

View of South Side Main Building and Lania

**THE WESTERN NEW YORK INSTITUTION FOR DEAF MUTES.**

The school for the deaf in this city was established in 1856 as a private corporation. It still has upon its Board of Directors four of the original corporators, Dr. Wm. S. Ely, Dr. Samuel A. Lattimore, Rev. Edward P. Hart, and as honorary director, Dr. Charles E. Ruder. There are twelve other directors: Charles P. Ford, president; James E. Booth, first vice-president; Rufus A. Sibley, second vice-president; Harvey W. Brown, treasurer; Mrs. Gilman H. Perkins, Charles F. Pond. Elected to membership during the first year: Hon. Arthur E. Sutherland, Mrs. Edmund Lyon, Mrs. Wm. Churchill, Mrs. Wm. R. Gurney, Rev. Charles C. Albertson, Mr. Albert Converse. The following esteemed citizens of Rochester have had prominent part in the establishment and upbuilding of the institution: Mr. Gilman H. Perkins, to whom with Mrs. Perkins, the inception of the institution was due, and who was for twenty-four years its treasurer and financial backer; Hon. E. Darwin Smith, the first president of the board of Directors; Hon. Geo. G. Clarkson, Hon. Oscar Craig, Lewis H. Morgan, Samuel D. Porter, Sylvanus A. Ellis, Rev. Thomas Galludet, Jonathan E. Pierpont, Aaron Erickson, Mortimer F. Reynolds, Seth H. Terry, Ezra R. Andrews, James E. Briggs and George H. Ellwanger.

The school was opened in the block on South Avenue and Court Street, where the Y. M. C. A. building now stands, and in the spring of 1878, it was moved to its present location. The title to the property was acquired by the Board of Directors, \$19,000 of the purchase mortgage is still due the Rochester Savings Bank. The management has expended over \$100,000 upon the property, erecting good buildings, which they have finished well, so that in its present situation all requirements of the institution are satisfactorily met. For a number of years the City Park Board has from time to time urged the directors of the school to negotiate the sale of a considerable portion of its property for park purposes. The change that would be necessary, however, would involve the rebuilding of more than one-half the present plant upon a long, narrow lot that would never adequately serve the purposes of the institution. So it has been decided to secure a new site. This it is expected will be accomplished during the present summer, so that when the city requires, the institution will be

provided with a satisfactory location on which to erect new buildings.

At the time the school was opened in 1856, there were forty-eight other schools for the deaf in the country. Forty-four of them followed the method introduced by Galludet and Clar in Hartford, and the four others used the Gumar or oral method. The management of the Rochester school favored the oral method, and also used the sign language. In the third year of the school they began an experiment which has since developed into a method of communication and instruction peculiar to this school, its principal feature being the constant use of speech, accompanied simultaneously by manual spelling. Every child speaks whenever he spells. He fixes his attention upon the lips and sees what the fingers write in the air incidentally. All the pupils have daily instruction in speech, and every school exercise is a speech exercise. As a further feature of the Rochester method, it is not necessary, as it would be if the pure oral method were followed, to abandon any individual as incapable of receiving instruction, because on account of some physical condition of the vocal organs, he cannot learn to speak, or of serious defect of sight, he cannot learn to read the lips. Through the free use of the manual alphabet, such children are carried as far through the courses of instruction as they may be able to win their way and have been graduated.

Another feature of the work at this school is the use of the phonetic manual, devised by Mr. Edmund Lyon of Rochester. This is a great aid in teaching speech and in correcting speech faults. Through it, the exact position for the production of any desired sound or combination of sounds can be quickly and accurately shown. All the teachers of the school have constant and persistent recourse to this manual in their daily work.

Another very helpful invention devised by Professor A. Melville Bell is a system of phonetical printed and written characters that are abbreviated or suggestive drawings of the vocal organs in the positions required for the production of the elements of speech. The school is provided with a liberal font of this type and has prepared a large number of exercises that are very helpful in teaching speech. A typewriter is also provided with which the teachers or pupils can write speech exercises in this illustrative character, with rapidity and ease.

