

With regard to the health of the inmates there has been little to complain of; but on the occasion of a boy meeting with an accident we had to remove him to Christchurch, where he was professionally attended to by the medical officer of the institution.

We adhere to the opinion expressed last year as to the advantage of having separate buildings for the girls and boys after school hours.

Our curiosity with regard to Verrier's ear-tube (*audigene*) has not yet been gratified, although steps were taken as early as October last to get possession of the instrument through the good offices of the Agent-General. Let it not be supposed, however, that our knowledge of its probable worth to the school has remained deficient, for the opinions of some of the most prominent experts on the Continent of Europe, who have used it, are in our hands.

In the report, 1891-92, of the Institution for Deaf-mutes at Rotterdam, my friend Mr. Bikkers, the Director, referring to the *audigene*, remarks, "Not until November last (1891) could experiments be made with this instrument, and these trials were interrupted by the Christmas, Easter, and midsummer vacations, so that we have not as yet gained sufficient experience to pronounce a definite opinion with regard to its power." This appears to me ominous.

On page 368 of the December number, 1892, of the *Organ der Taubstummen Anstalten in Deutschland*, a report will be found of the discussion held at the Conference of German experts at Nagold re the utility of Verrier's ear-tube. Translated, it reads as follows:—

Before the meeting "experiments were made with Verrier's ear-tube on several pupils of different degrees of deafness. These, however, produced no special or striking effects.

"*Härter*.—Hitherto no better tube has come into my hands. It is a good conductor of sound, or speechwaves (*sprachwellen*), and is, in any case, of use to those who have lost their hearing in later life. I certainly doubt whether it can ever be of any use in the case of the totally deaf.

"*Höller*.—I am greatly interested in seeing this tube, for I have had in use for the last two years an ear-tube of very simple construction. . . . At first it appeared to me as though it were useless: to the scholar the sound seemed to appear very strange, but after a time he got used to it. I obtained the advantage that the hearing of my pupil became more acute.

. . . . Care is necessary in using an ear-tube.

"*Hollenbach*.—An ordinary funnel will render the same service as this complicated ear-tube.

"*Vatter*.—It is beyond question that the inventor aimed at constructing a 'hear-awakener,' not a mere ear-tube. Reports from France show that all hope is not lost. I have been strengthened in my conviction (*überzeugung*), however, that, wherever there is no life, no life can be called into action, even by this ear-tube. We can only sharpen hearing wherever a remnant of hearing is left. But one is easily deceived; even famous aurists are often mistaken in an extraordinary manner."

I have entered into fuller particulars concerning this instrument than was needed perhaps, not because my faith in its efficacy has grown stronger, but more to show the great anxiety there is in the minds of all concerned in the education and welfare of the deaf to detect, preserve, and sharpen any remnant of hearing these unfortunate children may have the good fortune to be still possessed of.

That the number of the non-totally deaf in every school for deaf-mutes amounts to a larger percentage than one would at first suppose, is a surprising fact that deserves to be more widely known. Let me ventilate this subject a little more by representing the power of hearing, say, by the letter A, the degree of hearing-power in a person of normal condition by the unit 1A, and the absolute want of all hearing-power by the formula 0A. It will be clear that a scale of all intermediate stages of deafness may now be drawn, and that only experience in testing is required to relegate each case in a school to its proper place on such a scale.

In the Sumner school, for example, where there are forty-one pupils, the scale would appear thus: 0A, fourteen pupils; $\frac{1}{4}$ A, two pupils; $\frac{2}{4}$ A, four pupils; $\frac{3}{4}$ A, six pupils; $\frac{4}{4}$ A, five pupils; $\frac{5}{4}$ A, five pupils; $\frac{6}{4}$ A, three pupils; $\frac{7}{4}$ A, not represented (children with average intellect belonging to this class would not remain dumb); 1A, two hearing pupils with defective speech. The feature exhibited here, that no less than twenty-five out of thirty-nine deaf-mutes are not absolutely deaf, is a striking one.

The large percentage of *partially* deaf children on this scale is not peculiar to New Zealand, but will, with slight variations, be found in most deaf-mute schools in countries with a damp or variable climate; and such remarks as are made below with regard to the scale will apply generally:—

1. Deaf children falling under Class $\frac{6}{4}$ A, though hearing slightly, are *bonâ fide* deaf-mutes, and enter an institution as such—that is, without either oral or mental speech.

2. Such deaf children need expert treatment just as much as those in Class 0A and upwards.

3. After a few years' proper tuition by means of the pure oral method, knowledge and practice enable these pupils to understand through the ear at a yard's distance a good deal of such language, spoken behind them, as they have previously acquired artificially by speech and lip-reading.

4. Language *strange in meaning* to pupils under Class $\frac{6}{4}$ A, but clearly uttered at the same distance behind them, can neither be recognised nor repeated.

5. It is clear, then, that the previous knowledge of a word or sentence contributes more to its successful recognition than does the slight power to hear the sound; that with even the most favoured of uneducated deaf-mutes there can be no question of their having in the slightest degree any notion of language or any idea of silent, inward, mental speech, and that to the deaf and dumb all language, as used in speech or in writing, has to be taught and retaught again and again.

6. For the want of this mental speech or inward language every effort of mental energy in untaught deaf-mutes is fettered and shackled, is crude, and the process of thinking is carried on more by the power of imagination than by any other faculty of the mind.

7. No wonder, then, that the following resolution of the German Teachers' Conference at Nagold, on the 18th May, 1892, was unanimously adopted without discussion: "To induce, encourage, cultivate—literally, to build up in the soul (*hinein zu bilden*)—the thinking of deaf-mutes