THE SILENT SCHOLAR.

Story of a Mission Sunday School in a Carpenter's Shop and

A PUPIL WHO WAS DEAF AND DUMB

Origin of the Movement Which Led to the Establishment of

THE WILKINSBURG SCHOOL FOR MUTES

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

Joel Kerr, the Mission School Superintendent.

A GAME of baseball, played without noise or outcry. Such was the remarkable spectacle which I witnessed a few days ago. To set myself right before the public and maintain whatever reputation I may have as a veracious chronicler of cotemporary history, I hasten to say that the game was not played at Recreation Park, but on the grounds of the Western Pennsylvania Institute for the Deaf and Dumb at Wilkinsburg. As both spectators and players were mutes, they found it easy to refrain from loud protests against the umpire's decisions and audible remarks on the brilliant plays made by different members of the nines. I have witnessed a number of ball games in Allegheny county, but never before have seen one in which silence was so conspicuous an element. Yet the boys seemed to enjoy it, and apparently all were quite as much in earnest as the most garrulous nines that ever contested on the diamond could possibly be.

It is pleasant to learn that children who are without the invaluable natural gifts of speech and hearing are not on that account wholly debarred from the enjoyments which other youngsters of their age so much delight in. More than this, the man whose heart is in the right place must also derive great satisfaction from the knowledge that such unfortunates are kindly cared for and

Henry C. Bell, the First Pupil at the Mute Sunday School.

have a home where everything is done that can be done for their comfort and pleasure; that they are taught useful trades; instructed in those branches of education that are most serviceable and practical, and in such principles of ethics, morals and manners as shall make them honest and worthy men and women.

A WORTHY INSTITUTION.

The people of Pittsburg and vicinity have the best of reason for pride in the noble institution at Wilkinsburg. It is a perpetual monument to the zeal and charity of a small band of enthusiastic philanthropists who, in their efforts to do good, were guided by good judgment as well as benevolent impulses.

Nowhere in the county, and probably nowhere in the State, is there a better illustration of the divine truth contained in the parable of the sower than in this same Institute for the Deaf and Dumb at Wilkinsburg. A little seed, that was planted more than 20 years ago, fell upon good ground. It was carefully nurtured and tended and the shoot developed into a magnificent tree, which is now bearing such rich fruit that the few who watched solicitously over the growing plant must surely feel that their patience and labor have been rewarded more than a hundred fold.

The institute, which has now an average of 160 or more pupils each year, had a humble and peculiar origin. Away back in 1868 there was a little mission Sunday school which met in a carpenter's shop on Congress street in Pittsburg. Joel Kerr, a hard-working riverman, better known as "Dr." Kerr, was its superintendent. Mr. Kerr was, and still is, a faithful member of the Third U. P. Church. He entered upon Sunday school work as a young man over 40 years ago, and is still following it with the same zeal and energy that made his labor successful in his earlier years. In his humble school he sought to encourage pupils and to extend the influence of the mission as much as possible.

AN AMBITIOUS PUPIL.

To this end he made an offer that any pupil who succeeded in bringing in a new scholar should receive a prize. The presents so distributed were not remarkably valuable, consisting mainly of books that cost 15 or 20 cents each, but they were sufficient to arouse the ambitions of his pupils, and quite a number of new scholars were gathered in who would never have come save at the earnest solicitation of those who were striving to win prizes. One Sunday a little German boy appeared with a new pupil, a bright looking colored lad about 5 years of age, and claimed and received his reward. The Superintendent was not at first inclined to receive the new scholar, and asked why he was not sent to a Sabbath school for colored youth, which met weekly in a neighboring building.

"His tongue is tied and his ears are stopped up, and he can't learn nothing there," was the reply of the boy who had picked up the waif and brought him to school.

And sure enough, the new pupil was found to be deaf and dumb. The youngster was allowed to remain, but the superintendent could do little with him. Mr. Kerr was anxious to befriend him, and yet on one or two occasions he had to put the little mute out of the schoolroom, as the boy, uttering that peculiar, plaintive cry that the deaf and dumb make, disturbed the other scholars and diverted their attention from their lessons. A lady who was teaching in the mission school took a deep interest in the little black orphan boy. She had a relative, an educated mute, and she persuaded him to come to the mission school and undertake the instruction of the unfortunate child.

BIRTH OF A GREAT INSTITUTION.

The name of this mute teacher was William R. Drum; the name of his colored pupil was Henry Collins Bell. Their coming together in this way, while not an important occurrence in itself, was the beginning of a movement from which great things resulted. It was a humble beginning, but the history of the Western Pennsylvania Institute for the Deaf and Dumb dates from the time that Mr. Drum came to Joel Kerr's little mission school to teach a class of one. But a teacher requires pupils, and Mr. Drum concluded he might as well instruct several boys as one. He was urged to continue, and an effort was made to hunt up other mutes and bring them to the Sunday school. Another deaf and dumb boy, Johnny Lowry by name, was discovered and induced to join the school. But he had only attended a few times when his mother raised an objection. She did not want her boy taught in the same class with a colored child! So Archy Woodside, a competent instructor, was brought to the school to undertake Johnny Lowry's education.

