



## THE ONTARIO INSTITUTION

BY PAUL DENYS, BELLEVILLE.

There is in every human heart  
Some expectant, workable part,  
Where seeds of love and truth might grow,  
And flowers of generous virtue blow,  
To plant, to watch, to water there—  
This be our duty—be our care!

It boasts its own special achievements. Whether in the fields of valor or the avenues of art and learning, whether in the chemical progress or scientific discovery, what man's hand uncovers, unravels, unfolds, the annals of time in their good time, proudly proclaim. And whilst we gaze with wonder, dwell upon dauntless daring, pause before the solemn, endless march of human genius, watch with keenest interest all the developments of modern research and study, there is one attainment, one exploit, one triumph which today stands out in single, sublime splendor—one that lifts itself high above all that this century, rich as it has been in skilled accomplishments, can show—one that the humane, the good, the noble shall not cease to exalt in, rejoice in and give praise for: the emancipation, deliverance, redeeming, by heroic efforts of the great silent family from the prison of darkness, the shackles of forced isolation, the slumbers of an intellectual night, the famine of a hungering and thirsting soul.

The sun that first broke upon the humble home of Montmartre, that later touched our shore with one of its beams and is now shining full over both continents has, it is conceived, brought glad hope to many an anxious, loving heart. And why so glad? . . . Ah! Have we, upon whom nature has lavished all her choicest gifts, ever given a thought to the poor dear ones from whom the unspeakable blessings of speech and hearing were withheld? Have we not time and again seen the big, warm tear rolling down a parent's cheek in the sight of the afflicted offspring? Has not the bright eye of some silent child as his glance, full of appeal, rested upon you, awakened an echo in your inmost being? Has not your heart gone out to those poor, innocent little ones as their tiny hand was extended to you at, perhaps, a father's bidding? There they were bright, young, art-captive, and you would almost imagine—imploing with their look your reclaiming action in their behalf—awaiting the reply that was to open their mind to light, loosen their chains and bring them to our society and companionship. Yes, we have seen and felt all that and rejoiced this age could boast the grandest conquest christian heroism and love, philanthropy and zeal could inscribe upon their standards. And if the light brought was in proportion to the darkness that hitherto prevailed, one will easily understand the joy with which the breaking beams of hope were sought.

We need not here recall how Greece and Rome, Aristotle and Platonius looked upon these disinherited of nature, nor indeed the causes which in biblical times, were believed to preclude speech. . . . Was it not the late General Pitt Rivers that told us that a deaf-mute at best was but *half a man*. Add to that the early testimony of Augustine, who would make faith depend on the possession of hearing and all the other negative appreciations that, at various times, were passed upon these ostracised beings and you will not wonder at the world rejoicing when, as in the days of miracles, the news was not less wonderfully proclaimed, "the Deaf are and the Dumb speak."

Confidence, says Locke, will carry us through many a difficulty, and when that persuasion is supported by power of mind and fed with noble impulse, be the task ever so arduous, it eventually must yield. It was no doubt under the influence of similar reflections heightened by burning clarity that the great De L'Epée, rising equal to his sublime mission, "built himself an everlasting name" when he severed, as with Orlando's sword, the thousand ties of just probabilities from the car of future triumph. Skill and benevolence made one, brought forth the regenerative principle that obtains to-day throughout the civilized world, and has set 100,000 or more interesting fellow-beings free. Alas!

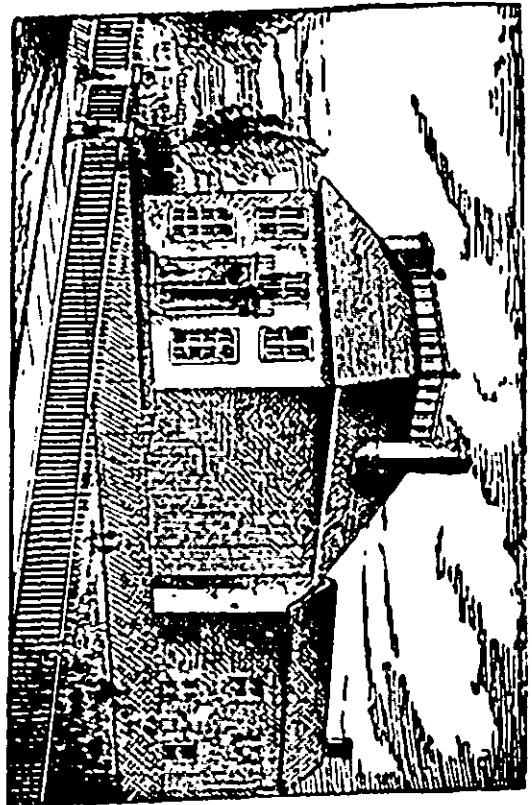
Let us see the great Abbe at work. . . . Dr. T. H. Gallaudet across the water in quest of the processes used in the art of teaching the deaf. England is cold. France opens wide her arms. He returns with Clerc and in 1816, at Hartford, the first school of the kind in America. In Quebec, Canada's eldest daughter, soon follows, opening an establishment in 1831. Forced to suspend after six years when children are excluded from the benefits of instruction until 1847 when the Mile-End Institution, now so

prosperous, is started. Nova Scotia, whose school began in August 1856, comes next for the honor of a step in the laudable direction. And here we may well ask why the sum of \$80,000 voted some years before by the old Canadian Parliament towards the erection of an asylum for the deaf and dumb and the blind in Upper Canada, was never expended? The only apparent reason may be sought in the complications and political changes of those times and the engrossing of the public mind therewith. It was not long, however,



JOHN BARRETT MCGANN.

before a better day dawned for the cause in this part. Mr. John Barrett McGann, a man of scholarly attainments and benevolent nature, in 1858, opened, at great personal sacrifices, a school in Toronto, in which many prominent citizens soon became interested. As the commencements of a work of this kind are always trying, many were the difficulties encountered. In 1864, Mr. McGann removed his school to Hamilton, where he met with more generous support. Public attention had now been aroused and a grand move, one worthy the Banner Province of the Dominion, was made, which resulted in the establishing at Belleville in 1870, of the Ontario Institution which stands to-day a monument of the liberality of the people as well as a credit to the profession. Ontario does nothing by halves.



THE FIRST SCHOOL BUILDING DEVOTED WHOLLY TO DEAF-MUTES. INSTRUCTION IN ONTARIO.

Less prompt than her sister-provinces, when she realized that the time for her had come to execute the grand work, she set to it with a will, a munificence that rivalled similar efforts in any clime. A large tract of land was purchased in the immediate vicinity of Belleville—a pretty, young city with a fair name and larger people—and a majestic building was seen to rise on a commanding spot, casting its imposing proportions upon the placid waters of far-famed Quinte.

The 20th of October of that year witnessed the opening of the school, which was done amid pageant pomp and ceremony. Lieut.-Governor W. P. Howland, Attorney-General John Sandfield McDonald, Hon. Treasurer E. B. Wood and a host of other distinguished visitors were present. J. W. Langmuir, Esq., Government Inspector, installed the following officers, W. J. Palmer, Principal; Mrs. M. A. Keegan, Matron, Angus Christie, Bursar. Teachers, J. B. McGann, D. R. Coleman, S. T. Greene and Mrs. J. G. Terrill.

Others who have been associated in the education of the