

June 28, 1864

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT ELECT, EDWARD M. GALLAUDET, A. M.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No language at my command can adequately express the feelings to which the remarks you have addressed to me have given rise.

While your words of commendation on the part I have been permitted to perform in the rearing of our beloved institution are precious and most cheering to me, I cannot feel that they are deserved. I have been but an instrument in the hands of Him who rules the hearts of men, and whatever of success has attended the efforts which have been put forth in behalf of the Columbia Institution is owing to His especial aid and blessing.

To Him, therefore, let us humbly ascribe the praise for our past history, and in Him let us put our trust for the future, believing that in His own good time He will perfect the work which we in His name are now met to inaugurate.

The interest you express in our institution, the hope you record for its future advancement, and the purpose you indicate of continuing to further its progress, find a ready response in my heart. As from the beginning of our enterprise, so from this time onward, I shall rely very greatly on your ripe experience, your sound, prompt judgment, and your far-seeing sagacity to sustain me in the discharge of the important duties devolved upon me. May God in His goodness spare you long to our institution and to those who look up to you with veneration and affection.

To you, Mr. President and revered friend, to you, gentlemen of the board of directors, and to you, my friends, members of the association, by whom the high honor of elevating me to the presidency of the institution has been conferred, do I return my most heartfelt thanks for the unwavering confidence and support you have given me in the past, and for this new token of your regard which has been manifested on the present occasion. I implore the Source of all strength so to bear me up that I may henceforth be more faithful, more earnest, and more successful in my labors for the improvement of the deaf and dumb and the blind than I have been in the years that are past.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: We are now entering upon a most important period in the history of our institution. We are about making advances that may materially change its character.

We are preparing for a work, deemed to be of great importance to the deaf and dumb, that has been hitherto unattempted.

When the western pioneer, urging his adventurous way over the mountainous ridges that divide our continent, reaches, after weeks and miles of toilsome

journey, the summit of some o'erlooking peak, whence he may view the land to which his aspirations lead him, it is natural that he should direct his gaze backward and encourage or warn himself with the memory of difficulties surmounted, of dangers passed, and of advances accomplished.

In like manner the true reformer, the practical inventor, he who would introduce among his fellow-men for their advancement new elements of civilization, calls to his assistance the experience of the past, and, ere entering upon untried fields of labor, ponders well the record of efforts directed in similar channels, that he may gather inspiration both from the achievements and the failures of those who have gone before him.

It will not, therefore, be deemed inappropriate on the present occasion, having as its object the inauguration of an undertaking without precedent in the annals of institutions of learning or of benevolence, and which may in after years be looked back upon as an era in the history of the improvement of the deaf and dumb, to consider what has been done for the amelioration of the condition of the deaf and dumb in our own and other lands.

That deaf mutes were found in the earlier ages of the world we have the most undoubted evidence. It is plain also that they existed in such numbers as to form a class in the community, for we find them mentioned in the Code of Justinian, the Mosaic Law, and still earlier, fifteen hundred years before Christ, (and this appears to be the first mention of deaf mutes in any recorded history.) by Jehovah himself, when he remonstrates with Moses on account of his diffidence, and says: "Who maketh the dumb or deaf, or the seeing or the blind! Have not I the Lord?"

The student who would attain a full knowledge of this subject must pursue his investigations over a period of three thousand years. Hence it will not be expected at this time that anything more than a *résumé* can be given of the results of researches so extended.

That the deaf and dumb in early times were a degraded and despised class of beings is evident from the injunction in Leviticus xix, 14, "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind." This prohibition being, doubtless, against practices which had obtained among the Israelites, and were denounced by the Almighty.

In the Justinian Code, the foundation of most of our modern European and American jurisprudence, the deaf and dumb from birth are, without exception and without regard to their degree of intelligence, condemned to a perpetual legal infancy, in this respect being considered as on a footing with the insane, and those who were incapable of managing their affairs through the affliction of permanent disease, and hence, like them, were to be placed under guardianship. *Mente captis, et surdis, et mutis, et qui perpetuo morbo laborant, quia rebus suis superesse non possunt, curatores dandi sunt.* (Digest, Lib. 1, tit. XXII [sic], De Curatoribus, § 4.)* [See footnote]

Among the laws of the Hindoos, we find in the ordination of the Pundits, or Code of Gentoo laws, whoever was "deaf from his mother's womb," or whoever was dumb, was classed among the persons incapable of inheritance. (Halked's translations of the Gentoo laws, from the Persian and Sanscrit, London, 1776.)

