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THE
Intermarriage of the Deaf.

HIRAM PHELPS ARMS.

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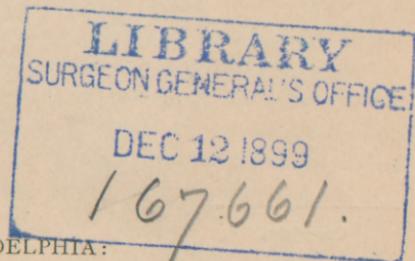
THE
INTERMARRIAGE OF THE DEAF:

ITS

MENTAL,
MORAL AND SOCIAL
TENDENCIES.

BY

HIRAM PHELPS ARMS.



PHILADELPHIA:
BURK & McFETRIDGE, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS,
1887.

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NOTE.

The author's purpose in issuing advanced sheets (first part) of this article is to obtain additional facts to embody in the chapters devoted to the consideration of the Physiological and Sociological aspects of this question. The chapters here given indicate the line of argument the author favors. While positive in his own theory on this subject, he is yet open to conviction where it can be demonstrated that he is in error.

The author feels that he can rely upon the generosity of those who have given the matter thought, and who may be in a position to throw light upon the subject, to render such aid as may be practicable.

Any such service will receive the grateful acknowledgments not only of the writer, but of many unhappy people of silence who writhe under the stigma cast upon them by Prof. A. Graham Bell.

INTRODUCTORY.

It is with feelings of deep indignation that I record a protest against Professor Bell's suggestion that legislation be called upon to pass a law prohibiting deaf-mutes, who may have deaf relatives, from inter-marrying.* I protest against this as an unwarranted would-be interference with the affairs of other people, these people being as sane and as capable of forming a concept of a proper line of action as any other class. The text of Professor Bell's proposed law is given elsewhere. I must do the author justice, however, to claim for him the best of motives in this controversy, as he looks at it; I only regret that he has not shown more heart in the matter. He proposes a policy of interference by relatives and friends where the law would prove nugatory—such a policy, of course, would be legitimate when one or both of the principals to the difficulty are in their minority, but the moment this is passed, then such interference would not only be unkind, but useless and unseemly.

Professor Bell states his faith in the system of having deaf-mutes attend school in their respective districts, arguing that the cost per capita now paid (\$223.00) for their education, would be sufficient to employ a special teacher, who could take three or four pupils, a number large enough to insure a salary of \$669, or \$892 per year. This non-segregational scheme is offered as a means to bring about the inter-marriage of deaf-mutes with the hearing; in other words, Professor Bell would ask society to do what he as an individual certainly would not do (allow a son or daughter of his to marry a deaf-mute). The inconsistency is so broad, that it is surprising that it should have escaped his notice. With the advance of education and a larger field to choose from, even the non-congenital deaf-mute will

* My attention was drawn to Prof. Bell's theory but a few weeks since, the occasion being a report of an interview he gave a Rochester, N. Y. paper.

decline to form a union with a congenital deaf-mute. This deviation is even now being manifested to a marked degree. Professor Bell's essays tend (and here for once I can agree with him) to encourage this movement. The inevitable result will be to force the congenital deaf-mute to seek out members of its own class with which to contract marriage. This is certainly, from the standpoint of those more fortunate, and who wish well of humanity, a sad and bitter conclusion to arrive at, but can it be helped? It could be, no doubt, held to a slower growth by forcing them to a union with the non-congenitally deaf, and with the hearing, but this would be at the cost of the more fortunate class, and as such would be opposed to equity.

The one comforting feature in this movement looking towards the isolation of congenital deaf-mutes, is, that an all-wise Creator has provided for them to an extent sufficient to enjoy life as fully as those who hear and speak. He has endowed them with minds capable of receiving instruction, with no limits as to advancement. He has given them a language, and hearts to regulate their emotional life, with strength of body to labor. He has in a word, constituted these people precisely as other people are constituted, differing only in manner of communicating thought. It is for the sake of these people that I lift my voice against Professor Bell's proposed measures, as tending to degrade them to the level of incapables!

It is no pleasant task I have undertaken, in writing these papers, for the very people whose own respect I am endeavoring to shield from the attacks of Professor Bell and others of his mind, not only refuse to encourage my efforts, but flatly condemn them. Still, I believe, there are deaf-mutes, whose nobility of character will enable them to speak the truth, however bitter it may be, and say with me, that it is not only hazardous to marry a person so different from them as the hearing and speaking, but that it is the height of selfishness to encourage such infatuations.

I know a hearing gentlemen who married a deaf woman, and the universal opinion is that his wife is a drag upon him, socially. He is generous, she is selfish, is the verdict on every tongue.

Under the head of *Psychological Aspect* I define the emotions. *Part Second, Physiological Aspect*, treats of the laws of heredity; the question of deterioration or non-deterioration of intellectual

power in deaf-mutes, and their general health. *Part Third*, gives the *Sociological Aspect* of the question. Under this head I speak of domestic life; the difficulties under which the deaf labor in their association with the hearing; the ease with which they live their own life. From all of which I make the following deductions:—

First.—From eighty to ninety-five per cent. of the deaf marry the deaf.

Second.—That of the remaining portion, the majority who marry the deaf are led to the connection by selfish motives, presumably the acquiring of property.

Third.—That where this predisposition to the acquisition of property has not existed, then other motives have ruled, such as a greater or less timidity or effeminacy on the part of the one who hears (if it be a man), and age, widowhood, or the blight of divorce (if it be a woman).

Fourth.—That inferiority of birth and station, benevolence and infatuation, are clearly defined factors controlling the selection by the hearing of deaf-mute partners.

Fifth.—That where a hearing person and a deaf person (one who is more or less dependent upon dactylology as a means of receiving and giving communication) have married in equal circumstances of birth, station, and intelligence, divorce has in many instances been the sequel of such marriages.

Sixth.—That as a matter of fact, only those deaf people who by great success in vocalism and lip reading, can hope for a continuation of their happy marital relations with hearing partners. But even here the element of risks attends such unions; for in proportion as a person becomes, through success in the acquirement of speech and lip reading, his or her other qualities, station, and intelligence being taken for granted, in that proportion is he or she enabled to mingle in a higher order of society, with the result of a desire to select partners from that order. And it is these very people who, by their liveliness and social qualities, are liable to regret having married deaf persons; it matters not how easily this deaf person mingles in hearing society. It is with this class of deaf people to whom the question of inter-marriage assumes such a complex affair.

The only solution that I can offer for a deaf person thus situated is, first, that in forming a connection with a hearing person, this person's predominant characteristics should be, passiveness, and a manner more or less unassuming; or, second, that he marry a person similarly situated as himself. In this latter case, however, it is only those couples to whom public opinion has adjudged to be well matched in intellect and other qualities, and whose social position is beyond question, who can marry and be exempt from that unpleasant feeling of self-consciousness of deafness, that only needs participating at a large reception to bring out in bold relief. If the wife is a woman of intellectual force and tact, and the husband a man who can command respect and applause, the combination would be such as to effectually counteract this feeling of self-consciousness.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT.

CHAPTER I.

BENEVOLENCE.

“ The justification for the ethical feeling is that it exists. The justification for any code of morality is that it exists.”—*Spencer's Data of Ethics.*

I begin this analysis with Benevolence, as being the first and chief emotion to spring from the common root of Sympathy. I shall demonstrate how Gratitude, the complement to Benevolence, can be perverted from its original channel, and I will also point out how Benevolence fails of its aim, through inequality of distribution.

In the marriage of A., who is a deaf-mute, with B., who is a man able to hear and speak, A. will have an *excess* of gratitude, joined to an excess of selfishness, by virtue of her (A.) dependence and exaction upon B. for intercourse with the outside world. B., on the other hand, will have an excess of Benevolence [proved by his marriage with a less perfect person than himself and one who imposes upon him the labor of a dual existence, that of sound and that of pantomime], and he (B.) would also have an excess of selfishness, *vide* his excess of Benevolence. Paradoxical as this latter statement may sound, it is a truism, nevertheless; for as Benevolence is simply a pleasure with the doer, he is merely doing that which gives him pleasure. He would take an equal pleasure in feeding, caressing and cherishing a dog. The dog would appreciate this treatment for a time, then growing weary of it, become spoilt; and, finally, would either run away, or be unceremoniously bounced by the very man responsible for its sins!

Benevolence is not love, and its reward is not love, but gratitude; and this is not a pleasant feeling when carried to extremes, not even with a brute.

