



# THE CANADIAN MUTE

Four, six or eight pages.

PUBLISHED SEMI-MONTHLY

At the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb  
BELLEVILLE, ONT.

### OUR MISSION

**First** - First a number of our pupils may learn type setting, and from the knowledge obtained be able to earn a livelihood after they leave school.

**Second** - To furnish interesting matter for and encourage a habit of reading among our pupils and deaf mute subscribers.

**Third** - To be a medium of communication between the school and parents, and friends of pupils, now in the institution, the hundreds who were pupils at one time or other in the past, and all who are interested in the education and instruction of the deaf of our land.

### SUBSCRIPTION

Fifty cents for the school year, payable in advance, postage prepaid by publisher. New subscriptions commence at any time during the year. Remitt. by money order, postal notes, or registered letter.

Subscribers failing to receive their papers regularly will please notify us that mistakes may be corrected without delay. All papers are stopped when the subscription expires, unless otherwise ordered. The date on each subscriber's wrapper is the time when the subscription runs out.

Correspondence on matters of interest to the deaf is requested from our friends in all parts of the Province. Nothing calculated to wound the feelings of any one will be admitted—if we know it.

### ADVERTISING

A very limited amount of advertising, subject to approval, will be inserted at 25 cents a line for each insertion.

Address all communications and subscriptions

THE CANADIAN MUTE,

BELLEVILLE,

ONTARIO



MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1900.

### The Duty of Parents.

Our Superintendent recently received the following letter, which we take the liberty of publishing in full for the impressive lesson it conveys.

"I am going to write to you regarding my brother who is deaf and dumb, but never got any schooling when he was young. He was very delicate and we couldn't persuade his mother to let him go to school as she thought it would kill him, and now as he is grown up to be a young man he is nearly crazy because we hadn't sent him to school, and I often feel so bad for him, to think he won't see the world before he is dead, for the other he gets the more he thinks of it. He is 21 years old. What do you think about him going now? If he could only learn to write and read we would be quite satisfied, for he is very clever and can write his own name very nicely. He is a very smart boy if he only had schooling. Will you kindly answer this at once and tell me what you think of him going and what it will cost a week or a month or whatever your terms are."

Here surely is a text for an earnest exhortation and a solemn warning to delinquent parents, of whom there are not a few. Who that reads this protest of a neglected soul, this pathetic plea for at least a little ray of light amidst the encircling darkness, can repress a feeling of strong indignation against those who have been so sadly derelict in their duties, and of deep sympathy with one who realizes so keenly the negligence of his parents and his own irreparable loss.

Of course we will take the young man in and do what we can for him, but all our efforts can never restore to him the full vigor of an intellect which has become dulled by long disuse. A third or more of his life has, through no fault of his own, been passed in rayless darkness, and never can his mental powers recover their full buoyancy and strength, never can he be half the man he might have been had his education been begun at the proper age. We have repeatedly endeavored to impress on parents what a sad and irremediable mistake they are making in neglecting to send their children here during early childhood, when the mind is most receptive and every sense is alert. But there are some who have rejected our admonitions and suppressed the dictates of their better

judgment, yielding rather to the promptings of selfish affection or the apathy of careless indifference. For, unfortunately the instance cited above is by no means an isolated case. We have had scores—and still have several—pupils who did not enter the Institution till they were grown to manhood physically, though still mere infants intellectually. Fine fellows many of these are, with good natural abilities, and most eager to make the most of their belated opportunities, but few of them can make satisfactory progress and none can do even approximately as well as if he had begun sooner. And they fully realize these adverse conditions, and it is really pathetic to see their strenuous efforts to make up for lost time and to witness their humiliating sense of partial impotence and failure. They feel most keenly their inferiority in both acquirements and mental activity to many of the younger pupils, and realize how seriously they are handicapped, not only here, but in all their future careers, and many of them feel bitterly the injustice and neglect with which they have been treated by their parents and resent it with not unnatural vehemence. We know of several deaf-mutes in the Province who are fast approaching maturity, but whose parents have refused to allow them to come to the Institution, and we hope these parents will take to heart the lesson set in the above letter and act accordingly. We can assure them that when they neglect this all important parental duty—the mental and moral training of their children—they are not only doing these children a great and irremediable injury, but are also laying up for themselves a bitter harvest of filial distrust and estrangement.