We have no evidence that attempts were made among the enlightened heathen nations to instruct the deaf and dumb. This seems the more surprising from the fact that with the Romans, in the time of Nero, the pantomime of the stage (essentially our present language of signs) had been carried to such perfection that a king from the borders of the Euxine, seeing a pantomime performed at Rome, begged one of the performers of the Emperor, to be used as an interpreter with the nations in his neighborhood at home.

Pliny, speaking of the most eminent painters of Rome, mentions "Quintus Pedius, grandson of that consul, Quintus Pedius, who was named in Cæsar's will, co-heir with Augustus." "This young man, being a mute from birth, the orator Messale, of whose family he was, thought might be instructed in painting, of which also Augustus, of sacred memory, approved." And it is stated "the young man made great proficiency in the art."

And yet, though the ancient Romans had before their eyes intelligent deaf mute youth, and were familiar with the very language of all others adapted to their use, not only were no attempts made to open their minds, but the possibility of instructing them was denied by the wisest men. Lucretius did but express the acknowledged opinion of all classes when he said:

"To instruct the deaf no art could ever reach,
No care improve them and no wisdom teach."

So firmly fixed was this opinion of the permanent and necessary intellectual and moral inferiority of the deaf and dumb, that in the fourth century St. Augustine, commenting on the words of the apostle, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," remarks that deafness from birth makes faith impossible, since he who is born deaf can neither hear the word nor learn to read it.

So far as recorded instances of instruction of the deaf and dumb afford information on the subject, the first effort was made among the Anglo-Saxons in the seventh century by John, Bishop of Hagulstad, afterward known as St. John, of Beverly.

The success of the bishop was esteemed at the time miraculous, as appears from the account given in the Ecclesiastical History of Bede. One youth only was taught by the bishop, and the intellectual development of the pupil must have been but slight.

A single case appears in the fifteenth century, mentioned by Rodolph Agrícola, a

native of Baffle, near Groningen, and a distinguished scholar of his time, but no details are given of the person, place, or mode of instruction.

It was about the year 1550 that Pedro Ponce de Leon, of a noble Spanish family, opened a school for deaf-mute children in the convent of Benedictines at Oña. His triumphs, according to the testimony of contemporary writers, were complete, and some of his pupils showed great proficiency in the study of science as well as of languages.

In the course of the seventeenth century the subject of deaf-mute instruction received considerable attention in Italy, England, and Holland, and early in the eighteenth century successful efforts were made in Germany; but it was between the years 1755 and 1760 that the first considerable movements were inaugurated in behalf of the deaf and dumb.

It is a noticeable fact that in three separate nationalities the men who now stand in history as the founders of three distinct methods of instructing the deaf and dumb should have commenced their labors almost simultaneously. These instructors were Charles Michel de l'Epee, in France; Samuel Heinicke, in Saxony; and Thomas Braidwood, in Scotland.

Time will not allow any extended notice of the achievements of these pioneers in the work of establishing permanent schools for the deaf and dumb. Each of them succeeded in securing for the class they sought to benefit a lasting hold on the sympathies of the public, and all existing institutions for the deaf and dumb trace their origin to the impulses communicated by the labors and success of these three instructors.

The method known as the "French," and having as its basis the use of pantomimic signs, was invented by De l'Epee, and improved by his pupil and successor the Abbe Sicard.

Dr. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, who founded the system of deaf-mute instruction now prevalent in America, gained his knowledge of the art from the Abbe Sicard.

Dr. Gallaudet gave to the world the most convincing proof of his belief that the deaf and dumb could through education be made the social and intellectual equals of those possessed of all their faculties, by taking one of his own pupils as his wife. He, having lived to see twenty noble schools for the deaf and dumb in successful operation in this his native land, filling with joy in the knowledge of things human and divine thousands of immortal beings who otherwise would have been doomed to lives of intellectual and moral darkness, has passed from earth to the bosom of that Saviour in whose name and strength he labored for the welfare of the afflicted and distressed.

