

Mr. PAYNE, (deaf) said whatever value could attach to his utterances there he had one special advantage. To a large extent he shared the infirmity of those in whose interest they were assembled. There was an important element in the present question which some amongst them seemed to show a sublime disregard to—the opinion and wishes of the deaf and dumb themselves. He was glad to see Mr. Healey address them yesterday. It was right that they should admit the lamb to the argument. But there was but one master of a deaf and dumb institution who was entitled to take his seat at that Conference and address them as a class representative of the deaf and dumb. He owed his position to his ability, developed and directed by the sign language. He alluded to Mr. Drysdale, and he was very sorry he was not there, if only to give formal expression to what was well known to be the opinion and wishes of the deaf and dumb themselves upon this question. Under the circumstances, he (Mr. Payne) might be permitted to speak for them. He was deaf, *not* dumb, and for more than eighteen years had been most intimately associated with the deaf and dumb. They had been the playmates and schoolfellows of his boyhood, the associates of his youth, and *weezy* now, many of them, the respected friends of his manhood. He had given the first and the last lesson to some of them, he had watched over and to some extent guided their career in life; he had sat by their death-bed, and had talked to them then as the pantomimist only could; he had carried them to their graves, and stood over them there hoping for the bodies committed to the ground a glorious resurrection. He, therefore, hoped he should be credited with having the interests of the whole class at heart. He hoped it would be believed he was honestly willing to do the best he could for his present pupils. After the President's appeal yesterday, it might be thought that all this should be taken for granted, and that his own appeal was needless. He wished it were so, but it was notorious that the pantomimist teachers of the deaf and dumb, most of whom, he firmly believed, were engaged in a labour of love, had not always had extended to them that charity which hopeth and believeth all things. They had had not only to put up with hard names and unworthy imputations, but the fruits of their labours, the results of the system they conscientiously adhered to had been both denied and ignored. It was no recommendation of the opposing system that its advocates refused to give honour to whom honour was due. By anyone at all acquainted with the interior life of an institution and with the immense moral influence the pantomimist had over his pupils' minds, and their quickness of intellect, the sign language could not be lightly esteemed. And its value was more apparent in after life, for the pantomimist did not bid a final good-bye to his pupil at the schoolroom door, but followed him into his walk in life and gave him the benefit of temporal

and spiritual counsel, as good and as full as the hearing community received from lectures, from high-class literature and sermons. Did oralists do the like? No; they depended on others to do it for them, others who did not know half so much about the deaf and dumb as their teachers did, who could not communicate with them so well by any system, and whose influence over them was in the same small proportion. He preferred sentiments to figures, but others might prefer figures. When the last census was taken there were in England and Wales 11,518 deaf and dumb persons. Of that number there were 1,220 scholars, and he had calculated—and they might check it—that there were 4,327 earning their own bread, by definite occupations. It was so generally true that it might be taken as an axiom that without some sort of education the deaf and dumb could do nothing and know nothing. Then the number enjoying the benefits of education would appear to be 5,547, or nearly half the whole number. And by which system were they educated? Let the oralist take all they chose out of the 5,547. Of course they would say there were many establishments and agencies, and if they had these or similar means they would have done as well or better. He doubted very much whether they would have done as much for all, he was perfectly certain they would not have done better. Let them say for a moment they would have done as well. But at what cost? He had taken at random six recently published Reports of as many Institutions conducted on the basis of the sign language, and had found that the actual average cost per head per annum in them was about £27. In the Cambrian, the Institution he represented, it was about £22, and for that sum they educated and maintained their pupils. But it would be said that oral instruction was so superior that at a greater cost—at any cost—it should supersede the present system. Now, what was the grand aim of deaf-mute education? Was it to awaken, develop, and guide the whole moral, religious and intellectual nature of the deaf-mute, or was it only to give him an artificial and confessedly imperfect vocal utterance, together with just that degree of intellectual development which his simple diction represented? Was it, in a word, to train him for eternity or only for time? He would ask advocates of the German System a few questions. As regarded the vast number of deaf and dumb of the school-age, were they prepared to educate by the oral system all who had any degree of mental capacity? As regarded articulation with lip-reading, did the majority of their congenitally deaf pupils acquire it so well that they were placed in this respect on a par with hearing people or anything like it? As to verbal language, did they acquire it so well that they were enabled to read for themselves and understand high-class literature and the Holy Scriptures? Did they get the full benefit in public worship? If not, did they really value such benefits so little that they thought