Aristotle, in his Nicomachean Ethics, speaking of Benevolence, says: "But those who are Benevolent [only] do not on this account love each other the more, for they only wish well to those to whom they are Benevolent; but they do not cooperate with them in anything, nor do they endure any molestation for their sake. Hence it may be metaphorically said, that Benevolence is sluggish friendship; yet not that friendship which is founded in utility, nor that which is founded in delight; for Benevolence does not subsist on account of these things. * * * * * Benefactors love and are fond of those they have benefited, though at present they derive no advantage from them, nor are likely to derive any in the future. And this, also, happens to be the case with artificers, for every artist loves his own work more than he would be beloved by it if it should become animated. Similar, therefore, to this is that which pertains to benefactors, for he who is benefited is their work. Hence, he loves the work with a parental affection, because existence also is dear to him. But this is natural, for what the agent is in capacity is indicated by the work in energy. At the same time, also, to the benefactor that which results from the action is beautiful, so that he is delighted with him in whom it is inherent, but to him who is benefited nothing is beautiful in the benefactor, but if any is it is utility, and this is in a less degree delightful and lovely." Now, taking up the two formulas, A. and B., with their respective concomitants, Gratitude and Benevolence, and then assimilating the two, you are surprised in your stupid ignorance that the resultant is not the full, perfect, equalized *one* which you set out to fashion, but is instead a mixture of antipathetical emotions wrought by that disregard of equality of parts, the whole held together, not by natural laws, but by the laws of Sociology. Many endure this indifferent or unhappy existence in silence, rather than brave the exposure of their mistake; others invoke the decree of society to set them free, and many others resort to that savage, natural method, assassination; and still others take that cowardly and infamous expedient, desertion, to sever the bond that binds them!

This ignoring the laws of psychology in the blind pursuit of a physical result has been the cause of much unhappiness in the marital affairs of the deaf, as I shall presently show.

In many instances where well-educated deaf women have married hearing men, their "venture" has found a sequel in the records of the divorce courts. There is a more or less prominent case to the point, which I now recall. A deaf and semi-mute lady, of more than ordinary literary powers, pleasant and refined in manners, is compelled to enter the divorce courts to combat the granting of a separation from her husband, a hearing man. This man, presumably, tired of his life of silence (I give this as the cause in lieu of any direct and proved charges of a different character), is seeking to annul his marriage. I am in position to cite a considerable number of such cases among people of respectability, and taking the ratio to be the same in the knowledge of other persons in different countries, we have a statement that speaks with no uncertain voice. On the other hand, there are but few instances on record, where a deaf couple who possessed any reputation for refinement and culture, have been brought to the extremity of divorce proceedings. It is only in cases where such deaf persons are of uncultured minds and brutal in manner that divorce and desertion have received their recruits.

I cannot recall a single instance where a deaf couple who married in equal circumstances, who based their nuptials on love, and who have lived together a number of years, have sought a separation. It is only where palpable fraud in the desire to acquire property, and an entire absence of true sentiment has entered into the union from the moment of its first inception, that there has been a separation. These separations have occurred mostly in the space of a year, or a few months, and even in a week, which go far to establish the facts in the premises. It is a noteworthy fact that these separations in the poorer classes of "honest" deaf-mute society are of exceedingly rare occurrence. The cause I hold to be this: *equality of the emotions and equality of action.*

In concluding this chapter, I insist that the spirit of *Benevolence* is the parent of much indifference and unhappiness in marital life, in all conditions of society, whether of the deaf or not.

I do not wish to be understood as casting a slur upon so noble a trait of character as that of *Benevolence*, far from it! I freely accord that no greater sentiment has been planted in the human heart than that feeling, to be of use and kindness to others; but

even such a fair and lovely ideal may be made to exceed its limit by its continual exercise without reciprocation in kind. What was once a pleasant, warm impulse, becomes through excessive repetition a mere form of action—a thing given and taken as “a matter of course.” The debtor—the recipient of the benefit—provided she or he has not been made selfish in the interim alone writhes under the load of accumulated service and kindness, and, not being able to return in equal form, feels and carries the memory of the debt to the last.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT.

CHAPTER II.

UTILITY.

"* * * * * And how they all fall into harmony in a wonderful manner in the concensus of mutual support, and enforce ethical law by an united authority."—*Spencer's Data of Ethics*.

Close upon Benevolence follows Utility, the basis of Selfishness. To acquire something that will be of service to you and for that reason only, indicates the selfish emotion to be predominant.

A tub that will hold water is a useful article, but what deaf woman would marry a tub? An animated ear-trumpet and telephone combined (metaphorically speaking, a man who can hear and speak), is also an excellent and useful article, but what deaf woman with an ounce of self-respect would marry an animated ear-trumpet? Does she not look for something besides Utility? Has she any right to ask for Love, Sympathy and Kindness? Certainly.—Does she secure it? Doubtful.

Can any one name a single instance, where a hearing man with any pretension to self-worth has ever married a deaf girl, and who is mute also, *for the sake of the girl herself*—one who has neither property nor influence? I fear not! Benevolence has captured some of these dowerless deaf-mute girls, but no one pretends that their unions were formed on the score of equality.

Why is it that there are so many deaf-mute girls of wealth and social position, leading lives of enforced celibacy? Simply, that they (fortunately) possess the qualification to distinguish the difference between the price of an ordinary tin ear-trumpet, and an animated one, and observing that the price of the latter is never less than fifty

thousand dollars, they prefer to go without the article rather than throw away their money. Sensible girls. Until some young man of sterling worth marries a dowerless deaf girl, solely for herself, I shall adhere to the foregoing definition of Utility, as applied to the inter-marriage of deaf girls and their money, with the rank and file of the hearing and their empty pockets !

Your practical person, one who is continually expounding utilitarian doctrines, would say, that in the management of a home and family, it is necessary that one, at least, of the parties should hear. His system would tend to elevate the head of the person and relegate the heart to a secondary place. He would have Utility (the advantage and use of hearing) occupy the place that should be held by affection. He would force the one partner who is deaf, to constant effort to live up to an equality with the one who is at no disadvantage. He would compel on the part of the one who hears a never ceasing unbending to meet the requirements of his deaf partner. He would require you to use a language foreign to your own ; a language of which you by reason of your hearing cannot feel the power, or sympathize in the pathos ! All he desires is that you make yourself useful. He says you are a thorough master of this other and foreign language, but he fails to observe that the mother tongue always commands your preference. That this "slow" speaking for those who communicate by lip-motion, or signs for deaf-mutes, is irksome, can be, and has been, detected in the otherwise most devoted husband or wife.

There are of course disadvantages and petty trials to be met with if both parents be deaf, but with that spirit of adaptation and balancing to which everything in nature is subservient, more or less, these draw-backs are reduced to a minimum. Here we have a blind man : observe how he brings all his faculties into play to sustain him in his life of darkness ; how quickly he adapts himself to his situation ; and see, too, how soon he discovers by that marvelous sense of touch to do everything except to see ! He can, even though he reside within a labyrinth of streets, point out any direction you may wish to go. And so with the deaf. In the loss of the sense of sound, the other faculties, sight and touch, are called upon for additional effort, till by a happy balancing of account on the part of nature, your deaf person is able to keep from being run over. He

learns to *feel* noises about the house. His sight enables him to carry on communications with his hearing fellow-beings. He can read articulate language by motion of the lips, and, such is the acuteness of his vision, even understand words spoken by a shadow of a person's face thrown on a wall. He can join in any social festivities; he has the ability to direct his business affairs; in fact he is able to accomplish everything within the compass of a normal person's power, except to hear.

There are cripples without either arms or limbs, who yet can accomplish locomotion, and in their special work, can do their part as well as, and in some cases even better than, one whole of body! How kindly nature guides the way through difficulties and misfortune! And what think you of a case of such frightful deprivation—deaf, dumb and blind! And yet I have conversed with just such a person, incredible as it may seem, on subjects that had appeared that very day in the telegraphic reports.

This man assured me he was happy and resigned to his lot. He had many little pleasures to cheer him, even in the dark and lifeless solitude that seems inseparable in one circumstanced as he was. That he really found existence pleasant in his way, could be judged from the absence of hard lines upon his face, and the buoyant expressions spelt upon his fingers. His whole demeanor so impressed me with the power of nature to alleviate misfortune and, in a measure, balance any deficiency, that I involuntarily offered thanks to *Him* for the creation of this law. Bearing this in mind—the knowledge of the power of nature to bring about, in a great measure, an equilibrium in action, notwithstanding the loss of one and two, and even three of the fundamental senses, I would say, let any man who is deaf, who wishes to marry one similarly situated, who does not desire to substitute Equality and Sympathy for Utility—I say, let him not be hindered by difficulties so easily surmounted, but go right on and follow the dictates of his heart, only exercising due caution in regard to the laws of heredity.*

How well I remember a bright little episode, the outcome of a visit to a young married deaf couple to pay my respects to their first born, a tiny, perfect specimen of the *genus homo* (not the gigantic evil that Prof. A. Graham Bell is petitioning parents, societies, and

* See Chapter I on Physiological Aspect.

even the Government to avert), the exemplification of the highest sympathy sent to gladden the hearts of the silent parents! On expressing my concern at the idea of having the baby sleep with its mother, with no one to hear its cries, I am met with a cheery little laugh from that individual, and the information that the little one's head always rests on her arm, and that the slightest movement, therefore, wakes her up at any hour of the night. Still unsatisfied, I exclaim: "But I have even pounded a man, in the effort to awaken him, with indifferent success. What then can such slight movements on the part of a few months old baby effect!" "Oh," here speaks up the father: "God provides for the mother in such emergencies." The air, the tone, the complete faith in which this was said, forever stilled all doubts I had on the subject, and with awe-inspiring thought I again exclaim: How beneficent is Nature!