She, my mother, whose ears have ever been closed to the sound of her children's voices, whose tongue could never sing a lullaby to calm their infant fears, now sits before me, an intelligent and joyous participant in the exercises of

the day. Released, by the advance of years, from the cares of a family now grown to maturity, she has since the organization of the Columbia Institution devoted her life to its interests, and, in the motherly care she has exercised over the pupils, has contributed in no small degree to the success with which, in the good providence of God, its labors have been crowned. And though her days have been lengthened to well-nigh three-score years and ten, yet a full measure of strength remains, and she is pursuing her peaceful way towards the shore of the dark river, in the hope that many years of active usefulness yet remain to her, wherein she may continue to point out, to infant minds, the shining way that, will lead them where their unstopped ears may listen to the joyous songs of heaven, and where their loosened tongues may join in anthems of praise to Him who doeth all things well.

In the introduction into America of the art of instructing the deaf and dumb, Dr. Gallaudet was assisted by a pupil of Sicard, a deaf-mute gentleman who had had, prior to coming to the United States in 1817, several years' experience as a teacher in the Royal Institution in Paris; and the name of Laurent Clerc will ever be held in grateful remembrance by deaf mutes and their friends in this his adopted country, as a pioneer and a life-long laborer in their behalf. Having spent a full half century in developing and training the minds of his fellow-mutes, Mr. Clerc is now, in the calm evening of a life prolonged beyond the allotted time of man, enjoying that rest to which his untiring and useful labors richly entitle him. Warmly alive to every movement tending to the advancement of the deaf and dumb, he has, in spite of many infirmities, journeyed from his home in New England to Washington, that he might give his personal blessing to the new department of deaf-mute education, to inaugurate which we are assembled on this occasion.

Born while the venerated De l'Epee was still alive, Mr. Clerc stands among us today a living monument of an age long past, a witness of events, a contemporary of men, soon to be known only in the pages of history.

Happy are we indeed, when ushering into existence an institution which we trust may complete the system of deaf-mute instruction in the United States, in having the benediction of him who bore a hand in the establishment of that school which will ever be regarded as the Alma Mater of all American institutions for the deaf and dumb.

The advance of the cause of deaf-mute instruction in this country gives evidence unmistakable of the humanity of our people and their willingness to respond to appeals for the unfortunate.

Institutions have been established and well endowed by legislative appropriations and private munificence in every quarter of the land, and even in a time of civil war schools for the deaf and dumb have been successfully organized in the new States of the west.

A system of instruction prevails which, in the judgment of men of learning who

have examined critically the methods pursued in other countries, affords the speediest and most practical results, and the priceless benefits of education are within the reach of rich and poor alike.

Do any, regarding complacently the work already accomplished for the deaf and dumb, comparing their present happy condition with that degraded state to which public law and universal sentiment consigned them in former years, argue that no further advances should be made in the development of their minds? that enough has been done already? that no additional facilities are needed to give deaf mutes the fullest opportunities for the mental development of which they are capable? Let such consider what progress has been made during the present century in affording means of acquiring knowledge to those possessed of all their faculties, and it will directly appear that while colleges, universities, free academies, and high schools for the hearing and speaking have been multiplied throughout the land, no institution has hitherto been opened where the deaf and dumb can pursue a collegiate course of study, and secure that mental training and that foundation of learning which may enable them to engage successfully in scientific or literary pursuits.

The last census shows that the deaf-mute population of our country numbers upwards of fifteen thousand. Is it to us supposed that none of these are capable of receiving benefit from those courses of instruction which are so highly valued by their more favored fellow-citizens? But let us review the opinions of those who have made the matter of deaf-mute instruction their especial study.

Dr. Gallaudet often before his death expressed to the speaker his belief that the time would come when a college for the deaf and dumb would be established. He considered deaf mutes capable of attaining to a high degree of mental culture, and felt that every practicable opportunity should be afforded them for advancement.

In the year 1851 a convention of instructors of the deaf and dumb was held at Hartford, Connecticut, where the first institution was established. Among other important subjects discussed was that of a high school or college for the deaf and dumb.

