

## The Uneducated Deaf.

On whom devolve the duty of providing for the education of the deaf sometimes falls upon a sufficiently competent degree, but if those in charge have not fully realized the vast difference in the status of an uneducated deaf person as compared with that of an uneducated hearing person, they would be more prompt in providing the necessary and adequate facilities for the former. An uneducated hearing man, if of average natural intelligence, readily acquires a very considerable vocabulary, and, without any special instruction on the part of others, can name the names and characteristics of almost any kind of object that comes under his observation, is able to express his thoughts freely and intelligibly, and by means of conversation with others he has a pretty thorough knowledge of all matters important to his own immediate interests, and though he may not be able to read a word, he can, by talking with others, ascertain in a general way what is transpiring throughout the world, and can hold constant and intelligent converse with his neighbors, and others with whom he comes into contact. He can take part in the various activities of his community, and discharge his duties and responsibilities involving upon him, and even rise to positions of trust and honor, and, despite his limitations, may thoroughly enjoy life in all its phases. His moral and religious convictions may be strong and accurate, and he is capable of understanding and performing his duty to God and to his fellow-men.

How vastly different from this is the condition and the lot of an uneducated deaf man. With but few exceptions he lives in a state of impenetrable ignorance and isolation. His want of knowledge is not merely comparative but is absolutely absolute. He does not know the names of the commonest objects of every day use, and his knowledge of what goes on around him is limited to what he actually sees with his own eyes, since he cannot receive ideas or information from others, not convey ideas or information to them, except his communications by pantomime. Unable to hold conversation with others because of his entire lack of language, he lives a life of loneliness quite inconceivable to hearing people. Of the general events transpiring throughout the world he must remain in absolute ignorance, since he cannot read and possesses no language by which he can communicate with his friends. The whole of Europe might be deluged with blood, or half of the continents of the earth destroyed by volcanic or earthquake or famine, and he would know nothing of it, for there is no way in which any ideas can be conveyed to his own experience can be conveyed to him. And while he cannot be immoral in practice he cannot to a large extent quite immoral, for he can have but a very limited comprehension of the concept of right and wrong, and he can know nothing of the existence of a God or of the hereafter, nor even that he has any duty, nothing of religious thought or sentiment, except such faint impressions as ideas on such matters as may be inherent in mankind. To him the world is an insoluble enigma, and his life a dread and fathomless mystery. And so he lives his blank, uneventful existence, never hearing the sweet sounds of human speech, never knowing the delight of the communion of friend with friend, never feeling within him the pulsations of

an awakening and developing intelligence, never realizing the comfort of consonant human sympathy nor the consolations afforded by religion, and at the end he passes through the gates of death with no conception of what it means, and no hope or knowledge of aught beyond. An existence such as this is terrible to contemplate, sad and pathetic beyond description or even conception, yet to such an existence is condemned every deaf-mute for the education of whom adequate facilities are not provided. It is to be hoped that no longer, either in this land or any other, the opportunity will be denied every deaf-mute of acquiring that golden strand of language, which, though so easily and inexpensively secured, will serve as the clue that will guide its possessor out of this labyrinth of mental ignorance, moral blankness and religious stagnation, and open up to him all the bounteous store of the wisdom of this world and the assurance of the joys of the world that is to come.

## For Parents of Deaf Children.

There are deaf children in the Province whose parents refuse to send them to the Institution for selfish reasons. Every parent who loves his children can of course sympathize to some degree with those delinquent fathers and mothers. It certainly is hard for a parent to place his child for nine months in the hands of strangers, and the heart of every right-minded parent is no doubt torn with grief because of the separation and filled with ceaseless longing for the loved one. This is natural and therefore to be expected, yet it is no justification for the conduct of those parents. There are two kinds of affection and two corresponding methods of its manifestation. There is a selfish affection which clings to its object, not so much for the sake of that object as from a selfish disinclination to give up a source of personal gratification. But there is another kind of affection, a great unselfish love, a love so great that it is willing to endure the pain of separation and to sacrifice all personal considerations for the sake of the higher good of its object. The person actuated by the one regards chiefly his own desires, the other is concerned chiefly for the best interests of its object. The one is ignoble in its motive and blighting in its effect, the other is the highest type of disinterested, unselfish devotion and self-sacrifice, blessing both him that gives and him that receives.