Rev. Dr. John G. Brown, Principal of the Wilkinsburg Institute.

Mr. and Mrs. Kerr soon became greatly interested in the welfare of the mute scholars, and so did other friends of the school. One pupil after another was added to the deaf and dumb class until it numbered eight or ten members. Educated mutes began attending, and those not employed as teachers were formed into a Bible class under the instruction of Mr. T. H. Murray. This Bible class, I understand, still meets regularly, and has quite a large membership.

The mission school soon grew too large for the Congress street carpenter shop, and a room in the Franklin street schoolhouse was secured as a meeting place. Here the teachers, having blackboards and other conveniences, worked to much better advantage. The deaf and dumb Sunday school grew in numbers and influence until it began to attract considerable attention from the public. The pupils attended the Third U. P. Church regularly each Sabbath, and occupied seats set apart for them in the gallery.

PREACHING TO MUTES.

Rev. Dr. John G. Brown was the pastor, and Miss Sarah Woodside, acting as interpreter, repeated, in the sign language, his sermon to the mutes. But there was no denominationalism in the school; pupils were picked up wherever they could be found, no matter what religion their parents professed, or whether they professed any. Exhibitions and entertainments were held and the proceeds used to aid the needy scholars. Earnest and successful efforts were made to enlist the sympathies of the charitable.

But it was impossible to give the pupils all the instruction they needed in a Sunday school alone. An effort was, therefore, made to have the class taken into the public school. This movement succeeded, though against bitter opposition, and in September, 1869, the mutes were allowed to attend the First ward public school. The class numbered less than 20, and Archy and Sarah Woodside were the teachers. The little, silent children, attending a great school for the first time, enjoyed the novelty, and also enjoyed teaching their associates the sign language. It is said that nearly all the pupils who came in contact with the mutes learned to use their hands as well as their voices for talking.

But even after it had been decided to give the deaf and dumb a chance to be educated and to defray the expense out of the public money those opposed to the plan continued talking and grumbling. They said the children, not being able to hear or talk, would be run over and killed by vehicles and cars on the streets. No accidents were ever reported, however, as Mayor Brush instructed his police to look carefully after the unfortunate little ones and see that they were kept out of harm's way while on the way to and from school.

THE INSTITUTE CHARTERED.

As many of the mutes lived too far away to attend the school daily and return to their own homes at night, a home was established on Second avenue where they were boarded and cared for. It was not long until the plan of establishing a deaf and dumb school like that in Philadelphia was projected and encouraged. Dr. Worthington, of the Board of Public Charities, visited the mutes, urged their friends to continue in their work, and eventually succeeded in getting an appropriation to help forward the movement. The school was removed from the First ward to the Third ward (Grant street) and the home from Second to Wylie avenue. The capacity of the quarters allotted to the mutes became taxed to the utmost, and the necessity for more ample accommodations became apparent to all.

James Kelly donated a tract of ten acres of land in Wilkins township, and $21,500 was raised in subscriptions for the purpose of erecting buildings. The institution was incorporated in 1871, but circumstances delayed the work. Finally, in 1876, a hotel building was secured at Turtle Creek, and on the 25th of October the Western Pennsylvania Institute was opened with a small number of pupils. It continued there until the fall of 1884, when the splendid building at Wilkinsburg was completed and occupied.

The Late John R. McCune, One of the Institute's Early Friends.

And now, having briefly sketched the history of the rise of the institute, it will be of interest to inquire what has become of those who were the prime movers in the noble work that resulted in giving the deaf and dumb children of Western Pennsylvania the best of educational opportunities.

THE MUTES' EARLY FRIENDS.

Joel Kerr, who was in one sense of the word the founder of the institution, lives on Elm street, and follows his old occupation on the river. I had a talk with him and his worthy wife the other evening. Both gave many interesting reminiscences of the little mission school and of the diligent and difficult efforts which finally led to the establishment of the school at Wilkinsburg. Very appropriately a large portrait of Mr. Kerr occupies a position of honor in the reception room at the institute.

Henry Collins Bell, the first mute pupil, is now a young man and a worthy and respected citizen of the Southside. He works in a wire mill as a drawer and is a competent and trusted workman. William R. Drum, his early instructor, is a carpenter in East Liberty and still continues to teach in the Bible class of mutes. Archy Woodside, a capable man of business, holds a responsible position in the cork works. His sister, who has devoted a great deal of time to teaching and assisting the deaf and dumb, resides at Braddock.

Rev. Dr. John G. Brown, who became interested in the good work long before the institute was thought of, and who has been one of its most faithful friends from the start, is now the principal at the Wilkinsburg retreat. He has held the position for the past four years and has discharged his difficult duties in a manner that has met with almost unanimous approval.

