

Draper, Amos (1901) The Deaf Section of the Paris Congress of 1900. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 46, (2), 218-223.

THE DEAF SECTION OF THE PARIS CONGRESS OF 1900.

THE proceedings of the Deaf Section of the Paris Congress of 1900 have been printed in an octavo volume of over 400 pages.* It is edited and published entirely by the deaf, and in both respects is a creditable piece of work, though some typographical errors, almost inseparable from a print of this kind, are visible, as also some evidence that hazy notions of American geography are not confined to British minds.

The membership of the Section is shown to have been highly representative. It numbered 219, coming from nine countries of continental Europe, from England, and from the United States. Naturally, France, with 126, and Germany, with 46 members, were the most largely represented. The number of delegates present does not, however, by any means mark the limit of the interest and sympathy shown by the deaf in the meeting. The numerous letters, telegrams, and articles sent by those unable to be present, show that this interest and sympathy were world-wide.

The chief subjects upon which papers were read, or discussions held, or both, were: the exclusion of the deaf from the hearing section of the Congress; methods of instruction; art and industrial teaching in the schools and transference of the pupils to outside fields; higher education; the deaf as teachers; homes for the aged;

*EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE DE 1900.

Congrès International pour l'Étude des Questions d'Assistance et d'Éducation des Sourds-Muets (Section des Sourds-Muets.) Compte Rendu des Débats et Relations Diverses. Par HENRI GAILLARD, Secrétaire du Programme, et HENRI JEANVOINE, Secrétaire Général. Paris: Imprimerie d'Ouvriers Sourds-Muets, 111^{me}, Rue d'Alésia (31, Villa d'Alésia). 1900.

the results of pure oral teaching in Italy, France, Germany, and Austria; religious work among the deaf; societies of the deaf in France; the deaf in general society and as citizens; careers and professions for the deaf; physical training in the schools, and the utility and preciousness both of speech and of the sign-language to the deaf.

Upon these questions fifty-two papers were presented at the meeting and are printed in this report, many of them being followed by the discussions arising from the reading.

The authors of and debaters upon these papers are among the best educated and ablest deaf persons in their respective countries, as Dusuzeau and Genis in France; Watzulik and Rumpf in Germany; Ricca in Switzerland, Brill in Austria, Becker in Denmark, and Titze in Sweden. The American authors were Messrs. Hanson, Fox, George, Robinson, Grady, and James L. Smith, and Mrs. Searing (Howard Glyndon).

Thus this report contains the ideas, opinions, and information of many of the ablest deaf men in the world, each speaking for his own country, upon all important questions relating to the deaf, both during and after, but especially after, their school lives. Each speaks not for himself alone, but for a great constituency. For example, it is shown that in France there were fifteen societies of the deaf represented, the national body having more than 3,000 members. Parallel facts are known to exist in the other countries. Again, each speaks from no theory, but from the irresistible results of the daily battle of his life and of the lives of his deaf brethren and sisters around him. Their conclusions are expressed in resolutions already printed in the *Annals*.*

However lightly the conclusions of this body may be set aside by theorists not in sympathy with it, is it sure

* In the January number, pp. 108-111.

that an unbiassed investigator, anxious to know the truth about the deaf, would treat them in the same way? Nay, more; is it not conceivable that such a man, viewing both sections of the Congress, would regard the Deaf Section as the more important? Suppose a keen, practical man of business at Paris to have had his interest suddenly and for the first time awakened in the deaf. He enters the Hearing Section to learn all he can. He hears of the wondrous things pure oralism can do, and sees the triumphant votes in its favor. But he is a practical man. He looks about him for proof, naturally and reasonably expecting to have some of these wonderful deaf men pointed out to him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them (apparently) and asking them questions. None being indicated, he asks his next neighbor if this pure oralism is a new invention which is yet to prove its faith by its works. "No, indeed," says his interlocutor; "it has had absolute sway here in Paris for twenty years, in Italy for thirty years, and in Germany for a hundred years." More mystified than ever, he passes out, only to find in an adjacent room some hundreds of deaf men, evidently intelligent, and, he learns, earnestly opposing the sweeping claims that he had heard in the first hall; doing it, too, by means of a language which he had there heard unsparingly condemned. He asks them why? They reply, with practically one voice, "Because we have tested in the world the experiments that were tried on us in the schools. The *soi-disant* panacea you heard lauded in the other hall goes far to cure a very few; it helps somewhat a considerable number, but it totally fails to help a great many, and is, indeed, an injury to these last. Of all this *we* are the proof. Look into our daily lives. We believe they will give you confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ. Ask our friends, relatives, employers. Test our speech and power to read speech by sight *yourself*,—not of a few of us, not of the