An elaborate paper was read by Rev. William W. Turner, then an instructor of many years' experience in the American Asylum, and since for ten years its principal. Mr. Turner, after recounting what had been done for the deaf and dumb in the then existing institutions, says:

"The institutions for the deaf and dumb in the United States hold the same relative position as the better class of public schools in our cities. Like the latter, they teach beginners the elements of language; then, its principles and construction; afterwards, arithmetic, geography, and history. But as all this must be done in five or six years, it is obvious that a thorough knowledge of these subjects cannot in most instances be acquired. In view of the difficulties to be overcome, some instructors have chosen to teach facts and science at the

expense of language, while others have labored to elucidate and fix in the minds of their pupils the rules and idioms of language, without leaving sufficient time for the other branches of a common-school education. In point of fact, our pupils go from our institutions with the ability to read and write the ordinary style of letters, narratives, and conversation more or less correctly, without being able to comprehend the import of elaborate essays on elevated subjects. They understand as much of arithmetic as they will have occasion to use in their respective vocations, and they can pass a fair examination in geography and history. In short, they have laid the foundation of a good English education without having completed the superstructure. This account of the matter is not, however, strictly applicable to all. While some dull or inattentive pupils fall below the ordinary level of a class, a few gifted minds rise considerably above it. These are to be regarded as exceptions to the general rule. But notwithstanding the incompleteness of their education, a majority of them will return home to friends less perfectly educated than themselves, and will consequently be thought to know more than they really do. And as most of them become farmers or mechanics, their education may be considered sufficient for persons in their stations in life.

"The question still recurs whether their usefulness and happiness would not be promoted by a more thorough mental training, and by a more extended and complete course of study. We do not hesitate to affirm that this would be the case. The same arguments which go to show that knowledge is power, that the condition of a people is improved in proportion as the masses are educated, have their application with equal weight to the deaf and dumb. Indeed, those who can hear and speak will much better make their way through life without education than the former. The ability which uneducated persons possess of obtaining, through the ear, information communicated orally, and of imparting to others their own ideas through speech, affords them advantages which nothing but education can supply to the deaf mute; and very much in proportion to his knowledge will be his position and influence in society."

After noticing the difficulties which would arise, were the various institutions to undertake separately to afford the college course to the very few in each who might properly pursue it, Mr. Turner goes on to say:

"What he needs is a school expressly provided for him, and for others in his circumstances, a high school for the deaf and dumb.

"This high school should receive only those who had completed a regular course of study at the State institutions, together with those semi-mutes who had in other ways acquired an equal amount of knowledge. It should afford all its students a three years' course of instruction under two or more of the ablest professors of the art that could be obtained. In such a school, suitably endowed and judiciously managed, we might expect such a development of deaf-mute intellect as has not hitherto been witnessed in this or any other country. We might expect that its graduates would be fitted to partake equally with us of the enjoyment derived from reading and literary pursuits. We might expect to see

them creditably filling stations for which their peculiar privation has been thought to disqualify them. We might expect to find them in families of cultivated minds and refined tastes, the chief ornament and attraction of the social circle."

In closing his essay, Mr. Turner urges the importance of early action in the following terms:

"When ought this enterprise to be undertaken? We answer, immediately. If there is a demand for such an institution, its establishment should not be delayed. There are no more serious obstacles to be surmounted, no greater difficulties to be encountered, no more labor or self-denial required at present, than will be at any future time. Let the subject be carefully considered by this convention. Let the attention of the officers and patrons of all our institutions be directed to it. Let there be harmony of feeling and of views respecting it. Let there be unity of plan and of effort among the friends of the enterprise, and success is certain."

In the discussion which followed, Mr. Wetmore, a director in the New York Institution, said:

"He was struck very forcibly by the arguments presented. He had often regretted that pupils should go out from our institutions for the instruction of the deaf and dumb before their education is thoroughly completed. In the State of New York the term is limited, and the course of study cannot exceed seven years. In this short period it cannot be expected that the pupil should attain beyond a moderate point in his acquirements."

Dr. Peet, the distinguished and venerable principal of the New York Institution, who has spent a most laborious life in the work of deaf-mute instruction said:

"He had long felt the importance of carrying forward our institutions to a point far beyond that which is now attained.