The school gratefully accepts the

syllabi of the courses of study prepared by the State Education Department at Albany, for the public schools of the state, and is glad of the privilege of taking the grade or commissioner's examinations and the Regents examinations for the secondary or high school course of study. The requirement by the Department of Education that the school shall work to these standards has proved a great incentive to earnestness and excellence. The school holds that the deaf can pursue the same courses of study and accomplish as much work from year to year as do hearing children in the public schools. As large a proportion of pupils who enter our school can win the Regents diploma as is the proportion of high school graduates of the whole number of those who enter the public schools.

When a few years ago special examinations for schools for the deaf were held for a series of years, the printed report made possible a comparison of the results of teaching by different methods. During the whole series of annual examinations, the Rochester school led the other eight schools in the state and at no time was any other one of the schools nearer than twenty-five points on the scale of one hundred to the general average of this school. This demonstrates the advantage of the school's methods.

The first four years that deaf children are in school are required for nursery training, or the education that hearing children receive at home in the nursery before they are of school age, so that in their fifth school year, they enter the first grade, that is when they are eleven years old. These children under twelve are given a separate building for their home and school life, though they take their meals in the dining-room with the older pupils. In this kindergarten building, the younger children, who could not endure long periods of application, have gymnastics and marching exercises interspersed. The little ones devote a period every morning to training in the games that are always popular among hearing children. They are not only taught to go through the motions of the game, but to play the language as well.

When the pupils become twelve years of age they are promoted to the second grade and to the Senior building. From year to year it is expected that the average child will be able to make a grade a year, so that they would finish the eighth grade in the year from nineteen to twenty, and then be ready to enter upon the course of secondary or high school training, taking the Regents examination before obtaining this promotion. Four years would then be allowed to them to complete the high school course and receive the Regents diploma.

Any pupil who receives this Regents diploma must maintain from year to year a certain required scholarship, which has to be determined by Regents examinations. According to this arrangement of grades, the average boy or girl would be four years older when graduating than would his hearing brother or sister, as it is expected that they would graduate from high school when they are twenty. But there are many possessed of special gifts who are able to graduate much younger. It is believed that a proportionately large number of the deaf also will be able to graduate as much earlier than the age limit named above.

The children under twelve years of age, have manual training from the day they enter, through the several gifts of the Froebel kindergarten, the training of the sense of touch, and the art classes, in which they receive daily instruction. So that before they have completed the first grade work, they have learned to draw from objects, to use India ink and color in broad washes, to sketch with charcoal and crayon, making pictures to illustrate nursery stories and stories of their own experiences, and to sew, in all the stitches of plain sewing and darning as well as in embroidery and fancy stitches. The little hands are taught some of the softer work in wood carving, and in clay modeling they work out elaborate designs with satisfactory execution. In basketry and sloyd, a large collection of well-made objects is produced every year. As this work is carried on under the care of two teachers, each having a daily exercise with all the pupils under twelve, much more time is devoted to it than is customary in schools for the hearing. Consequently the work that is accomplished by the children who are eleven years old is good ninth grade art work as required of public schools.

Since the school was begun it has had an arrangement of its classes by which its older pupils, under instruction six hours a day, have their school day divided into three periods, two of which are spent in the literary classes and one in the industrial classes. By this arrangement, both these phases of school work are continued side by side without friction. The boys have practical industrial training in the carpenter shop, in the printing office, in the paint shop, in



Winter Scene--View of School Buildings from St. Paul St.

the garden, and in stationary engineering in the boiler room. The girls are trained in the sewing room, to do fine work with a needle and to fit dresses. They also have daily lessons in general house work and in cooking and sewing.

The moral training of children fills a very large place in the duties of a teacher in the school. It is the custom to spend the first twenty minutes of the morning, before breakfast in Bible study, and the study of hymns and selections from general literature that are morally and spiritually helpful in laying the foundations of character. The selections that the pupils learn they recite to one another.

