

deaf, but are capable of perceiving loud noises, such as claps of thunder, discharge of firearms, sounding of bells, or even that of sharp whistling; and being able to learn and articulate certain words, are called semi-mutes.

Of the various causes of deafness, it is not my purpose to speak; but, whatever be the cause, the unfortunate victim is innocent of it; and priceless is the invention, and noble the philanthropy by which this silent, isolated, unfortunate class of human beings "may be educated in mind and heart, so as to sustain intelligent relations with their fellow-men, and by which the deaf hear the Saviour's promises, and the dumb speak, in language mute, but eloquent, their Maker's praise."

The number of this afflicted class is very considerable. In France, there are upwards of 20,000, or one to about every 1,800 of the population; in the United States there are about 13,000, or one to every 1,600 of the population. The actual number of deaf and dumb persons in England is not known; but, it is said, the proportion is diminishing. In Ontario, there cannot be less than from 750 to 1,000 of this unfortunate class.

## II. NATURE AND DIFFICULTY OF THE EDUCATION OF DEAF MUTES.

The education of Deaf Mutes presents formidable difficulties, and requires great skill and labour. They are not only to be taught the subjects of ordinary school education, but the very language in which those subjects are taught; and, in teaching that language, there is no organ of hearing, as an instrument of instruction and knowledge. To the Deaf-mute the world is a world of solitary silence—no harmony of music, no sounds of the elements, no voice of words. He cannot tell his wants and wishes; he has no mother tongue; he has never heard the sound of even the mother's voice, and is unconscious of his own. He can form no idea of sound any more than can a blind man of colours. His eye is his only ear, and gesture his only language. But what gestures can express the truths of science, the doctrines of revelation, the moral duties and social relations of life? The solution of this problem appears to me one of the most difficult and noblest achievements of human genius and philanthropy. Yet, it has been solved; and thousands of this speechless, isolated, unfortunate class—yet, with unmained intellects and hearts—have been restored to society—have been made useful members of it—have learned trades, and acquired the knowledge of ordinary life; and many of them have made marvellous attainments, not only in the subjects of common school education, but in the physical and moral sciences, in the higher mathematics, and in ancient and modern languages. Without the instrument or power of spoken language, they have learned the meaning of its words, its structure, and its use, by writing with a facility, and, in some instances, with an elegance and power truly wonderful. The knowledge acquired by many of them in Natural History (especially Botany) the elements of Chemistry and Natural Philosophy, Mental, Moral and Political Science, is equal to that of ordinary students in the higher schools of learning. Thus the intellectual and moral, as well as physical, world; is opened to the minds of these children of silence, whose only media of communication are the bodily eye and bodily gestures.

In educating a Deaf-mute, the first step is to teach him the language in which he is to learn—a matter of far greater difficulty, in the absence of all vocal sounds, than