"Our institutions ought to be institutions for the *education* of the deaf and dumb; and he desired that provision might be made, in connexion with our present institutions, by which the education of the deaf mute could be carried to a greater extent. If this *could not* be done in our existing institutions, he held that the subject should then be fully entertained of establishing a high school or an academy, or whatever we may please to call it, for the higher education of the deaf and dumb. We shall need some method to instruct them in the fine arts, in science, in the mechanic arts, civil engineering, &c., &c., for all which they are fully competent."

Mr. Cary, principal of the Ohio Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, says:

"Thought the idea was capable of being realized. There were obstacles to be overcome, it was true, but they were not insurmountable, and he trusted that the project would be deemed worthy some practical attempt. He suggested that the institution be planned with reference to its national character. We have a Military

Academy at West Point, supported by the government. Why may we not apply to the national legislature for aid to establish an institution where the deaf mutes in the United States may receive a higher education? He believed a sufficient number might be selected to make the institution of sufficient size."

Mr. Morris, an experienced instructor in the New York Institution, and Mr. Ayres, now the instructor of the high class in the American Asylum, favored the project, and believed public opinion was ready to sustain such an institution.

A committee, consisting of Messrs. Turner, Cary, and Van Nostrand, was appointed to consider the subject, and report at the next convention, which was to meet at Columbus, Ohio, in 1853.

As a result of this debate, the institutions in Hartford and New York undertook separately to meet the wants detailed in Mr. Turner's paper, by establishing high classes.

In view of these efforts the committee above named, in a report made at Columbus, Ohio, at the convention of 1853, says:

"We fully believe that the results of this experiment will be most happy, not only upon members of the high class, but upon those of other classes also, and upon the institutions in which it has been commenced. We would not, therefore, as a committee, recommend the adoption of any measures, under existing circumstances, which should interrupt or interfere with the workings of this experiment; but advise rather to wait for its full development, under the impression that it may be necessary, as a preliminary step to the establishment of a high school, and the realization of all our hopes and plans in regard to it."

The high class at Hartford was formed on the 15th of September, 1852, and Mr. Turner was appointed to instruct it. He says of the project, in an article published in the American Annals:

"Although this plan does not secure all the advantages of the proposed high school, and may not remove the necessity of its final establishment, it does, however, meet a present want, and, if successful, will prepare the way for the more extended and better plan."

An able article on a college for deaf mutes appeared in the American Annals for April, 1854, written by Mr. John Carlin, himself a deaf mute, educated in part at the Pennsylvania Institution, but who has, in his maturer years, improved himself in science and letters to a most remarkable degree. I quote from his article:

"Taking in consideration the great variety of minds, arising from the physical formation of the brain, and the effects of climate, disease, parental negligence, &c., it would be at variance with the logical principles of physiology to suppose that *all* speaking and hearing persons have minds equally capable of superior culture, or that *all* the minds of the deaf and dumb are incapable of higher

training. Yet, though there can be found no difference between speaking persons and deaf mutes, of the higher class, in imagination, strength of mind, depth of thought, and quickness of perception, it cannot be denied, however repugnant it may be to our feelings, that the deaf mutes have no finished scholar of their own to boast of, while the speaking community present to our menial vision an imposing array of scholars. How is this discrepancy accounted for, seeing that the minds of the most promising mutes are eminently susceptible of intellectual polish? Does it not show that there must be in existence certain latent causes of their being thrown into the shade?"

"Is it not within the range of our researches to solve the mystery in which they are enveloped?"

"The question whether there is any possibility on the part of able masters to develop the intellect of their prominent mute scholars to its fullest scope, were their term of pupilage extended and their course of studies semblant to that generally pursued at colleges, may be answered in the affirmative; for with the gracious permission of my excellent friend, Mr. I. L. Peet, the able preceptor of the high class at the New York Institution, than whom, as one fitted for that arduous avocation, the directors thereof could not have made a better selection. I have made careful and impartial investigations of the progress his scholars have made in their studies.

"Notwithstanding their having been but one year and a half in the high class, they have, in their pursuance of the higher branches of education, pushed on with prodigious strides toward the goal where merit, honor, and glory wait to be conferred upon their brows.