Reading is made interesting by talks on books, and by various devices to stimulate the pupils' interest. The school has a library of nearly ten thousand volumes. Every school room is devoted to a specialty, and each there is a library of supplementary reading which each teacher uses to make the subject of study attractive. Each school room is supplied not only with a supplementary library, but with the illustrative apparatus the teacher needs to make clear the subject he teaches to any or all of the grades.

Story telling by teachers and by pupils is a part of the process of language development. It is a constant practice of the pupils, after having read a book which pleases them, to entertain a group of play mates by recounting the story from memory in speech and manual. A debating society maintained by the pupils is a very helpful feature of the school work and is interesting from all points of view.

The school has a good stereopticon, arranged so that entertainments of this character can readily be given. The children are taken to the city to entertainments of various kinds, and parents are asked to leave money with the officers of the school for car fares and admissions. Many courtesies are shown to the school by those conducting entertainments.

Much use is made of pictures to give a home atmosphere to rooms which the pupils use. But pictures are not alone relied upon to give this "hominess" and cheer. All the members of the household exercise a kindly sympathy and a watchful, tactful helpfulness. The children are never left without supervision. There is always someone whose duty it is to know and who knows where every child is and what he is doing, and who is always ready with plans for the interesting and profitable use of any moment that might without his help hang heavily upon idle hands. Whenever a word of sympathy is called for, it is ready. Love for children is pre-requisite for one who would fill such office. By purpose and practice this love becomes an enthusiasm, and the work among and for the children a mutual delight and a mutual profit.

In the class rooms and at the table, boys and girls are seated together; at the table little children sit with the older ones who train them as older brothers and sisters do in the homes, and as they themselves were trained. Thus the little children learn much from those who are so near their own age as to sympathize with their needs and enjoy teaching them. This is also a great aid in developing the dignity and understanding of those who are older.

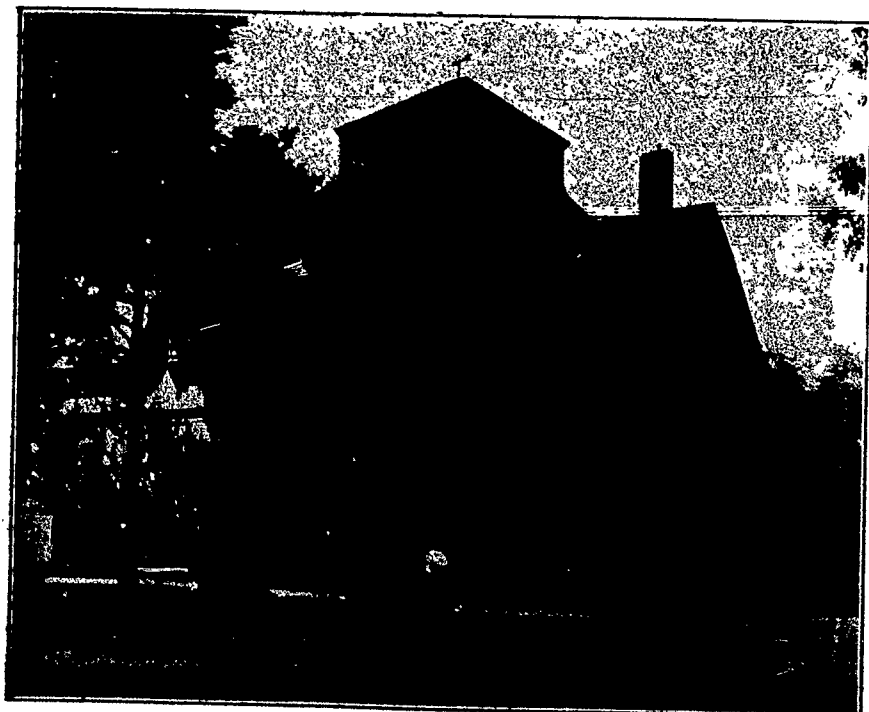
There is no gymnasium, but classes have been maintained in callisthenics, Delsarte, and dancing to give grace to the gait and erectness to the carriage, and to encourage precision in action and a knowledge of the proprieties and conventionalities. Parties, receptions, and entertainments at homes are frequently given so that the children may become accustomed to social functions and be at ease, and that they may know how to entertain and to be entertained. Talks and informal discussions upon social subjects supplement such evenings.

