclination, while the smaller boys and girls have a rink provided for the purpose. Baseball and lacrosse receive a due share of attention at the present season. Here, again, the Government wisely shows its liberality in assuming the cost of the recreation, parents indulged thereby administering to the health and comfort of the inmates, am pleased to record that, in this respect, the office of Physician to the Institution is, at times, a sinew. This position is largely due to the exercise of unbounded care and attention on the part of the several officers, whose duty it is to look after this portion of the internal economy.

Thanksgiving Day was hailed with delight by the inmates of the Institution. The day itself proved to be of the class which especially at this time of the year the heart wisheth for. The occurrence afforded the writer an opportunity of witnessing the social demeanor of the inmates; for on the evening of that day, the inmates were treated the customary feast, and the inmates

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