We appeal to those parents who are animated by merely selfish gratification to rise above such motives and, at whatever pain to themselves, to look only to the ultimate good of their children. We have before tried to depict the sad, dreary condition of an uneducated deaf person, though words fail to give adequate expression to the real solitude of his lot and the blankness of his existence. Is it to such a life of joylessness and despair that those parents are willing to condemn their children? If not, now is the time to act. In a few years these boys and girls will become men and women and their opportunity for an education will then be gone forever. At any time these parents may be cut off, and their children, in all their ignorance and helplessness, left to the not always tender mercies of a none too kindly world. We can conceive of no other earthly consideration that could render the death-bed of a parent so wretched, or pierce his heart with a sharper pang of condemnation, than the knowledge that his own short-sighted selfishness he had entailed so cruel a wrong upon his child, whom he thought he loved so absorbingly, but whose

worst enemy he had proved himself to be. Before God every parent is responsible for the well-being of his child to the extent of his capacity. The scripture says that he that provideth not for his own household is worse than an infidel, and the best way to provide for a child is to put it into the way of earning its own livelihood. From the material point of view, then, it is important that every deaf child should receive an education. And even from the sentimental stand point a strong argument can be deduced. These parents love their children dearly, love them with so selfish and absorbing a passion that they are content to ruin their lives rather than forego for a time the pleasure of their company. But what do they receive in return for this wealth of devotion? Their children now cling to them with a sort of animal like instinctive affection. But how inferior such a love is to the love of an educated, intelligent, cultured boy or girl, who has been informed as to the true relationships of life and of the sanctity of home ties and affections, and who realizes something of what love implies and filial duty entails. Surely it would pay well, even from the sentimental point of view, to forego for a time this present instinctive passion in order to gain in the future the wealth of an intelligent, refined affection from an awakened soul and a cultured intellect. We hope we do not appeal in vain to these parents to sink every selfish consideration and look only to the ultimate good of their children, to which they are prompted by every sentiment of humanity, by every instinct of justice and every obligation of parental duty and affection.

## A Word to Parents.

Yes, your little one is deaf. It has a trial. Only God and you know the depth of it, the intensity of it. You look down through the years with sadness and foreboding, perhaps, for the future of this darling child. You think of the time when he or she must meet the world alone when your love can no longer provide for and shelter. If you are solicitous about the future of your other children you are doubly concerned about this one. Upon him or her centres the supreme love of your heart. You have not the courage to dwell long upon the time when you cannot stand between the loved one and the storms of life. But dear parent, sometime the stern reality will face you.

So the supreme question becomes, "What can I do to prepare the afflicted one to meet life bravely and well?" You have become so accustomed to thinking of him as one apart from the other children, as one with whom a different course should be or may be taken. But the world will sternly demand the same of him as it does of others before giving him its bread, demanding more than less because of inconvenience in communication with him. He must do his work better than his hearing brother or be more trustworthy before he can stand an equal chance in the world's market.

The best you can do to help him meet this sad fact is to do your very best to help him form the habits that contribute to success, to the probity and nobility of character that are more in demand everywhere than skill and talent because scarcer. As you value his entire future do not raise your child on the self-indulgent line or overlook offences because he is deaf. Give him more help here rather than less than his hearing brother. The foundations for good character are truthfulness, industry, respect for authority, and consider-

ation for the feelings and rights of others.

You do not need to talk to him about these things to teach them to him, but simply have him practice them. All that your hearing children know at first about lying, unkindness, disobedience and indolence is that you do not approve of them, do not permit them. You can easily teach your deaf child as much. An intelligent deaf-mute once told the writer that she had as clear an understanding that these things were wrong when she entered school at ten years of age as she ever had, and that she knew also there was a great Somebody up above her whom her godly parents revered and feared.

Probity, energy, perseverance, industrious habits, etc., do not grow of themselves. Here a little, there a little, they are woven into the character by right example and practice, and it is utterly impossible for the teacher to bring these things about without the early, earnest and continued co-operation of the parent. We wonder how many parents know that some millionaires do not allow their children to eat candy, and we read the other day of the son of one entering a machine shop. The days are upon us when he that can not do valuable work has no shadow of a chance. Take the pains to teach your deaf child self-control and self-reliance when he is growing.

Let the peculiar love that dwells in the heart of the parent for the deaf child be his courage in holding him to just as high a standard in diligence and conduct as is required of his hearing brother.—*Laura C. Sheridan in New Era.*

## Selfish Parents.

At the beginning of last session a gentleman brought his deaf son to this Institution, remained a day or two and then went home again. The next day he returned for his boy, saying that he and his wife could not endure the pain of separation. Some parents, however, soon realize the folly of such selfish acts, as the following instance will show. When school opened last Fall a bright little girl was brought here by her father, who then returned home. The next day he also came back to the Institution for her, saying that her mother insisted on having her child with her again. All remonstrances seemed to be in vain and the girl, who seemed quite happy and contented, was taken home again. At New Year's the father returned with the girl, saying that they had thought better of it and would let her remain this time. The parents are to be commended for this action. We know that it is very hard indeed for parents to part with their children, but the truest affection is shown by sacrificing all personal considerations and enduring all consequent pain in order to advance the best interests of the loved one. There are other deaf children in the Province whose parents refuse to send them to the Institution for the same selfish reason. Nor is our experience unique in this respect, for similar instances have occurred in connection with nearly every school for the deaf on the continent.

## Uneducated Deaf Children.

I WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE EVERY person who receives this paper send me the names and post-office addresses of the parents of deaf children not attending school, who are known to them, so that I may forward them particulars concerning this Institution and inform them where and by what means their children can be instructed and furnished with an education.

R. MATISON,  
Superintendent.