

and catch a ball, to lace their boots, carry a glass of water, &c. You will do excellent work if you let them blow up a paper-bag or a bladder, and you supply them with a slate and pencil; the former will strengthen their lungs and expand their chest, the latter will practise their eye and hand.

The number of pupils discharged at the end of the year was five. How greatly educational results depend upon the mental capacity of the learner, in a greater measure even with the deaf than with the hearing, is forcibly illustrated by comparing three of these; the same care and attention bestowed upon all produced only meagre results on the two oldest (girls), owing to their third-rate powers, whilst bringing out a specimen of uncommon excellence in the youngest, a lad of barely sixteen. This last, though on the day of his admission perfectly mute and equally ignorant with the girls of all words and languages, is now able to hold intelligent conversation with almost every one. He not only looks with intelligent and inquiring eyes at every object and every human action, but he reads such books as “Treasure Island,” by L. Stevenson, and “Robbery under Arms,” by Rolf Boldrewood, with comparative ease, and has, therefore, accomplished what to the deaf-mute of a public school is the almost Herculean task of realising and appreciating the secrets of our intricate and beautiful language.

The peculiar hearing boy, who came to us as an outsider, and to whom we have referred in former reports, was, by the end of the year, so far advanced in the art of articulating words and in the knowledge of colloquial language, that the society of deaf-mutes had become more a hindrance than an advantage to him. For this and other reasons he has now been sent to an ordinary village school, where the companionship of other hearing children will no doubt lead to his further development.

Frequent visits have been received in the course of the year from former pupils. There was a difference in the rate of their general progress. Those who passed through a fairly complete course of studies have made greater strides than those who left the school after five or six years' training.

The Law Court case of the 28th May last, in which one of the old pupils as chief witness, and the director of the institution as interpreter, had to appear, is of special interest to us from an educational point of view. With the explanation that only the questions from his Honour the Judge, from the Crown Prosecutor, and from the accused when cross-examining, were put in a clear tone of voice by the interpreter to the deaf witness, that none of the latter's replies needed repetition, or were repeated, I beg leave to quote the reports which appeared in the *Christchurch Press* of 29th May, 1895, and the *Lyttelton Times* of the same date:—

(From the *Christchurch Press* of 29th May, 1895.)

An Interesting Witness.—The prosecutor in one of the cases before the Supreme Court yesterday was a deaf-mute who had been in the institution at Sumner, and who gave his evidence by lip-reading through Mr. van Asch in a most satisfactory and audible manner, putting to shame many witnesses not so afflicted, whom one is accustomed to hear, or, at least, attempt to hear, in the Court. His Honour the Judge, and Mr. Stringer, the Crown Prosecutor, both spoke in terms of commendation of the excellent manner in which the witness gave evidence, testifying as it did to the excellence of the system at the Sumner Institute.

(From the *Lyttelton Times*, May 29th, 1895.)

A Deaf-and-dumb Witness.—The utility of the Sumner Institute for the Deaf-and-dumb was shown in a striking manner during the proceedings in the Supreme Court yesterday. The prosecutor in a “confidence trick” case was a young man, a deaf-mute, who was for some considerable time an inmate of that institution. It is easy to conceive what would be the utterly helpless condition of a person so afflicted without the special training given in the institute. As the result of that training, however, the young man is able to earn his own living as a farm servant, and to make his way about the world without much trouble. It is true that he was swindled by a sharper by means of a “confidence trick,” but it must be admitted that persons in possession of all their faculties have been victimised by exactly the same ruse. Mr. van Asch, director of the institute, acted as interpreter, and the youth gave his evidence in a perfectly distinct voice, straightforwardly, clearly, and intelligently. His Honour Mr. Justice Denniston complimented the witness, and expressed the great pleasure he felt in seeing the admirable results of the training which he had undergone, which had made an intelligent, capable member of the community out of a person who would otherwise have been practically helpless.

I have, &c.,

The Minister of Education, Wellington.

G. VAN ASCH.

No. 3.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Christchurch, June, 1896.

I have the honour to forward the following report on the Deaf-and-dumb Asylum at Sumner:—

The institution numbers now fifty—twenty-seven boys and twenty-three girls. They have generally enjoyed good health; the exceptions have been a few trifling cases, for which they were brought to my house for advice. One serious accident occurred; the boy was removed to the Christchurch Hospital, and is now very well.

The institution has been clean and in excellent order throughout. The water supply has recently been very inadequate for the requirements of the institution. The high-pressure supply is now within a very reasonable distance of the school. It would be advisable for the department to consider whether the expenses incurred in connecting the same with the school buildings will not be fully compensated by the enhanced safety in case of fire and the utility and comfort to the staff and pupils.