The *Colorado Index* of Dec. 21st devotes considerable space to tributes paid by other papers to Mr. David C. Dudley, formerly superintendent of that institution, who died on Nov. 27th, and no man could be more worthy of the warm encomiums of his fellow laborers. The deceased was one of the ablest instructors of the deaf in America and has done much to place this important work on a sound and substantial foundation. Despite the fatal disease which had preyed upon him for so many years, his energy was unremitting and his zeal never flagged. His was a noble character; and his kindly, helpful disposition, his loyalty to duty, his quick intelligence, his ever ready tact and his eminent ability as teacher and superintendent endeared him to the whole profession and gave him unbounded influence for good over his pupils. But at the early age of fifty-five years he was called away and of him it may be said in its best sense that "he rested from his labors and his works do follow him."

With the new year the *Deaf Mute Journal*, of New York, began its twenty-ninth volume. The *Journal* is one of the best of all papers published in the interest of the deaf on this continent. Most papers published in connection with schools for the deaf are chiefly local in character. The *Journal*, however, aspires to a wider field of usefulness. It aims to be—and very successfully—a paper of general interest to the deaf everywhere, and especially throughout the eastern part of the Union. It has a large corps of able correspondents, its news is well selected and cosmopolitan in scope and character, its editorials are apt and well written and the general character of the paper is such as to commend it to the confidence and to merit the support of the deaf everywhere.

The *Kentucky Standard*, one of our most valued exchanges, has just completed its twenty-fifth volume, and we tender it our felicitations on having completed a quarter of a century of usefulness and ever increasing excellence. It deservedly occupies a place in the front rank of institution papers. Its pages are crowded with good things, its object being to be practically helpful to teachers and pupils rather than simply entertaining. It is ably edited and intelligently conducted, and we give it our best wishes for its future prosperity and long continued usefulness.

### The Abuse of Gift Giving.

BY SYLVIA C. DALING.

Now that the holidays are over and the rush and worry of preparation for them are things of the past, we can pause and contemplate its spoils and our despoliation also. If pity is the victim of the Christmas gift craze, whose debit and credit sheets will balance? There have been innumerable changes rung up in the topic of the beauty of giving and its attendant joys. I venture here to speak of the evils and the consequent miseries. From far and from near, wails of distress have reached me, they have quite drowned the more pleasurable sounds of the Christmas season.

Write me, three weeks before Christmas, "I am driven nearly to death with my school work and trying to make gifts for all those whom I know expect them."

Dear me! why did she not, like Col. Sellers, allow them to continue to have their great expectations?

Another busy, hard working girl wrote: "I get up early and retire late. I am spending every spare moment trying to finish my Christmas gifts. A few days after Christmas another writer said, "I am so tired I feel as if I never would get rested again."

Still another wail reached us. "It cost me \$31.00 to remember the people in this building, consider what it has cost me when you add my immediate family." Later we visited the writer, and saw her display of presents received, and to use her own words, "The only decent thing here, is that dish and those kid gloves." "There," said another, waving us into her private apart. ent, "is the stuff I have fixed up for Christmas gifts, and many thanks I'll get for them."

"In the name of common sense, why do you do it then?" we asked.

"Thank goodness! Christmas comes but once a year!" was the fervent exclamation of another sufferer.

The wife of an officer, resident in a public institution wrote, "I had to make twenty-six presents to as many persons in this institution, no wonder my own family suffered. It has become a burden that increases yearly."

The foregoing quotations are all the actual expressions of persons who reside in public institutions in different localities. The unhappy experience of one seems to be very nearly the counterpart of others, so let this be considered a composite article.