"Besides those of the New York high class, I have learned with much satisfaction that the scholars of the Hartford high class have made such progress as to encourage our hopes of the ultimate success of that department of higher mute education.

"Notwithstanding the acknowledged excellence of that department and its system, which is arranged expressly to accelerate the progress of its scholars in knowledge, it is still but a step which invites them to ascend to the college, where they may enter upon a still more enlarged scale of studies and then retire with *honorary degrees*. But alas! no such college is yet in existence.

"Those of those who speak and hear have indeed produced eminent men. So will our 'National College' also. I do not pretend to say that the mutes will be equal to the speaking in the extent of their learning and in the correctness and elegance of their language, but if proofs be needed to give conviction of the truth of my assertion that mutes of decided talents can be rendered as good scholars as the Barneses, Macaulays, Lamartines, and Bryants, I will readily refer to Dr. Kitto, of England, the celebrated biblical commentator; Messieurs Berthier and Pelissier, of France, the former a successful biographer, and the latter a fine poet; our own Nack and Burnet, both excellent authors and poets; and Mr. Clerc,

who is the only mute in this country enjoying the honorary degree of Master of Arts, to which he is fully entitled by his learning and long experience in mute education."

It is to the officers of the Columbia Institution one of the most gratifying features of the present occasion that Mr. Carlin, whose self-culture under adverse circumstances entitles him to high honor among literary men, is here to-day to receive the honorary degree of Master of Arts recently voted him by our board of directors.

From what has been stated as to the expressed views of distinguished deaf mutes and those engaged in their instruction, it appears that the desirableness of affording this class of persons opportunities for high mental development is strongly urged. And it is as plainly shown that the organizations known as high classes, of which there are but two in the country, viz: at New York and Hartford, while performing a most important and useful work, do not meet the wants of the deaf and dumb in this particular.

Without occupying time in adding to those already brought forward, by some of the most distinguished men of our profession, further considerations to show that a college for deaf mutes is demanded and would be a source of great good, I will proceed to detail the purposes which the Columbia Institution entertains of perfecting that "more extended and better plan," recommended in the convention of 1851, of establishing that "National College for Deaf Mutes," for which Mr. Carlin so ardently aspired.

Our institution, by the provisions of its organic law, is not limited as to the extent to which it may carry forward the education of those placed under its fostering care by the United States. It is authorized to receive and instruct deaf mutes from any of the States or Territories of the United States, on such terms as may be agreed upon by their parents, guardians, or trustees, and the proper authorities of the institution. By a recent act of Congress the institution is authorized to confer degrees in the arts and sciences after the manner pursued in colleges. It thus appears that this institution has power to open a collegiate department of study, and to offer to such deaf mutes as may avail themselves of its privileges, academic honors equal in rank to those conferred on hearing and speaking persons by the highest literary schools in the land.

To fulfil these important trusts is the earnest desire of those to whom the direction of the institution has been committed, and it is their intention to spare no efforts, that here at the nation's capital may be successfully established a seat of learning which may extend its benefits to deaf mutes from every State of our Union.

There are cogent reasons why the college for deaf mutes-and I say *the* college, since many years must elapse before the wants of the deaf and dumb in this country will require more than one-should be built up at Washington; one of the most weighty of which is that it has already, by the highest authority in the nation,

been ushered into life here with its functions complete, although they may not yet possess that power and endurance that the accretions of maturity alone can give.

Appropriations of public money as well as the benefactions of private munificence will be needed in the development of the National Deaf Mute College and while it would not be right to ask the representatives in any State legislature to tax their constituents for the support of an institution for the benefit of citizens of other States, it is eminently proper to solicit the aid of the national legislators, representing as they do the people of every State, in behalf of an institution that shall extend its humane and elevating influences throughout the entire national domain. Undoubtedly the assistance of the federal government would be most important, in the establishment and perfection of a national institution for the deaf and dumb; and where would that aid be more likely to be afforded than to a school already established and supported by the United States, under the very eaves, as it were, of its Capitol?

While our institution confined its operations to residents of the District of Columbia, Congress accorded a ready support; when its scope was extended to embrace the children of our soldiers and seamen, the government promptly increased its appropriations; and now that we propose to enlarge our sphere of operations so as to offer to deaf-mute citizens of every State and Territory advantages which they cannot obtain elsewhere, the law-makers of the nation have set their seal of approbation on our undertaking by the appropriation of larger sums than ever before, supplying the needs of the institution incident to the establishment of the college, and giving an earnest of their intention to aid in its extension hereafter.