For the second time, I admit that there are periods when the fact that both parents are deaf, proves a serious discomfort; but this is only temporary, and is not much worse than the trials that others, under different conditions, have to endure. I can present as a recompense for these trifling disadvantages, a life of equality between husband and wife. There is no suspicion of sacrifice, charity, pity, or self-imposed utility with the one partner; and with the other the element of envy, petty jealousy, or an uncomfortable spirit of dependence has no existence. They are one in sympathy, one in mutual respect; no thought of their misfortune ever obtrudes, all is kindly hidden—forgotten, through an easily communicable and common language, and manners that are simply the reflection of each other.

It is the testimony of fact that there are thousands of happy homes throughout the world, the affluent and the humble, whose founders are both deaf. They point with pride to their successful lives, and bid you look on their sons now in college, or in business, or at any honest toil, the peers of others, and of more fortunate progenitors. There certainly seems nothing amiss in such unions, with such results, combining as they do, a friendship and love that have for their basis, similarity of manners, and equality of service, a condition of life that the mere form of marriage could not have accomplished.

Plus in amicitia valet similitudo morum quam affinitas.—"Similarity of manners and congeniality of tastes are stronger motives for friendship than mere relationship." This certainly does not leave room for the invasion of Utilitarian ideas.

I have made calls on deaf-mute couples, and I never experienced any trouble in having the door-bell answered. I have always found that these people's domestic affairs move on much the same as any other class of society. There appeared to be no worry and anxiety on the part of the family to make their guest comfortable. Through all, no one thought of Utility as part of the *regime*.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT.

CHAPTER III.

SYMPATHY.

“* * * * An incompilance of manners, small and frequent distastes, though not discerned by the world, produce the most incurable aversions in a married life.”—*Plutarch*.

There are many persons who labor, more or less, under the impression that in degree as they show “pity” for a person, in that degree is their kindness measured. They vaguely understand that Pity and Sympathy are one and the same emotion, or at least that the two spring from a common source. Can anything be more absurd? Have these persons ever analyzed the emotion termed “Love of Approbation?” Can they not see that this feeling is antagonistic to Pity. To be admired by others, above all, to be admired by him to whom you have given your life, is to have this love of approbation gratified in a high degree. This feeling of self-love exists in every human being. “Before there exist in considerable degrees the sentiments which find satisfaction in the happiness of others, there exist in considerable degrees the sentiments which find satisfaction in the admiration given by others. Even animals show themselves gratified by applause after achievement.”* To attempt to reduce this emotion to quantitative proportion—to measure its limit—is impossible. Who has not failed to note what man will not do to win applause? War, the battle with pestilence, the struggles with want and misery in regions of perpetual ice and snow, or the stealthy, venomous, ferocious onslaught of danger in the jungles of an unknown and sun-scorched land, all these have their votaries in the search for applause.

* Spencer's Prin. Sociology, vol. i. p. 64.

The student in his analysis of emotional phenomena, will not fail to observe, that in proportion as man has achieved the measure of his ambition, with its resultant, applause, just so will he become indifferent to this admiration. Praise a great man, he will deign no attention ; praise an ordinary man and it will turn his head. It is therefore evident, that in degree as a person is incapable of high success in intellectual, physical, and social matters, equally, in a like degree, will that person desire applause [or] approbation. A woman who is at so much disadvantage as to be mute and deaf, will in the presence of the company of other men and women, feel dissatisfied at the meagre amount of approbation she is able to command in comparison with others of her sex, and also in comparison with what her hearing and speaking partner obtains. This feeling is often very painful, and gives rise to many humiliating and unworthy emotions, one of which is Jealousy. I am not stating a hypothetical question, but one founded on fact, as I have observed it in the unconscious actions of those laboring under it, added to this, that the correctness of the arraignment is substantiated from what I have found to exist, for the time being, in my own nature. This inability to attract admiration may have a less irritating effect if a woman be assured of her husband's approbation ; then she need not miss what others decline to give. But it often happens that if the husband is a person of consequence and can command attention, he would very likely act as others do, fail in meeting his wife's expectations. Some men, however, defiantly claim their wives to be as good as and equal to, other women, in the face of the truth to the contrary.

This feeling can best be illustrated in a little episode which now comes back to my mind very forcibly ; however quaint it is, it indicates clearly the point I desire to make. Two little girls, one of well-to-do parents, the other of humble birth—schoolmates at one of our public schools—were quarrelling over the merits of their respective dolls. The rich girl claimed hers as the prettiest ; the poor girl as stoutly, and with tears, maintained that she owned the prettiest one. Now to me, a disinterested observer, the rich girl had the prettiest one. I felt no doubt on that point, for, in fact, the poor girl's doll could not attract the least attention from the numerous little people around it. All eyes were upon the rich girl's

doll. Now the owner of the ugly doll must have known that she was claiming what really did not exist, which gave rise to certain disagreeable and correlating emotions, hence her tears. She soon dries these, however, for out the crowd there steps another little Miss as poor as her friend, with a doll without so much as the features left. She quickly and defiantly joins the "minority," and claims everything for her friend; the two then walk away perfectly satisfied with the affair so far as they were concerned.

Now it is plain that a hearing man of vital force and consequence, who takes upon himself to marry a deaf-mute, or a woman afflicted with a deformity, must have taken the first step from motives of sheer kindness or benevolence of heart. Then when the revulsion comes, his pride will prompt him to take the course our little Miss and her ugly doll did, and so he exasperates his friends by claiming what really did not exist, to speak in a comparative sense.

A deaf-mute woman will assuredly feel her inferiority in a certain sense, in comparison, as I have said, with other wives; and if she does not find unmixed approbation in her husband, it will go hard with the ideal of married life.

From the foregoing, it is clear that to pity a person is to give mortal offence; to sympathize with him is to gratify his love of approbation; for this latter emotion is co-related to sympathy. " * * * * Sympathy is therefore only a readjustment of self love." *

That this desire for Sympathy is a predominant emotion in the marriage of the deaf, is plainly evident from the fact that deaf people of wealth or social position have, as a rule, sought a union with those, who, as educators of the deaf, are supposed to possess that sympathy they would look for elsewhere in vain. In the abstract consideration of the point, nothing, it seems to me, could be more absurd. Why should my friend who is not an educator of the deaf, but who understands their language, why should he, on that account only, be selected as a fit person to marry a deaf woman? Could he not marry a Chinese woman with equal grace if he understood the Chinese language? The most of these deaf people pay roundly to secure this sympathy they crave, and it does seem an unjust ruling

* Alfred Barratt, p. 162, *Physical Ethics*. London, 1867.

of fate that their "venture" turns out to be a mere piece of Benevolence or, what is just as unfortunate, they come into possession of a partner whose character is chiefly made up of equanimity, a non-impulsiveness of emotion, a being, in short, who is but half alive.

Up to this date, only comparatively impecunious school teachers and a few ordinary people, have married the deaf. I have never heard (except in a few instances, where the deaf partner was more or less restored to society by proficiency in lip reading and speech) of any young man of assured standing in society, stepping outside of his sphere to marry a deaf-mute woman. By a strange and suspicious coincidence, the deaf partners, even those who are only deaf, and deaf and partly mute, have in nearly every instance furnished the capital, the others furnished the ears and more or less proficiency in the deaf-mute language. Where this has not been the ruling cause, Benevolence has had a great deal to do with it. It is impossible to understand this question in any other light. From inquiries put to many young men of social prominence (young men of worth whose own efforts are bringing them fame and fortune) as to whether they would or could marry a deaf-mute, the invariable answer was, that I was proposing an anomaly. Of course they would not, and in effect thus added: "Such things we leave to the philanthropist and men who haven't any chance in other directions." I cannot refrain from indulging in a sneer when I look back upon my experience in a family where I had the opportunity of observing at breakfast, dinner and supper the actions (more eloquent than words) of a gentleman and wife, one of whom (the wife) was deaf. Such a parody upon sentiment it is impossible for the uninitiated to conceive. These people were refined and cultured—there was no doubt on that point—but, oh, what inequality, what abject dependence, what selfishness there was in it all! So far from advocating the expediency of such unions, I would earnestly advise every deaf-mute woman to remain single all her life, and for every deaf-mute man to let his line of descent die with himself. He or she would thus escape a thousand petty humiliations, a thousand trials of one's temper and pride.