The extent to which the questionable custom of exchange of gifts has grown in public institutions as in other places is surprising. What should be a care-free and happy season has become a dread and a burden, its advent is met with misgivings and its departure joyfully anticipated. The accumulated conglomeration of trash gathered by some nets is truly surprising. Our sympathies were strongly attracted to the young woman who specialized only two articles in her collection as decent while our roubles were called into play by her dramatic disgust. I regret to say it is mostly women and girls who are so foolish as to blindly follow the senseless custom such as this annual exchange of gifts has become. And it is they who get most hopelessly entangled in their attempts to give a logical explanation of why they do such a thing. The larger number of the other sex have less sentiment and more foresight, and when they begin to find themselves being imposed upon, they are inclined to become emphatic of language and the whole foolish business stops at once. If all this gift making is burdensome to the people with the lower salaries it cannot be otherwise to those with larger sums at their disposal, as they must feel that it is incumbent upon them to give in proportion to their means. The evil appears to have originated among a few thoughtless, but generous persons, who made trifling gifts, to a number for whom they had some regard. The following year each recipient felt it necessary to return the compliment with something of rather more value, and others with an eye more to the man chance and possible favors, began bestowing gifts also, with a great lack of sentiment and happy disregard for future consequences. So year by year the evil has grown. If, in

course of time, there comes a time when the length to which the custom has grown, and the amount of money spent in the effort to stand against its progress, a firm stand against its progress, a person is bound to be made to suffer accordingly. A person who has the strength to resist under such circumstances will suffer keenly. It requires a long season after season to be drawn into the vortex.

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In a few localities officers and employees are forbidden to accept gifts from their charges or the members of the same. It is a very wise rule. Such is the rule here. Some people apparently think that to wait for the consideration of their families, members of their families, gifts are not that necessary. It is not a kindness or is it accepted as such by the fortunate objects of their unkind attentions. It is a species of bribery, offer a public servant an expensive and is usually resented as such. There are honorable people everywhere who fully realize their responsibilities and who will act with justice and fairness of attention and gifts unwelcome in places the innocent recipients are in uncomfortable positions. They are greatly averse to accepting the gifts, yet are often so cornered they refuse to accept seriously offending donors, which is an act they are naturally most reluctant to commit.

If parents and guardians would realize that the bestowing of gifts and favors upon the authorities of our institutions makes no sense whatever in the treatment of their charges, they would soon cease to trouble them with the unwelcome and quite unappreciated attentions. They feel they must show their appreciation of what is being done for the children of the family, let the gift be of the nature of a donation to the fund of the school, for the library, for amusements or for the use of some less favored child.

It is to be wished that some rule regarding the exchange of gifts among the residents of some of our institutions could be formulated, if not entirely abolishing the custom at least curtailing it. Such a rule would be an immense relief to some persons who have not the courage to act independently and to be at the whole affair.

Here in Belleville it was proposed some time ago that hereafter, instead of spending time and money in manufacturing things for one another, the residents of the Institution would send to the poor. So each year now the Missions, Orphans' Hospital and worthy charities receive substantial remembrances from our Institution families. Let other gift-burdened households follow this example.

If Christmas is a dread to some, the sight of a wedding card gives cold chills to others. Both, once innocent, customs have become elaborated and abused to a terrible extent. A wedding card now a days reads between the lines, "You may come to our wedding if you choose, but bring some gift as the price of admission. Your presence is not necessary to the occasion but a gift would be acceptable. Maybe the recipient of the invitation takes the hint and goes gift laden. The young people with a small income who enter upon wedded life with a large wedding and its attendant long list of costly gifts, are being handicapped at the very start with a burden that might as well be a mortgage on their income with a 6% interest attached. One wedding leads to another. If there were only two or three gifts to be repaid they would be no need of complaint, but more likely to amount to several dozens in the course of time.

Happy are the young people who start life with a quiet little wedding, and blessed are they if they receive no gifts. They may then stand some chance of having what they want, when they want it. Besides the sense of freedom from obligations and the independence cannot be otherwise than most welcome.