phenomenous, but of all. If ever you visit a school for the deaf, do the same,—talk to the pupils *yourself*; see what they can do in reading *your* speech; try not simply those picked out for you, but try all, or at least pick yourself those you do try.

Now, this man, again, is a practical man. He looks for crops, not seeds; for products, not raw materials; for facts, not theories; for fulfillments, not promises. This body is in the direct line of his search. Will he lightly discard its evidence? Will he not rather think that the ideas of the Hearing Section are on trial in the *personnel* and experiences in life of the Deaf Section, and should stand or fall accordingly?

The report shows that the deaf in Europe, while approving speech-teaching in all practicable cases, still cherish the belief that the sign-language should not be banished from the means employed to educate their kind. They appeal with their president, Dusuzeau, in his opening address,

Je suis oiseau,
Voyez mes ailes,
Ne les coupez pas!

which may be freely rendered:

A bird am I!
Behold the wings by which I fly,
Nor, cruel, them to me deny.

Those who do not know the sign-language can, of course, not understand this deep-seated feeling among the deaf, still less sympathize with it. But those who do know that language—its infinite range and freedom, compared with lip-reading; its ease, rapidity, and expressiveness, compared with dactylogy—will understand, appreciate, and, to a great extent, sympathize with this natural and powerful desire of the deaf.

Hardly anything in the report is more marked than the

hurt feeling of the Deaf Section at its all but total exclusion from the Hearing Section. They return to the subject again and again. They make repeated efforts to have a joint session with, or at least some participation in, the deliberations of the Hearing Section, but meet in each case with prompt refusal. Some of them indulge in warm words at this treatment, but the leaders meet it admirably. These argue that it is the fiat of an official from whom is no appeal, and that it is the part of wisdom to accept it calmly, though under protest, and strive to reach and influence public opinion by themselves. Some of the reasons given by defenders of this exclusion on this side the water ill stand examination; for example, that they should not have been allowed to deliberate with teachers since they are not teachers, whereas quite a number of them are or have been teachers; moreover, the same rule would exclude Dr. Lacharrière, the author of all that is complained of in this connection, because he has been simply an attending physician at the Paris Institution, and not a teacher at all. The real reason is not far to seek. It lies in the spirit of intolerance that is characteristic of ultra oralism. If more evidence of this were wanted it can be found in the fact that when two men who have lived and labored among the deaf for nearly half a century, and are known, loved, and respected by the deaf the world over, wished to address the two sections simultaneously, in languages that both sections could follow, permission was refused. Was it a graceful act, after these repeated refusals to receive the deaf, for the Hearing Section to go of its own motion after its adjournment and ask to be received by the Deaf Section? That is what it did. Not at all as a matter of national pride, but only in the interest of the deaf, look on this picture, and then on that presented at Chicago, in 1893. There the two sections met separately, that being the most convenient and practicable arrangement, but there was no exclusion of the deaf. They were

constantly in the Hearing Section. They read their own papers there, and provision was made for them to understand all the proceedings day by day.

The report closes with lists of the officers organizing and conducting the Section; an account of the entertainments, nine in number, offered to visitors by the Parisian deaf; the announcement that an oil portrait of Thomas H. Gallaudet would shortly be presented to the deaf people of Paris by those of Chicago; and invitations from Mr. Rumpf and the Rev. James H. Cloud to attend meetings of the deaf to be held respectively at Berlin, in 1902, and at St. Louis, in 1903. It is to be hoped that fair-minded and competent hearing observers will attend the meeting at Berlin and give an account of it. It will probably afford a commentary upon the claims of ultra oralists more marked even than this of Paris.

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