There are many, who though deaf, are not so by heredity; who, even in the face of that fact, yet experience the greatest trouble to convince others that their inter-marriage can result in no harm,

either to themselves or to posterity. In vain they point to statistics* to sustain their position. It is in vain that they exclaim that they would live more happily in the society of one so much like themselves. In vain they recount the humiliation it would be to a proud and sensitive woman to have a husband, who, by force of his advantage of hearing, would exercise complete influence in the home, to the exclusion of the deaf parent. They even hint at an isolation of the deaf parent from her children, arguing that children would naturally associate with the one with whom they could more easily communicate. That these fears are good and sufficient, and have psychological law to sustain them, seems to me to be self-evident; or else how account for the inter-marriage of at least ninety per cent. of the deaf the world over. The wisest and the most ignorant have contracted such marriages. Instinct, apparently, governs the question, and no one, I think, can doubt that instinct is a surer guide than any theory ever evolved by the mind of man!

It requires no great effort to comprehend that in such unequal marriages as I have here outlined, if the husband and wife are of strong individual character, this opposition and division will be maintained, the resultant being a mere condition of master and mistress, with as much companionship, and community of thought and action, as is in the life of an Eastern harem.

There is a class of deaf people, who, deprived of their hearing in early childhood, after they had in the meantime, to some extent, acquired speech, and through fortuitious circumstances, or through the system practiced in the oral schools for the deaf, have been able to retain and improve their voice to such a degree as to enable them to hold almost unrestricted intercourse with the hearing class, without the use of the pencil and tablet. And there are some, too, who, by an almost phenomenal power of sight, are able to mingle altogether in hearing society through their ability to read words by motion of the lips; they are, in fact, in degree as they are proficient, "restored" to the speaking world. I would exempt such a qualified person from the necessity of taking a deaf partner. I would freely allow him to marry a hearing woman. I would, at the same time, express no surprise if this person should desire to marry one like himself. I would certainly admit that it was but a

* See Chapter II, Physiological Aspect.

natural thing to do. In ideal marriages there is ever present with those capable of real delicacy, a feeling to be of as light a burden to others, (notably, those so near as husband and wife) as possible. To obstruct such marriages, based as they are upon this high sense of equality, is to simply struggle against the dictates of nature!

I am contending for an ideal life whose softening influence is the result of mutual sentiments, equal joys and equal griefs.

I contend that two deaf people, if their hearts be in the right place, can lead in their own way a life as full of blessings, as full of interest as the most exacting moralist could desire. The field of literature lies ever open before them, and does it not seem that their lives of silence would tempt them to a still closer communion with this world of written thought?

Everything beautiful in art is open to their comprehension and enjoyment, and they need not yield this ability to thus appreciate, to any, even those who can hear. And, behold nature! Her countless beauties, o'er land, o'er sea, are theirs by natural right, and no one can gainsay their power to understand and appropriate, equally, these treasures with any, even those who can hear!

Over mountains, through vales, midst dreamy meadows, or adown rippling brooklets, come silent harmonies; for there is music without sound.

You exclaim, "But the majority of the deaf as a class have not such sympathetic natures—are not so highly endowed as to appreciate these things." "Still," I answer, "in their own way they can find many enjoyments to lighten their pathway through life, and education will do the rest."

Some irreverent person sarcastically remarks, "Why should the deaf inter-marry? If the *raison d'être* (sympathy) holds good in this instance, would it not be equally as conclusive in the case of the inter-marriage of cripples, deformed persons, one-eyed men with one-eyed women, and so on *ad infinitum, ad nauseam!*" It is distressing that any notice has to be taken of this exhibition of stupidity. Ought not this person to know that the æsthetic emotion [a love for the beautiful and perfect in form] exists in every character? That in proportion as this emotion is present, just so in degree will that person abhor deformity, in whatever shape it appears; it differs not even if he himself be deformed.

Here let me speak a few words concerning John Kitto, D. D., F. S. A., who, as a poor deaf and semi-mute boy, left the work-house to eventually become renowned in Biblical literature, as a scholar and doctor of divinity. An humble lad, deserted by his parents, deaf and almost mute, at a period when the education of the deaf was in its infancy, he, notwithstanding his frightful situation, rose to a high and noble position among his fellows through sheer force of intellect and stoicism. Now, no one would suspect such a character of possessing a mawkish craving for sympathy, and yet John Kitto did keenly and cruelly feel this sentiment. Speaking of his *fiancée*, a young hearing lady, to whom he had been engaged for some time, (she subsequently broke her engagement) he says: “* * * * I do not know what to think about her. That she loves me I have very great reason to believe; yet, on this supposition, and knowing that she is *not* naturally volatile, I have felt much at a loss to account for a degree of inattention to me when at her home, which has very frequently distressed my feelings much, very much indeed. The most trivial and unimportant circumstance has the power of diverting her attention from me, even though I should be speaking of something which may seem to me peculiarly interesting; and I have seen her chatting and laughing for a long time occasionally, without seeming to be in the least conscious that such a being as John Kitto was present. I am very foolish to mind such things, yet I cannot help minding them—lovers are very foolish beings. * * * * That she is faultless, I am not obliged by the most ardent affection to believe. * * * * If she do not experience that warmth for me that I do for her, it surely cannot be imputed as a *fault*; it is my *misfortune!*” Clearly there was a dearth of sympathy here. Clearly an unequal match, in spite of the fact that the great Biblical scholar was, intellectually and spiritually, a mine of worth! This young woman does not seem to have been a person of any great consequence in the circle in which Dr. Kitto moved, and yet by force of a mere “advantage” in hearing and its attendant emotions, she felt herself too good for even noble John Kitto! Had Kitto met a woman deaf like himself, and who possessed the requisite refinement and education, it would not be extravagant to say that he would certainly have sought her hand in marriage.

As the case stands, however, he married a hearing woman. Of the merits of this attachment I need not comment upon, except to say that it first grew out of mutual grief for a gentleman friend who died on shipboard while all three were en route for home. It appears that the lady in question was engaged to be married to the demised friend, and being in the depths of sorrow at his loss, and seeing that Kitto was sympathetic, contrived to like him, and so they were married—a possible working out of the theory “that misery loves company.”

It seems to me that in proportion as a man is cultured and eminent in his profession, he is in that proportion sensitive, and so, easily irritated by ungenial surroundings.

This high sensitiveness exists in animals as well as in man. With a fat, old-fashioned dray horse, you can do as you please: pull its tail, look into its mouth, and do all manner of mischief with him, and he will mind it but little. With a blooded race horse it is radically different. It is in some instances a precarious undertaking to even attempt to *caress* the animal, unless you are the owner and driver. It certainly would be the extreme of foolhardiness to pull his tail.

Highly endowed men weigh well the meaning of the word, Sympathy. I know of eminent blind men, high in the profession of music, who have married blind women, while the humble basket-maker takes unto himself a wife who can see.

I know of a deaf gentleman, a graduate of one of England's famous Universities, a graduate of Trinity, and Yale College, who married a deaf woman.

I know of a theological student, deaf and semi-mute, now in one of our Universities, who also married a deaf woman. I could go on giving many more cases in point, but the limit of this chapter prevents.

Bear this in mind that there is such a law as *equality of the emotions* and that as this law is ignored so will the harvest be!

“* * * * We cannot deny that, a main and principal thing that causes marriages to be so unhappy, and make this state of life so miserable, is the inequality of them.”*

* Bufford's Essay on Unequal Marriages, p. 11, London, 1693.

This is my fear for deaf-mutes. These people naturally, of course, will from a regard for their *amour propre*, politely inform me that these fears are entirely gratuitous, and that they are in no danger so far as they are individually concerned; but *ab actu ad posse valet consecutio*. "The induction is good, from what has been to what may be (a thing that has once happened it is but just to infer that such a matter may again occur)."

Such indeed is the omnipotence of this sense of sympathy that I do not hesitate to say, that should it be brought into conflict with honor, by itself, honor would be the first to yield.

