SOME EARLY BOOKS ON THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF.*

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There are in ancient history several accounts of deaf-mutes who were educated so that they could communicate with other persons and understand them.

Jerome Cardan is generally regarded as the first author who stimulated interest in the study of deafness by his writings, but the first man who appears as a practical teacher of the deaf was Pedro de Ponce, or Ponce de Leon, a Spanish monk of Sagahun, who instructed with wonderful results a large number of pupils. He was born in 1520 and died in 1584.

Juan Pablo Bonet wrote the first treatise on the art of teaching the dumb to speak. It was published at Madrid in 1620, three years prior to his death. It is said that he used signs and manual alphabet in the beginning, and then depended mainly on writing and articulation. It is probable that Bonet was the priest whom Sir Kenelm Digby refers to as the instructor of the Spanish deaf lord that was exhibited to him in Spain. A contemporary and countryman of Bonet was Ramvirez de Carion, who was also a successful instructor of the deaf.

Dr. Seiss, (*Children of Silence*, Phila., 1887) states that in France there was a deaf-mute school conducted at Amiens in 1746, by one Etienne de Fay, who was himself deaf from birth. A Portuguese, Roderiguez Pereire, taught the deaf in France in 1749 and was given a hearing before the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris, which reported favorably of his work. In 1760, Abbe de l'Epee began his work in the education of the deaf and dumb. He established a seminary for their gratuitous education, in which he was aided by Abbe Sicard, who carried on the work after de l'Epee's death. De l'Epee and Sicard used a manual method, although they also used as an auxiliary the oral method.

The first book which I wish to show is, so far as I am aware, the earliest publication in English dealing with an oral method of instruction for deaf-mutes. It is entitled "*Philocophus; or the Deafe and Dumb Mans Friend. Exhibiting the Philosophical verity of that subtile Art, which may inable one with an observant Eie, to Heare what any man speaks by the moving of his lips. Upon the same ground, with the advantage of an Historicall Ex-*

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emplification, apparently proving, That a Man borne Deafe and Dumbe, may be taught to Heare the sound of Words with his Eie, and thence learn to speake with his Tongue. By I. B. surnamed the Chirosopher. Sic canimus Surdis. London. Printed for Humphrey Moseley, and are to be sold at his shop in Pauls Church-yard, 1648."

Bulwer had previously published a book entitled "Cheirolugia; or the Naturall Language of the Hand," from which circumstance he derived the surname "Chirosopher."

The Deaf and Dumbman's friend is made up of several parts. Following the dedications and introduction we find: "A Table of such hints and notions as more directly concern Deafe and Dumb men." These have the appearance of being notes or jottings, which the author used, or intended to use, in elaborating lectures or instructions for the pupils in the academy which he thought should be established for the instruction of the deaf and dumb. Many of these "hints and notions" have a very modern sound, thus, "Why Deafe men beget Deafe children," "Why the children of Deafe men are not always Deafe. "The causes why many in a Family prove often times Deafe and Dumbe, very dark and obscure." "Why those who are borne Deafe are consequently Dumbe." "The chief signe to distinguish naturall Deafenesse, from that which happens through a disease." "That Dumbe folks, when they are angry, will make a very great gabling noyse." "The sad and lamentable condition of those, who are borne Deafe and Dumbe." "The sadder condition of those who are Deafe and Blinde." "The yet more miserable condition of those who are Deafe, Dumbe and Blinde."

The second part of the treatise is a very learned and elaborate discussion of language and utterance. The third part begins by quoting the description by Sir Kenelm Digby of a Spanish lord whom he had seen while in Spain with Prince Charles, who, although a deaf-mute, had been taught to understand and express himself so well that he could interpret by reading the lips the sounds of a foreign tongue, and render them back with great accuracy. The conclusion of Bulwer's work is devoted to a minute analysis of Digby's narrative in which he places the most implicit confidence, explaining at length the reasons why such a phenomenon could be brought about.

The second book which I show is, "Alphabeti verè Naturalis Hebraici brevissinis Delineatis. Qua simul Methodum suppedirat, juxta quam qui surdi nati sunt sic informari possunt ut non alias

saltem loquentes intelligent, sed ipsi ad sermonis usum pervernant. In lucem edita à F. M. B. ab Helmont. Sulzbaci, Typhis Abrahami Lichtenthaleri. A. D. 1657."