It is a question that may very naturally arise in the minds of those interested in the various State institutions, whether the proposed development of the Columbia Institution into a college will interfere in any way with the operation of its sister schools. To answer such queries in advance, it may be stated that our collegiate department is not designed to conflict, nor need it do so, with any existing organization for the instruction of the deaf and dumb.

It is no part of our plan to attempt to supersede or interrupt the most excellent and useful "high classes" now in operation. On the contrary, we desire the speedy advent of that day when every institution shall have its high class.

In no institution for the deaf and dumb have degrees in the arts and sciences been conferred upon graduates. In no institution does the course of study come up to the standard which would warrant such graduation. We propose to leave untouched in their operations the high classes, and bidding them God speed in their good work, and urging their multiplication, to occupy a field of usefulness hitherto wholly uncultivated.

The time is not distant when the United States will contain a population of a hundred million souls. There will then be a deaf and dumb community in the

country of fifty thousand. At least ten thousand of these would be undergoing instruction at the same time, requiring the employment of five hundred well educated instructors.

The existing opportunities for mental culture are only enough to fit deaf mutes to teach classes of low grades, and as a consequence they must receive relatively low rates of compensation, while the higher classes in our institutions demand the service of liberally educated men at relatively high salaries.

It is admitted that deaf mutes could be employed to a much greater extent than now, as instructors of their fellows in misfortune, and would make much more valuable teachers could they enjoy the advantages of a classical education. One of the designs of our college is to furnish deaf mutes the means of obtaining that mental training and those academic honors which may entitle them to consideration in the world of letters, and allow them to gain positions of much greater usefulness and higher emolument than they can now aspire to.

We propose at least to test the question whether what is valued so highly by hearing and speaking persons, as a preparation for entering the more elevated spheres of usefulness in life, may not in like manner result in opening to deaf mutes positions and pursuits from which they have been hitherto debarred.

If education to a high degree is important to a man possessed of all his faculties, is it not of even more consequence that those who make their way through the world in the face of difficulties which but a few years since seemed almost insurmountable, should, now that their aptitude for learning is proved beyond a question, have every advantage that the ingenuity or liberality of their more favored fellow-mortals can furnish?

The work of deaf-mute instruction in America may not inappropriately be compared to the erection of a stately building. Fifty years ago its foundations were laid broad and deep among the granite hills of New England, and a shaft of rare beauty and strength was reared thereon. Year by year the noble work has proceeded until but the pinnacle stone is lacking to complete the structure; and though it must be small in size and may escape notice amidst the massive and beautiful pillars and arches on which it must of necessity rest, yet it is needed to perfect the work, and the founders of the Columbia Institution would fain essay to place it in position.

And so to-day, in this solemn and public manner, they inaugurate the "College for the Deaf and Dumb;" looking to Congress for a continuance of its favor, to a benevolent public for its approbation, to sister institutions for their countenance and sympathy, and to Him who "doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men," for His sustaining Providence to bear up the enterprise to a successful consummation.

[End of Inaugural Address]

[Footnote:]

I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness for much valuable information on the early history of deaf mute instruction to Dr. Harvey P. Peet, the respected principal of the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, in whose learned and exhaustive articles on the "origin and history of the art of instructing the deaf and dumb," published in the proceedings of conventions of American instructors of the deaf and dumb, held at New York in 1850, and at Jacksonville, Illinois, in 1858, will be found a full and interesting account of the advance of deaf-mute education from the earliest times down to the present century.--E.M.G.

LINK TO INAUGURAL ADDRESS:

<http://tinyurl.com/2b2gvb>

NOTE: For a discussion of why both Lucretius and St. Augustine have been misunderstood and mistranslated, see:

"What did Lucretius Say?" *American Annals of the Deaf*, volume 57, pp. 212-214, <http://tinyurl.com/yszrs7>

"What did St. Augustine Say?" *Americans Annals of the Deaf*, volume 56, pp. 108-120, <http://tinyurl.com/2xlkdl>