Could I close my eyes to that divine injunction, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and deliberately start forth in life with the avowed purpose of taking a hearing man's deaf-mute wife from him, the conditions of birth, education, and station being equal, and could I convince this wife that I loved her with that intensity which is only possible where the emotions are equal, she would assuredly come to me! You start! You cry out, impossible! But it is so; you cannot deny it. Every day, every hour, in some part of the world this conflict is being enacted. How it dawns upon you now, with full force: the far-reaching scope, the power and majesty of that law, "*Love thy neighbor as thyself*."

Just here let me illustrate a phase of utility in conflict with sympathy—"He died of a complication of diseases. His worst disease was a broken heart." That is the verdict rendered over the remains of a young deaf-mute gentleman who had the misfortune to engage himself in marriage to a young woman (also deaf), who, notwithstanding that she had promised to be loyal and true to him, yet must needs cast him off at the command of her parents, who, having acquired wealth, knew the value of utility to be against sentiment, in their experience, and they would therefore enforce the former with all their power. Very well; now note the result. The victim, he who had won his love under equal circumstances of sympathy and affection, lies cold and lifeless in yonder graveyard, while she, the direct and indirect cause, is dallying with a tardy lover, a hearing man, whose want of sympathy, or community of thought, is a by-word among all who have come in contact with the two. These friends naturally feel a sense of irritation (as not being in harmony with their ideal) at the spectacle of a man of forty-two, or thereabouts, prolonging, as

he is doing now, an engagement that has already existed nearly a decade. They rightfully conclude, that as this lover has a good business, and as his *fiancée* is the daughter of a rich man, and as she is a deaf-mute, and needs the sympathy of a husband, there seems to be no justification for further delay of the marriage of the two. I am merely repeating what a dozen people have told me. I have no desire to stir up the matter, other than to illustrate my point for the benefit of those who may find themselves in a like position, and who may experience uncertainty how to act.

This want of sympathy and correspondence of manner with those who are deaf, on the part of those who hear, is clearly shown in every family where one of the members happens to be deaf. I do not remember a single instance in any household where one of the members suffered from deafness, that this member does not remember to this day the thousand and more neglects, want of sympathy, a forgetfulness of his presence, unintentional of course, but none the less sad; always compelled to take the initiative, to always put the question: "What is it, mamma? What is it, papa?" Indeed, I have heard of an accusation made in the presence of the family itself that one of the brothers had not spoken ten consecutive words to his deaf sister in a year! This is approximately true. It has been so to an extent in my own life. Now, I know that my position in my mother's heart is second to none, and I know that I can count upon brotherly regard, and that my sister's love is not one whit behind the rest; but note this, that with all my advantage of an easy flow of speech and ability to understand words spoken on the speaker's lips, I am yet, to a certain degree, alone in my own home! Unless I take the initiative, I doubt at times whether the family would notice that such a being as myself were present. How much worse off is a deaf-mute! For signs and spelling to those with whom it is not natural, is a species of labor to be dispensed with as much as possible. "It is so much trouble to talk that way," is an expression I have frequently met with.

I know a family of four grown-up children, two of whom (brother and sister) are deaf-mutes. I have visited this family many times in the past eight years, and I never failed to note that the deaf brother and his deaf sister were inseparable companions. If I looked up at the parlor window on entering the house, sure

enough there were the two hearts of silence! Bright and cheerful hearts, too; laughing and talking as if utterly oblivious of the fact that they were beings made up of misfortune, and, according to Prof. Bell's theory, beings who must consider themselves as proscribed in the free exercise of their sentiments; who should marry, if marry they must, those who can hear for them, and those, too, who, like him, have their own opinions in regard to keeping up the standard of the intellectual quality of the nation! In this connection, I would like to ask: Why does not the well-meaning Professor give his attention to restricting the intermarriages of the denizens of the slums?* In the space of one day, in one city, out of an hundred thousand, I can introduce him to more debased and malignant forms of the generation of human beings than he can discover in the total number of homes of deaf people throughout the globe. He has no Divine authority that would excuse his petition to law to prohibit the deaf from marrying the deaf. Such being the case, the people whom he desires to proscribe feel no fears, knowing that an all-wise and beneficent Father has provided for them!

It is only lately that I have become fully informed of the action that Prof. Bell has before taken, and what he is doing now to agitate the question. I am at a loss to understand his utter ignorance of, or contempt for, the laws of the Psychology in its bearing upon the subject. Were he to ask for a public debate, on, to speak gently—his hobby—I would confront him with a child, and he the child of that peaceable, contented, hard-working deaf-mute, erstwhile denominated a gigantic evil. He claims that he can sympathize with the deaf because his mother was thus afflicted. So be it. Now that he acknowledges this sentiment, how does he reconcile this with his declaration that all deaf people should marry hearing partners? According to this, to insure sympathy for the deaf partner, he would presuppose that every hearing partner should be the offspring of a deaf relative. A condition certainly stupendous in its application—nothing less than jumping out of the frying pan into the fire.

And now I ask, why should I, who have no deaf relatives, why should I be proscribed in the free exercise of my rights in this matter, all because through this accident of a fever I became deaf?

* See Chapter II, Physiological Aspect, and Chapter III, Sociological Aspect.

I am advised by a friend and follower of Prof. Bell, to marry, if I marry at all, a person who has had some association with deaf, such for instance, a teacher.

The professor, remembering his own experience as a teacher, no doubt, desires to create a demand for more educators of the deaf, so as to provide husbands and wives for these "gigantic evils." This is rather severe on the educators! I see no reason why these teachers, as a class, should not be entitled to live as freely and as easily as other people. Again, to look at it in another aspect, if he would have the "gigantic evil" marry hearing partners irrespective of their qualifications as educators and descendants of deaf people, then his claim as to the power of sympathy, as exemplified in his person, must be denied, or else his previous argument has no force.

Now, in concluding this chapter, I wish to give a few points for the benefit of those misguided persons who imagine that they can secure sympathy by marrying a person who simply understands their language, in preference to looking elsewhere for it. I can do nothing better than to quote from Sully's *Outlines on Psychology*, London, 1884.

First.—The giving of sympathy is largely a matter of exchange.

The pleasure of receiving sympathy calls forth responsive feeling. We cannot long go on feeling for another if he give back no emotional equivalent.

Second.—To feel deeply, readily, and widely with others, implies that we have felt much and variously ourselves, and are able to recall our feelings easily.

Third.—It follows from what has been said respecting the nature of the feeling, that warm and close sympathy between two persons depends on special circumstances. *It is not enough that both are of a sympathetic nature; more special conditions are necessary. To begin with, there must be a certain similarity of temperament and emotional experience.**

* Italics are mine.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT.

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

“Without a good degree of unity, of feeling, design, and action, everything in a family must inevitably go wrong; and coldness and gloom, if not distrust and discord, will be guests, where quiet, peace, tranquillity, mutual regard, and confidence ought to reign with unbroken sway.”—*Rev. Jasper Adams, D.D., Elements of Moral Philosophy, 1837.*

“There are certain noble motives for the choice of a husband or wife, which, in themselves, deserve all respect, but yet must be rejected as wholly inadmissible, since they can lead only to an unhappy choice. I mean the motives of gratitude and charity. If one selects for a wife the daughter of his benefactor and teacher, or a female friend, who has nursed him in a dangerous sickness—if another selects the helpless widow of a friend, or an otherwise estimable widow, who finds herself in pressing want, and is not in a situation to educate her children—(and if one selects a deaf-mute or a person who is blind, or one who is lame or deformed*), if these selections are made without love, from mere magnanimity, all will surely praise such a disposition; but duty to self forbids making such a sacrifice. We can, and ought, in certain cases, to sacrifice goods and blood for others; we may even sacrifice the comfort of life, and what promotes our culture, by imposing upon ourselves certain renunciations; but here is more than renunciation; here we pledge ourselves to a performance whose fulfilment is out of our power. On this account also, regard for the person to whom we would show our gratitude and magnanimity, must deter from such a sacrifice. Our intention is to make her happy and the

* The interpolation is mine.

opposite is the result; the connection formed, of which love should be the soul cannot prosper without this, and makes both parties unhappy."*

"* * * * * This above all: *To thine ownself be true*; And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man."—HAMLET, *Act I, Sc. 3.*

How, by what process of reasoning, did Shakspeare evolve so graceful, so true a definition of the nobility of reasonable self-love? Was it through the inspiration of the Word, wherein it is commanded, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," or did the "Golden Rule" form the basis of his conception? In either case the moral points to the same conclusion, that one must be true to himself if he would be true to others. Such then is the justification of this self-love—as if it needed justification!

I fancy those people, some through motives of utility, and some through motives of benevolence who marry contrary to their best interest—their moral interest—will find little to comfort them in their folly by a too close analysis of our motto "to thine ownself be true."