Seneca Park extends to the school grounds on either side, so that it is easy to find beautiful walks and a great wealth of objects for nature study. The city zoo, the next door to the institution upon the north, where the birds and small animals are kept, affords much entertainment and unlimited opportunities for language lessons and talks. Shops and factories in the city have kindly granted frequent permission to visit their buildings, thus giving to the pupils object lessons in textile and manufacturing industries.

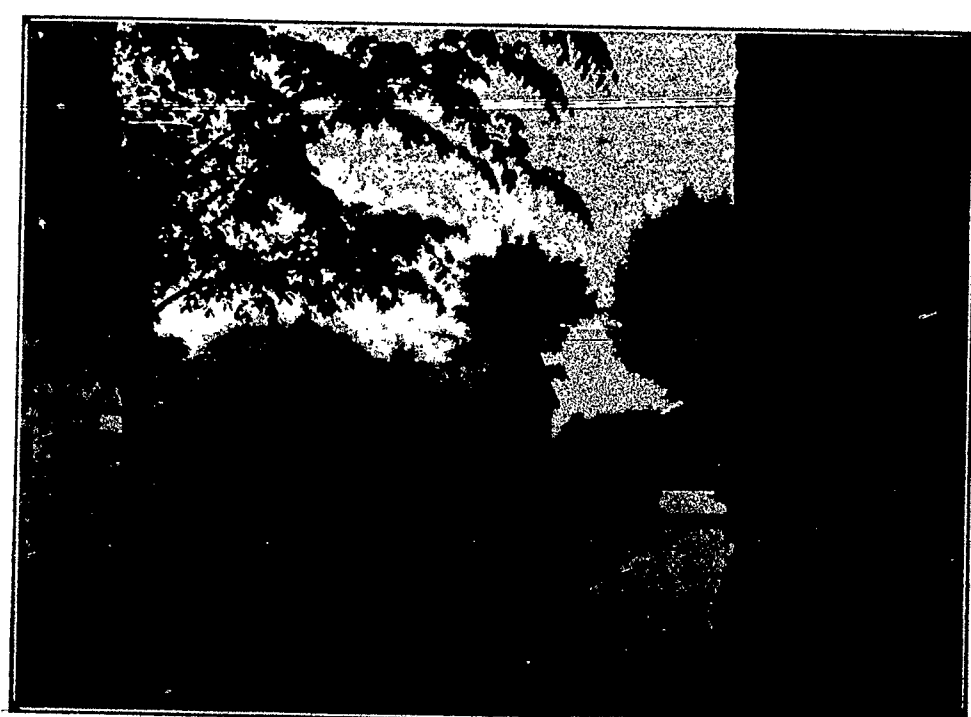
The tuition for private pupils is \$500 per annum. This includes board and care and medical attendance in case of illness. The tuition for private day pupils is \$300—this for the school year of forty weeks, and is paid in four installments at the beginning of every ten weeks.

It is the purpose of the state, however, that the deaf children of all citizens may receive free a common school education, the same as their hearing brothers and sisters. And to this end, the law provides that parents shall be at liberty to send their children to such one of the nine schools in the state as they may choose and directs that any supervisor of the county in which they live and to whom they may make application, after he has satisfied himself that the child because of his inability to hear or to speak must be taught by special methods, shall send the child to the school for which the parents express preference. The school district for such children between five and twelve is the county in which they live, and for children over twelve, the school district is the state.

Parents of children of twelve or over should make application to the Superintendent of Public Instruction at Albany, stating their choice of school, and having some one holding office in the community endorse the application.



View of Senior Building



Walk Around South Side Main Building