

SPECIMENS

OF ORIGINAL COMPOSITION BY THE PUPILS.

NOTE.—The following "Specimens" are printed, as the pupils wrote them, without correction, except such made by the writers themselves, when errors were pointed out by the Teacher.

In judging of these effusions, it should be borne in mind that their chief interest and merit lie neither in the subjects, nor the ideas expressed, but simply in the fact that they illustrate the peculiar difficulties which beset the Deaf and Dumb in acquiring the ability to use *written language* as a vehicle of thought. The uneducated Deaf-mute is as ignorant of spoken and written language, as the infant of a day old. The specific object of his education is to supply this want, thus restoring him to society, and enabling him to benefit by reading. The English language is as much a foreign one to the Deaf-mute, as Arabic or Chinese to us, presenting to his untutored mind and undeveloped faculties difficulties which have no parallel in the experience of a hearing person studying a foreign tongue. His habits of thought and the peculiar genius of the natural *sign-language* of the mute constantly operate as terrible barriers to a correct and idiomatic use of English. Hence the "deaf-mutisms," analogous to the blunders of a foreigner, which generally mark his efforts at written composition. A standard of comparison is almost impossible, but an approximate estimate of these productions may be made by comparing them with the essays of College Students at Latin or Greek composition. The Deaf-mute with all his disadvantages will hardly suffer by the comparison.

LITTLE STORIES.

I.

I went to the woods. I saw a bird on a tree. I threw a stone at it. I did not hit the bird. The bird flew away.

I went with a boy to the wood. We saw the partridge on a tree. I fired at it. I hit it. The partridge fell down. It was dead. I went to the partridge. I caught it. I carried with a boy. We went home.

W. B.

(10 years old—Deaf from infancy. About 1 year at School)

II.

I saw some apples on a tree. I climbed the tree. I took some apples. I put some apples in my pocket. I came down. I went home. I gave the apples to my mother.

I went to the woods. I saw a bird on a tree. I climbed the tree. I caught the bird. I put the bird in my hat. I came down. I looked at the bird. It flew away.

C. D.

(12 years old—Deaf from infancy. At School 13 months.)