How often I have seen that well worn adage "Love (?) is blind" exemplified in the doings of men and women of to-day, and how often turning to the records of days long passed by, to observe this same confusion existing then as now! A seemingly pretty saying is that "If I love her, I care not if she be deaf, stupid, or blind, or mute, lame, or disfigured—if I love her she shall be mine!" What sheer, arrant nonsense! What pure unadulterated weakness! What lamentable lack of duty to one's self! What reckless disregard of the affinities! With a wave of the hand you deny the existence of emotions that are as present and fore-ordained as the air we breathe; you deny a system of philosophy that dates from the creation; you scoff at even the whisperings of your own conscience; you would render unintelligible or null that divine injunction "Love thy neighbor as thyself." In a word, you would supplant wisdom with a species of insanity; you would unite inequality with equality; you would exchange mutual esteem and rational love for an insane desire for self renunciation, or for an equally insane state, that of infatuation!

* From the German of De Wette, Practical Ethics.

It is with profound sorrow that I record the following perversion of the ideal of human life, to which, however, we must extend, at least to one side, the commiseration due to a mind for the time being diseased.

An heiress, a lady of refinement, the idol of a pleasant home, with numerous and ever-willing friends; in short, a person possessing everything conducive to her happiness, through an insane freak (I propose to call things by their right names) of the mind, declares that she cares not if her father's coachman is a negro, that he is unlettered, or that he is ugly, coarse, and a menial, she cares not for these things, if she do but love him, he shall be hers, and forthwith she elopes with the anomaly! Don't tell me that this is love! Don't tell me that this love lasts a lifetime, that the scourge of fire, the elements of war, pestilence, and poverty cannot separate them, and don't tell me that death cannot part them; don't, I beseech you, endeavor to becloud my mind with such assertions, for this love(?) accomplishes none of these ends! A week, a day, serves to awaken the victim to her awful calamity, and she returns to the home she has outraged, forever lost to the esteem of the world—her name passed from mouth to mouth, from the house of God to the lowest brothel! Was she true to herself? The answer would fain anticipate the question—No! a thousand times, No! And the Anomaly, what of him? That monstrosity of selfishness, what of him? He, who knowing his boundless inequality, yet through a demoniac selfish desire, must need take even advantage of a mind diseased, what of him? The scorn of his fellows, the terror of his class, an outlaw that even the laws of society are unable to protect from swift retribution at the hands of those he has wronged!

From many a page of life's history, soiled by just such perversion of the emotions, I select another case fully as sad as the one just narrated.

Not far hence, there dwells a well-to-do family, whose name is honored wherever known. They have a daughter, a person of some literary note, a fine musician, charming in manner, and somewhat of a beauty. This woman (or rather girl, for she is only seventeen), like her unfortunate sister, falls desperately in love with—what?—a ruffian, a thief, one whose life from boyhood has been a succession of crime, who, when he was not in jail, lived a

miserable existence in a hut ; a giant in strength, his person always in rags, filthy, and of repulsive countenance, this being exercised the power to tempt a fair and lovely girl to live with him, in spite of the fact that no minister would unite them in marriage. When at last discovered, and while both were in prison, this fiend in human form must even mock a mother's prayer for her (to speak kindly) crazed daughter. As if the mother's agony, there in jail, on bended knee, was not enough, this daughter must force the bitter draught to the uttermost, by exclaiming that she would surely kill herself if separated from the man, or rather monster, she loved ! Was this poor infatuated girl true to herself ? Did she truly love ? It is hardly necessary to answer,—No.

It is just this spirit of infatuation, a yielding to a sudden and unaccountable impulse, that by its very unreasonableness seems to appeal for co-operation on the part of the victim, that is the cause of so many unhappy marriages. Of course, I do not wish it understood that I condemn a man of sense, in possession of all his faculties, as doing a crazy act in marrying a deaf-mute, or a blind woman ; but I do contend that the spirit is one in kind, only differing in degree. Happily, such cases are rare. It can be proved that such unequal unions as that of a well-educated and successful hearing man marrying a deaf-mute can be counted upon the fingers of a hand ; whereas there are plenty of instances that can be noted where utility in the desire to acquire property has brought about a marriage. The deaf partner, of course, furnished the property.

From inquiries put to several deaf gentlemen who married deaf girls without a dowry, in every instance I am informed that no trouble was experienced in obtaining the consent of the girl's parents to the union. On the other hand, I can cite a number of instances where rich parents, who had a deaf daughter, have uniformly opposed their daughter's inclination to marry one like herself, they rightfully concluding that their wealth and position will bring the girl a husband who can hear. And it is thus they write Utility as their criterion of the moral virtues !

One thing that strikes me as rather odd, that these parents who so vehemently oppose their deaf daughter's marriage with a man similarly situated as herself, seem to be totally oblivious to the fact that, if they force their daughter to wed a hearing man, this man's

relatives will just as stoutly oppose the entrance into their family of a deaf person. And here is another point. The daughter will perhaps think herself ignored by the relatives of her (hearing) husband, and her relatives may imagine themselves slighted by him; so, as a matter of fact, there will be no lack of abundant occasion for chagrin and suspicion. The only remedy for this state of affairs is that the deaf partner should bring a certificate of riches. But what a parody upon the ideal of love this would be! The man sacrifices himself upon the altar of mammon; the woman sacrifices herself to please her parents! “* * * * Where marriage exists in its first rudeness, and woman is nothing but a piece of merchandise which is sold, as in the East, it is the parents who close the business, and the bridegroom sees the bride for the first time on the wedding-day.”*

I am not trying to make out a deaf-mute woman to be such an undesirable person for a wife. I only argue that it seems out of place for a hearing man to deliberately abstain from making a choice from the hearing portion of his circle of acquaintance and marry a deaf-mute, with whom he cannot by any possibility hope to assimilate with until many years have passed. I look at the question much in the light that I would if it were suggested that I marry a blind woman. I am thoroughly secure in my belief that I will never be so untrue to myself as to take such a step. This may sound selfish, but it is not. I know some blind women. I can sympathize with them. I am at all times willing to be of any service in my power, and would fain lighten much of the load they bear; but as to giving them myself, that is another thing; I could not do it. I do not stop to consider that this blind woman may be a person of high nobleness of character, or that she is well educated and refined, and also, for aught I know, quite independent of any offer of marriage from me, I don't stop to consider these things; I only see that this blind person is in a large degree a helpless person and therefore to be looked upon in the light of magnanimity and benevolence rather than the light of equality. I am not exempt, however, from a possible infatuation that may lead me to take such a person for my wife; but as long as I am in my present state of mind, I am not likely to commit any such

* De Wette's Practical Ethics.

folly. And so I say of the hearing, if they are in a rational frame of mind, and have ambition for social success, they are not likely to burden themselves with a deaf-mute wife, or a deaf-mute husband. It takes a freak of the mind and heart, or dollars and cents, to bring about such marriages.

There seems to me no greater fallacy than that which would exact of a man, as the true ideal of a moral life, the renunciation of self to please a benefactor, or to round out his own personal theory of benevolence. Benevolence *per se*, could not have been foreseen and enjoined by Divine commandment, because, the creation, as first conceived, was to be a Paradise where want and misery were to be unknown. Benevolence, therefore, is a human institution—the antidote for human frailty.

If this practice of benevolence, pure and simple, which means self-renunciation for the good of others, were to be the criterion, and we will say, only criterion of a noble life, then the field for the exercise of this virtue must be enlarged. We must have more blind men and women to be the husbands and wives of those who see. Lamé, halt, deformed, and unfortunate people must be more plentiful to satisfy the demand for partners and helpmeets(?) for the sound of limb, the pride and glory of the well formed, and the eminently bright and successful people. Sweet voices of women, the majestic eloquence of men must be bestowed upon deaf-mutes. Intellect must consort with Ignorance. Wealth and social position must walk in fraternal spirit with poverty. Ambition is to be annihilated. The whole world is to be turned into a vast benevolent institution. Every perfect man and every perfect woman, is to practice complete renunciation of what is to their best happiness. Are the incapables and unfortunates expected to renunciate? Not at all, not even renounce a noble and complete sacrifice made for them. Benevolence and magnanimity are to be all on one side, the side of the capable; on the other side, outrageous selfishness is to reign supreme. The vast sum of happiness of one-half of the world is to be given to the more or less incapable other half. The benevolent enthusiast will shut his eyes to the void left by the extraction of this happiness and triumphantly exclaim, that at last the true equilibrium of the ideal moral life has been solved!

No one denies that the world is old, no one denies that it has reached the age to know what is right and what is wrong, and no

one can deny that the vast movement of human life, as regards the emotions of the heart in the question of natural selection, is regulated by an inflexible psychological law, a law too stupendous to have been the invention of any one human mind, or even a million human minds; no one denies these things except our benevolent friend, who is now kindly admonished to take note, that this search for individual happiness, this bettering of one's own condition has been for ages, and is to-day, the sum of the world's happiness, a happiness that brings with it, not the blush of a selfish nature in its shame, but a prayer of thankfulness to an all-wise Creator.