it an evil to confer them by special means? He could not help thinking that if oralists kept in constant view the great end of deaf-mute education, and if they were better informed in regard to the means others employed to that end, less would be heard of the superiority of their system over the other. It was said that pantomimists relied upon signs to convey ideas. He begged to say they did nothing of the kind. They relied not upon signs, but upon the sign language to convey ideas, and that in advance of their pupils' knowledge of verbal language. They often heard talk of what people called the signs, and knowing the signs and the diversity of the signs. Now, signs and the sign language were not synonymous. They might as well speak of English dictionaries and the English language as convertible terms. The sign language of course had its elements, but it was at once the most natural and most universal, the most impressive and most delicate, the most direct and most beautiful language that thought could be expressed in. Why, it was the very form and pictured semblance of the thought itself; it was thought unveiled, thought exhibited. Their reasons must be overwhelmingly convincing to warrant their depriving the deaf and dumb of that the chiefest pleasure of their existence. Now, in what did the superiority of the oral method consist? Were they to judge by what it had done? They could not judge by what it had done in this country, for it had as yet done next to nothing. Were they to judge by what it proposed to do? It did not propose to do half as much as they did. It proposed to instruct some of the deaf and dumb orally; they educated and maintained all they could get. By education he understood the development of all the best parts and powers of the creature; instruction was simply specific in formation. Compare the title of the Association for the Oral Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb with that of the noble old Institution in which he qualified—the National Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb Poor. In that they had all the difference. Under the one organization the agent was simply an instructor; under the other he was the trainer, friend, and guide of his pupils. On the very face of it, then, the difference between the pantomimist and the oralist was that between the teacher and the technologist, between the preceptor and the artist. They had oral schools and school-board classes. They were better than none, and he heartily wished every advance in the work God speed. But when they talked of the superiority of oral schools over boarding schools, and the advantages of school-board classes over institutions, he told them with all respect to their standing in the profession, and giving them full credit for the very best possible intentions, that this was not an advance in theory, but rather a retrogression to the notions of the novice, bounded as these were by the school-room walls. If they were oralists, they were indeed philanthropists, but their charity began

with the rich; they were, he supposed, the friends of their pupils, but they would not tend them day and night; they taught them for five or six hours a day, and, somehow, they loved them so well they could not tolerate their presence any longer. They sent them away, and did it never strike them that they threw after them the most powerful instrument in the hands of a teacher of the deaf and dumb—personal example and guidance? The smallest minds and weakest powers needed the new creation all the more. Let each one who took this view work on in the old paths, for he was, if man ever was, feeding the lambs of Christ for whom He died, and leading them to His fold. He believed in his work. To that work he was called and chosen in the morning of his life when his energies were young. He was engaged in it now in the noon-day of his existence, and he knew he was doing the best he could, for he was doing it in full view of his heavy responsibilities and all things around him, conditions, circumstances, difficulties, necessities, and knowing that the night was coming when these the tongues of time should fall, and work and word must cease.

It was agreed in view of the importance of the subject under consideration, and the fact that many other gentlemen desired to speak on it, that the discussion should be adjourned till the next day, and that the Conference should re-assemble then at 10 o'clock.

The Conference adjourned at 6 p.m.

TRAINING COLLEGE FOR TEACHERS OF THE  
CASTLE BAR HILL, EALINGAW.

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

R.N.I.D.  
LONDON

Conference of *Head Masters of Institutions*

AND OF OTHER WORKERS

FOR THE

EDUCATION OF THE DEAF & DUMB,

HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION  
OF SOCIAL SCIENCE,

AT THEIR ROOMS, 1, ADAM STREET, ADELPHI, STRAND.

ON TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND THURSDAY,

JULY 24th, 25th, AND 26th, 1877.

Acc. No. 8680

Class

Date 23 JAN 1967

LONDON:

G. HILL, STEAM PRINTER, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD.

1877.