

and of judging how far their training has fitted them for holding communication with outside people. For the casual visitor to an institution of this kind, the most striking feature, and the one by which the amount of good done is generally estimated, is the ability of the children to talk, and to understand what is said to them. I found that nearly all the children could make out what I said to them, and could give fairly intelligible answers. The pupils that have been but a short time at Sumner—say, a year or two—understand very much better than they speak; those that have been there for a longer time—say, for three or four years—do both nearly equally well. Seeing, however, that the number of children that have been at Sumner for a long period is small as yet, the impression made on a visitor is that the comprehension is very much better than the speaking. I am convinced that in two or three years' time there will be an alteration in this respect. I had quite a long conversation with one of the boys: this lad is stone-deaf, and four years ago he could do no more than make a few signs; any one who had seen us talking together on Saturday last would have noticed only that the lad repeated what I said to him, that, so to speak, he *looked at* what I said instead of listening to it, and that his own sentences were delivered in a monotone; otherwise there was nothing to give any one an indication of the nature of his affliction, or to cause a person unacquainted with the kind of work done here to imagine that it was a deaf-mute that was holding a conversation with me. A little girl, who two years ago was just beginning the course, was able to understand and answer questions about her home, and to inform me that she wished the holidays to come so that she might visit her friends. I noticed, too, that the children *spoke* to one another while they were playing. It would be futile to expect that these children could ever be placed on anything like an equal footing with those who can hear, but it is very plain that all the children here are in a fair way to hold conversations with their friends on any ordinary subject, and to have the disabilities depending on their want of the sense of hearing diminished indefinitely. This is, in my opinion, a very great deal to have accomplished in the short time that the institution has been at work. But the mere speaking and understanding, though of course of cardinal importance, are by no means the only acquirements of the inmates of the Sumner Institution. It is the awakening of the intelligence, and the developing and putting into working-order of minds disabled by the blocking-up of two of the most important avenues of thought and its expression, that are in reality the greatest benefits conferred on the children here. It is impossible to see these children after an interval without recognising that in the meantime their reasoning powers have been greatly improved, and that their minds are able to perform operations that had previously been quite beyond their range. There is nothing connected with this institution calling for unfavourable remark; so far as I can see, everything is going on very satisfactorily." And here is another report by Mr. Habens, the Inspector-General, in 1885.

88. Was his report favourable or not?—Yes, entirely satisfactory; but it refers to details with which I need not trouble you. After that, we have no other report in these papers by any one visiting the institution. The Inspector-General visits the institution every year, but no report is sent up by the Inspector; the reports here are only the reports of the Director and the medical officer.

89. Then have you any report of the medical officer showing whether the condition of the deaf and dumb children improves or not?—I have nothing here by the medical man showing the condition of the children.

90. I suppose you do not take in any weak-minded children. Is there any provision made for weak-minded children in the colony?—No, except, of course, the lunatic asylums. We have dull children, but we have no imbeciles.

91. Are the children of a low physical type generally?—No. Of course they improve greatly after a year's work in the institution. Our pupils are much the same as the average of English deaf-mutes.

92. Are there any cases of consanguinity in marriage on the part of parents that you know of?—There is one case, I think.

93. Any case of two in a family being deaf and dumb?—Yes; we have four cases now in the institution of two in a family.

94. *Mr. Van Oven.*] Do you mean eight children?—Yes; and, with regard to one child who left us about a year ago now, in that family there are six children deaf out of seven children.

95. Are the parents deaf and dumb?—No.

96. *The Chairman.*] Did Mr. Van Asch come to the colony on his own responsibility, or was he sent for by the Education Department?—He was sent for by the Education Department.

97. You told us that you visited the Australian Colonies: what deaf schools did you visit there?—I visited the institution for the deaf and dumb in Sydney, and another in Melbourne, and another in Adelaide. Of course all three institutions are institutions for the blind and the deaf and dumb all together. I have here a report of the institution in Sydney, and also one of the institution in Adelaide, but I have not a report of the Melbourne institution.

98. Are they, in those Australian institutions, teaching the deaf and dumb on the same system as yours?—No. In Sydney they are trying to start a class on the oral system; but the other children are taught on the old manual system.

99. Was the standard of education good or moderate?—Fairly good.

100. Would they compare favourably or unfavourably with those taught on the oral system, as far as general education is concerned?—From what I saw, I should say they would not compare favourably with those taught on the oral method.

101. They are both on the same system—on the manual system?—Yes. In the institution in Adelaide they are now trying to introduce the oral system entirely. I do not know what they will do in that way; they have great difficulties to contend with in trying to introduce it.

102. Is the education in those Australian institutions provided by the State?—No; I believe they are all benevolent institutions. I am not able to speak from actual knowledge of the fact, but