“* * * * These considerations might make such a man aware that his interest in true happiness for himself and his interest in it for others, are not two interests but one interest, of which the object is not a succession of pleasures but a fulfilment of itself, a bettering of itself, a realization of its capabilities on the part of the human soul.”*

The question now arises, what can, what should a deaf-mute do, who desires to enter the marriage state? The avenue to a connection with those who hear, being subjected to risks attendant upon the element of sacrifice and benevolence entering into the union, must forbid too much reliance for happiness in this direction; in fact, as far as my observation has taught me, I would earnestly contend against any and all such unequal unions. The subject, mind, being a deaf-mute, one who can neither speak or read the lips. This narrows the choice for deaf-mutes to seek wives among their own class. And this is just what Prof. Bell and other objectors so earnestly contend against—I would fain take sides with them, but I am convinced that so long as hearing people like to make use of their natural powers of speech and hearing, they are not likely to follow Prof. Bell's advice, and marry a deaf-mute, the very person who would appreciate least the many and pleasant surprises the human voice, such as they possess, is capable of. Now why not let deaf-mutes marry deaf-mutes? As to offspring being deaf and mute like their parents, “what of that?” The parents never having known sound or speech, can never feel that sadness for a deaf child that a hearing person, or one like myself who though deaf, has known what sound is, feels; at least not to such a great

* Thomas Hill Green, M. A., LL.D., *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Oxford 1883, p. 419.

extent. Being themselves happy, well educated, finding in the great world around them plenty of occupations to engage their minds and hearts, one may well ask, "What matters it" if they *are* deaf and mute. The orbit they may move in may have less grandeur in its sweep than that of those who hear and who are in the same social scale. But does this imply that the orbit of a deaf-mute must always define a lesser space? Assuredly not! If a young man, deaf from earliest childhood, and who depended upon his eyes in lieu of hearing, for communication with his hearing fellows, if this young man, could as he did,* at a great English University, stand sixth in a class of one hundred hearing men, others can do likewise. It is not a question of the loss of hearing and speech, it is a question of brains and eyesight. Admitting thus that a deaf-mute can be educated, and admitting that he is not helpless, for witness, that even against discouragements, he manages to get work and succeeds at it. Admitting that in his sphere he is doing that which his hands find ready for him to do, and who does it to the satisfaction of the person who pays for it. Granting all these things, is it exactly fair to assume to dictate, or even suggest, what he should do in matters that concern strictly himself. Who tries to say what the vicious, drunken, weak, and lost inhabitants of the slums should do in this question of marriage! No one. These people, so long as they are out of jail, or out of the jurisdiction of the insane asylum, are fully justified in following the bent of their affections, and have the same right to enjoy life, lowly as it is, as have the brightest and most virtuous. Therefore, I say let these people marry if they want to. To lessen the evil effects, society must educate them to a realization of their position, and point the way to higher labor, and it will follow that their moral tone will advance in equal ratio.

And so with deaf-muteism. Give these people all the schooling that can be afforded; by this means you lessen the defect. If a deaf-mute can form a concept of the meaning of the word Philosophy, and wishing to convey his analysis of the word to a third party, and does so with the aid of his *hand*, what is the difference between his conception and that of the man who hears, who gives his analysis with his *tongue*? There is absolutely no difference

* Rev. Henry Winter Syle.

between the two in regard to the understanding of the word ; the conception is exactly the same, but the mode of communication only is different : one speaks with that part of himself situate in the hand ; the other, that part situate in the mouth—a mere physical difference that does not impair the influences of either individual.

The grand principle underlying this question is—Are deaf-mutes capable of work? are they peaceable, that is, not vicious and destructive as pertain to those suffering diseases of the mind? The answer is, Yes. These people can labor, and are harmless. Now, then, if by the hand of God a number of these people are born deaf, not only of deaf parents, but of hearing ones as well, why not let them move in their orbit in the even tenor of their way? I care not how humble the mode of life, so that the main idea exists—that is, happiness and content. In five minutes' ride in the metropolis, I can take you from the abode of dazzling splendor and intellect, to a quaint little corner, where lives a family whose environment is the antipodes of that we have just left, and yet this family can hardly find room for the many enjoyments within its reach.

Considering all these circumstances, ought we to assume to dictate what class of woman a deaf-mute may desire to give that sacred, and eminently personal, name of wife? If he chooses a deaf-mute woman, that is Society's own fault, for Society does not propose marriage to deaf-mutes. Apparently, it prefers to make such proposals to those who can hear, and Society is perfectly willing to pay the extra cost in special schools,* and in other directions, as the result of this refusal to intermarry with such defective people, to the alternative of living a cramped life with a person that it can only require the best years of one's existence to learn to assimilate with.

Consulting Professor Bell's statistics,† I find that in 35 institutions for the deaf, 215 children born of deaf-mute parents, are returned as being in attendance. The remaining 21 institutions refused to give any information. It will be fair, however, in view of the fact that the larger schools have furnished statistics, to allow for the 21 schools the same proportion as given for the 35 institutes that

* See Chapter II, Sociological Aspect.

† Memoir to the Academy of Science, A. G. Bell, 1883, page 27.

responded, which will be a total of 138, or a grand total of 353 pupils, who, according to Professor Bell, are an unnecessary burden upon society in the way of special and more expensive schools for their education.

The cost per capita for the education of these 353 deaf-mutes is \$223.28 per year; from this deduct the cost per capita (in round numbers, \$12.00*) for the education of public school children, leaves \$211.28 as the excess over the cost of educating the hearing children. To meet this extra cost, a tax of a fraction of less than half of one cent a year will be required of, say fifteen million tax payers, an insignificant amount, when it is considered that its payment absolves the payee from all obligation to marry a deaf-mute, with its attendant liability to deaf offspring (it is an ascertained fact that deaf children do result from such unions, even though the hearing partner may not have deaf-mute relatives). This payment also gives the payee the power to consistently refuse to allow a hearing son or daughter to marry a deaf-mute. This tax of less than half of one cent a year is therefore the premium on a policy of insurance that protects society (that part that hears) from incurring a loss of \$211.28† per annum for educational expenses of a possible deaf child. And when it is remembered that this item of cost may be multiplied by two or even more times, and that in addition to this, society is put to the extra labor and inconvenience of deaf-mute partners, it must be admitted that the tax [or] premium is reasonable, and no one is surprised that society cheerfully pays it. Indeed, a young hearing gentleman has been heard to remark, that he would be willing to pay the premium in advance for fifty years (25 cents) to assist in isolating this defect and relegate the loss to those who are mainly responsible for it. Another hearing gentleman, and he is a prominent educator of the deaf, one who might be supposed to entertain liberal opinions on this question of the inter-marriage of the deaf with the hearing, says: "I would pay this premium if it were a hundred dollars, and pay it in advance too." And I who am deaf, and who take sides with deaf-mutes, I have to admit that he would be doing what was proper, eminently so.

* Report of the Commissioners of Education, 1883-84.

† In all cases where the parents are able to pay, this cost has to be paid by them.

No one with even half the experience I have had with the hearing world, can help smiling at the assertions by deaf-mutes everywhere, that they are good enough for partners for the hearing. The fact that hearing people don't seek them out, and the more weighty fact that at least ninety or perhaps ninety-nine per cent. of their number marry the deaf, has no force with them—they claim everything in the face of stupendous odds to the contrary. Meanwhile, every hearing person I ask, seems to show more than ordinary willingness to pay all sorts of premiums if it is demanded, to be free from obligation, moral or otherwise, to take to themselves deaf-mute partners.

As before stated, the cost per capita for the education of deaf-mutes is one-half of one cent a year, based on a population of fifteen million tax payers. It is argued that this premium would rapidly advance with the increase in the number of deaf-mutes as the result of permitting them to intermarry. This would be true, but, as soon as the deaf-mute community becomes large enough, then the system of day schools in use for the hearing could be adopted to meet their wants, with the result of reducing the cost of their education to the same scale as that for the hearing.

I shall speak more at length on this point in another chapter.