The sub-title being translated reads, "Illustrating the method by which deaf-mutes may not only understand each other, but may also themselves speak." This little work in Latin contains an exposition of an oral method, which, in a primitive way, is based in many particulars on the principles and facts used at the present time. The frontispiece represents the author studying and delineating the position of the lips in utterance. At the end of the book are some thirty illustrations representing the various positions assumed by the lips and tongue in articulation; also some pictures of physical apparatus employed in the author's researches.

This copy of Helmont's book is from the Library of the Abbe Fauvel. Helmont was a Dutchman, and in 1692 John Conrad Amman, a Swiss physician, practicing at Amsterdam, educated a young deaf girl of Haarlem so that she could speak and understand conversation. According to Seiss (*Children of Silence*), in 1692, he published an account of his method entitled, "*Surdus Loquens*," which was republished in an enlarged form in 1700, under the title, "*Dissertatio de Loquela*," and was later published in English.

The third book bears the title, "*Didascalocophus; or the Deaf and Dumb Man's Tutor*—to which is added A Discourse of the Nature and Number of Double Consonants: Both which Tracts being the first (for what the author knows) that have been published upon either of the Subjects. By G. Dalgarno. Printed at the Theatre in Oxford—A. D. 1680." A picture of the Sheldonian Theater, Oxford, illustrates the title page.

The author was a grammarian and his book is full of the distinctions and rules which rendered so complex all the grammars of his day. He deals with the manual method of speech, explaining his method of teaching it and suggesting its defects, especially the fact that those with whom the deaf man wishes to converse must also know chiromancy, as the author terms it. He then proceeds to consider the feasibility of an oral method of conversation for the deaf, which in many respects presents a crude prevision of the methods employed in the oral instruction of the deaf to-day. Dalgarno certainly grasped many essential facts. Thus he states, "That a Deaf man may be taught to speak, is no more a doubt to me, than that a Blind man may be taught to write." Again in his Chapter IV, "Of a Deafman's Capacity to understand the speech of others," he says, "That words might be gathered, and read from

the transient motions, and configurations, of the mouth (if all the several distinctions of letters, were no less manifest and apparent to the Eye, than to the Ear from the speaker's face) as readily as from permanent characters upon paper, is not to be doubted."

He proceeds, however, to reject the oral method because, he states: "But that all the distinctions that are perceived by the Ear in speaking, cannot equally be perceived by the Eye; I will prove by an argument, which though it be a *Posteriori*, yet I hope it will be of evidence and force sufficient to effect what is thereby intended. If the same distinction of letters and words did appear to the Eye from the motion of the speaker's mouth, which are discernable to the Ear from the articulation of his voice; then it would follow, that the capacity of a Deaf man would be equal to that of a Dumb (but not Deaf) for learning a language, so far at least as to understand it. But the capacity of a Deaf man is not equal to that of a Dumb for hearing a language from speaking. Therefore all the distinctions of letters are not manifest to the Deaf man from the speaker's mouth."

He quotes Sir Kenelm Digby's story of the "Spanish Deaf Lord," who was "able not only to know strange letters in strange languages, instantly; but also to be able to imitate them, though he had never been taught," and states his disbelief in it. The author then goes on to declare his belief that the "Diligent Hand" of the tutor is the greatest engine in bringing relief to the deaf. Dalgarno makes no reference to any previous work on the subject.

Another early English book on the instruction of the deaf is, "The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse, or a Treatise Concerning those who are Born Deaf and Dumb, containing a Discovery of their Knowledge or Understanding; as also the Method they use, to manifest the sentiments of their mind. Together with an Additional Tract of the Reason and Speech of Inanimate Creatures. By George Sibscota, London, Printed by H. Bruges, for William Crook at the Green Dragon without Temple Bar, 1670." This little book is in the nature of a philosophical discourse and does not treat the subject in any of its practical aspects. The copy which I hold has many notes in manuscript concerning ear-trumpets.

Lastly, I show a copy of the famous book of l'Abbe Charles Michel de l'Épee entitled, "*La Veritable Maniere d' instruire Les Sourds et Muets, confirmée par une longue expérience—Par M. l'Abbe, Instituteur des Sourds Muets de Paris. Paris, 1784.*"