Prof. Bell advocates a policy of interference:—"Among repressive measures should perhaps be included the influence of friends to prevent undesirable intermarriages."† And still worse, in the same paper he suggests the passage of a law—" * * * * Legislation forbidding the intermarriage of persons belonging to families containing more than one deaf-mute would be more practicable." What rank treason against a rational class of people such a law would be, if passed! He (Professor Bell) might as well assume that a useful animal, say a horse, has no right to live its life in its own way, because it is dumb, and should therefore be relegated to celibacy, and finally to extinction—a policy as heroic and astounding as that of the ancient Greeks, who thought that by destroying the weak, blind, and other unfortunate people, they would thus insure a race of giants and heroes. Their system fell, as will also Professor Bell's, for it is universally believed that every human

† A. Graham Bell, *Memoir to the Academy of Science*, p. 46, Nov. 13, 1883.

being has a soul, no matter how humble or imperfect the dwelling-place. A soul has its affections and ideals, and it seems wisest to me to refrain from interfering in its free line of action. The only restraint I advocate is where the person is insane, or where his action comes in conflict with Divine law.

To me there is something very grateful in Mr. Bishop's quaint story in an humble key of *Jerry and Clarinda*.* It abounds with touches of kindly sympathy and lively regard for his deaf-mute hero and heroine, for Jerry and Clarinda are deaf-mutes. Mr. Bishop acknowledges that occult sympathy, that unity of feeling that exists between the deaf. In the meeting between Jerry and Clarinda, Uncle Shackley is made to observe: "Clarinda is my brother's child; he left her to us when he died, and she's the pride of our house." "It's a great treat to them dummies," he added, "to see some o' their own sort once in awhile. I'd go half a day's journey out o' my way, any time, to give the girl a treat like this."

Why can't we all look upon the question of love and marriage of deaf-mutes in just such a broad and beneficent way as this, and not endeavor to force utility and the mere question of breed as the prime virtues. I boldly advocate that if a hearing man cannot agree on this point, he can at least let these people alone in all such matters as concerns their affections. To devise a system of education, to enlighten the hearing as to the inherent ability of the deaf to do a good deal of the work that is now denied in part to them, and many other improvements, will be measures that will deserve all praise. Let these people alone in the affairs of the heart.

Professor Bell expresses the opinion that the system of segregation mostly in use by the schools for the deaf, is the cause for much of this antipathy of the two classes to intermingle, to make sexual selection one from the other. He cites that in the earlier history of the deaf and dumb,† "before they were educated, comparatively few of them married, and intermarriage (if it existed at all) was so rare as to be practically unknown." Professor Bell, we fear, fails to observe that in those earlier days in deaf-mute history the deaf and dumb were not allowed to marry at all, and so far from having freedom of choice in their affection (as they now enjoy), they were

* Harper's Magazine, May, 1887.

† Memoir to the National Academy of Sciences, 1883, p. 41.

even deprived of their own personal freedom. Some were consigned to the lock-up, some to the work-house, nearly all led an aimless and hopeless life. Such people don't marry. There is nothing remarkable therefore in Mr. Bell's assertion, that the uneducated deaf very rarely married, and as to intermarriage, hardly at all.

This theory and objection to segregation* does not, it seems to me, have the weight that Professor Bell attaches to it. So far as my own experience goes, his non-segregation theory certainly has not offered any solution to the difficulty.

I entered a private boarding school at ten years of age, and my fellow-pupils were all hearing boys. I remained in this school until between twelve and thirteen years of age. Now, although I could hear at that time if spoken to loudly, and close to the ear, and although I retained the full use of my voice and could talk as readily as the rest, yet, I can recall distinctly now that I was very much alone among all those hearing boys.

To have had a deaf-mute or a person simply deaf, would not, in my estimate, have improved matters, for in this case there would have been two, instead of one, very much alone. Now, on reflecting, that of a necessity, these two, who were deaf, would certainly associate together by sheer force of community of feeling, the resultant would be the sum total of two different minds with their given quantity of ideas. It ought to be evident to Professor Bell, that a mind brought into contact with several hundred minds, as is now done in the would-be proscribed segregational institutes for the education of the deaf, would, and is bound to receive more information than that mind which receives the impression and reflection of only one mind. Of course, if boys, hearing boys, were as a rule, benevolent, kind, and considerate, willing to forego a game of cricket or base-ball, or any sport or exercises in which his deaf friend or fellow-pupil is incapacitated to take part for the sake of keeping this friend company, then the whole aspect of the case would be altered. But boys, as boys, are not so constituted. It takes years, and many disappointments and sorrows, to teach a man or woman how to be always considerate and willing to forego their own pleasure, to bring their action down to the pace of those who are

* See Chapter II, Sociological Aspect.

slower. Boys and girls are not made of such stuff. There is nothing a live, progressive, growing, war-whooping lad detests so much as a "slow coach," his definition for those who are slow of intellect, slow of motion, and slow of comprehension. No, these boys are boys, with but little or no time to devote to the theory and practice of ethics. To be self-denying is opposed to that sense of growth as seems to be the immediate condition of a boy's mind. They sometimes show it, this feeling for others, but it is so rare, as to command the epithet, "impulse." Life to boys is progression. It is all Excelsior with them, individually and collectively. You can comprehend now that I was very much alone in the fast moving school-life around me. In the case of a boy, mute as well as deaf, the loneliness, or isolation, would be still more accentuated, to such an extent, indeed, as to seem to me the veriest folly to say, that he would receive benefit from his association.

Lord Derby lays great stress on the need of separate treatment for the blind*; his remarks on the subject can, with equal force, be made to apply to the conditions that should govern the education of the deaf. He says: "When they (the blind) mix with seeing persons, they are exposed, especially as children, to various influences which are not to their advantage. * * * They are the 'poor blind.' Little or nothing is expected of them; they have a claim on every body's services, and need give none in return. On the other hand, when blind children are brought together into a common school, they learn first to help one another, and then to help themselves. In their own families it is almost impossible for them to do this. The contrast between their condition and that of people who have their eyesight is so striking that it seems cruel to expect them to do things for themselves. The consequence is that unless a child's character is exceptionally vigorous, the most impressionable years of life pass away without anything being done to make him independent of others. His only idea of making a livelihood will be by appealing to that feeling of compassion which he has looked to all his early life. Now, quite apart from the fact that when this appeal has to be made to strangers it will meet with a very intermittent and imperfect response, children who grow up in this state of dependence remain ignorant of many sources of happiness which

* From the *London Spectator* of recent date.

are really within their reach. What gives the blind enjoyment is not what is done for them, but what they can be taught to do for themselves."

Leaving school at the early age of thirteen, my life henceforth was to be a succession of disappointments and chagrin in my contact with the hearing world. In this time, however, I contrived to educate myself by practice and success in lip-reading, to mingle quite freely in hearing society; this was due to sheer force of pride and sensitiveness in regard to my deafness.

I have met in personal intercourse, Justices of the Supreme Court, Senators, and Representatives in the National and State governments, Army and Navy officers; I have dined in the home of wealth and culture; I have partaken of the hospitality of the humble iron-worker; I have met representative men in every profession; the blind, the deaf and mute, and the crippled, have all come in for a share of my personal interest; in short, I am a graduate of a cosmopolitan school, such as any great city offers. I am therefore certainly not a victim of segregational methods, and yet, I am far more sensitive, as my friends and acquaintances say, on this question of marrying a hearing woman, than young men whose lives have been from childhood spent in Institutes for the Deaf and Dumb. A parallel case to mine is that of Rev. Henry W. Syle, whose chief education was received in the schools and universities for the hearing. He acknowledges this sensitiveness, and emphasizes it by marrying a deaf woman.

I was twenty-three before I ever met a deaf person, and at that age did not know even the rudiments of the deaf-mute language, not even the manual alphabet, a convenience that even my hearing friends possessed, and who found fault with me for not having a like qualification. So much for the objection to segregation.

I cannot agree with Professor Bell that this is the root of the evil; rather say that the real evil is that the person is *deaf and mute*, and therefore unable to appreciate the voice of the hearing. This latter class will, in spite of all theories, go on and marry people who can appreciate what natural powers they may have. Fancy, if you can, a sweet-voiced nightingale consorting with a bird that was deaf—an anomaly it would be incapable of. In the past seven or eight years I have learned the inmost life of the deaf and mute;

and now, in view of all that I have seen, in view of the many happy and successful homes, looking at yon gray-haired deaf-mute and his silent, equal, and loving companion, his wife ; in view of what I have heard of opposite results, where one of the contracting parties was a hearing person ; in view of all these facts, I must protest against any interference, in any form, with the affairs of a people able to judge and act for themselves ; I must protest against such a prohibitory law as Professor Bell has outlined, as I would the darkest infamy !

And now, in conclusion, I desire to express a hope that Professor Bell will withdraw his suggestion of a "policy of interference" and certain prohibitory measures, the text of which has already been stated, and allow people, such as do not come within the jurisdiction of the authorities for the insane, or those suffering from contagious disease, and all those, in fact, whose presence does not conflict with public safety, to have freedom of choice in this question of the affections.