Among those who befriended the enterprise when it was most in need of friends were a large number of prominent Pittsburgers, several of whom have since passed to their reward. William Thaw was one of the most zealous friends of the benevolent project and contributed liberally. The late John R. McCune looked carefully after the financial interests of the institution, and as long as he lived continued one of its most faithful and efficient officers. William Holmes and Mrs. Jane Holmes made generous bequests; James P. Hanna, John B. Jackson, John Wilson and many others were among the earliest benefactors of the school. Of them it may be truly said that in the Wilkinsburg institute they have "a monument more enduring than brass, more precious than gems of the Orient."

E. W. BARTLETT.

STRIKING A DEADLOCK.

The Music Committee Refers to the Central Board the Choice—No Man to Succeed Prof. Presser as Yet.

The Music Committee of the Central Board met yesterday at 3 o'clock to elect a Supervisor of Music. Messrs. Blaze, Barlow, Yagle, Torsh and Bradley, of the committee, were present. Messrs. McCandless and M. B. Foley were absent. Secretary Reisfar read the list of applicants, ten in number. The committee decided not to have the recommendations read, and proceeded to discuss the question at issue.

Mr. R. Blaze said he thought that a Southside man should get it, as the vacancy is from the Southside. Mr. Barlow was of the same opinion, but he said that in any event a Pittsburger and not an outsider, should be chosen. Then a ballot was taken, each of the following candidates receiving one vote: Miss A. Asper, David Moore, J. H. Horner, G. Schmink and R. M. McCargo.

This didn't look very encouraging for a settlement, and when Mr. Yagle made a motion to refer the choice of a candidate to the Central Board every member of the committee greeted the motion with satisfaction, so the Central Board will wrestle with the question next Tuesday evening.

Prof. Jackman, of the High School, some little time ago wrote to the Oregon Immigration Company at Portland for some samples of seeds and grain, for the delectation of his botany class. This week a handsome collection of the cereals of Oregon arrived. Among them are six different varieties of wheat in the head, two of rye, and specimens of black, blue and white barley. Then there are bottles containing hops, wheat and corn. In the collection are two mammoth potatoes, weighing 2 pounds and 1¾ pounds respectively. Prof. Jackman has had the whole exhibit placed in a deep-seated frame, and the Pittsburg youths at High School can now familiarize themselves with the products of Oregon.

There are two schools in the Twelfth ward, Allegheny. Up to the present time the two buildings have been in charge of one principal, Prof. T. S. McAnlis. The board have decided to have a principal for each building; but their pathway just now is pursued by many followers, for there are a number of applicants for this vacancy.

The Allegheny schools have a regular inspection day, when the Superintendent, Secretary and a number of directors visit the school and give a report of each room. It was inspection day at the Ninth ward school last Thursday. Superintendent Morrow, Secretary Scandrett, Directors Minnemeyer, John Richards and William Davis were present. A surprising sequence, to the visitors, was an elegant dinner which Prof. Arbuckle and his corps of teachers had prepared as an aftermath.

Educational Echoes.

PARENTS' DAY will be in vogue at the Soho school May 29.

A NEW case has just been placed in the Teachers' Library.

PROF. MESSINGER, of the Erie High School, was a visitor at the Central Board.

THE Liberty, North, Hiland and likely the Hazelwood schools will have but a half-day session from June 1.

THE O'Hara school will hold a picnic at Hulton's Grove, June 27; the Thad Stevens at Alliquippa on the same day.

THE Ninth ward school, Allegheny, will hold its annual reception next Thursday evening. The Superior Band will be in attendance.

MISS SARAH EVANS, teacher at Sheridan School, has been elected Principal at Ingram School. She will commence in her new place next Monday.

THE annual teachers' examination will begin next Saturday at the High School. All applicants must register at the Central Board rooms before next Thursday.

THERE is a deadlock in the Eleventh ward school, Allegheny, over the election of Miss Jennie Green. The vacancy was caused by the recent marriage of Miss Kennedy.

THE Oakland School Board decided at their last meeting to purchase two pianos, one each for the Bellfield and the Soho schools. Since Thursday two elegant upright pianos grace the halls of these schools.

THE National Teachers' Educational Association meets at Nashville, Tenn., July 16. There is every likelihood that a number of teachers will form an excursion party to that point, provided the river is high enough.

THE European party of teachers and their friends now number 22. The ones who first signified their intention of going yesterday received their tickets and the numbers of their berths. Any others wishing to join should do so the coming week, as the berths are nearly all secured.

Fine Wines.

Brandenburg Freres Claret and Sauterne wines, Henkil & Co.'s Rhenish and Moselle wines, C. Lautern & Sohn's Rhenish and Moselle wines, R. Bruninghaus' Burgundy wines. For sale by G. W. Schmidt, 95 and 97 Fifth ave.

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THE picturesque dresses of the children who took part in the May dance make photographs beautifully, and Dabbs is making some wonderfully attractive pictures of them.

EXTRACTING teeth, 25c.
DRS. MCCLAREN & WAUGAMAN,
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THE best 75c and $1 corsets, perfect fitting, at Rosenbaum & Co.'s.

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Incidental operatic selections. Novel instrumental solos. Parlor acrobatic entertainment. Medleys, Glees, Dances and startling mechanical effects.

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150 VOICES.
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Wedtesday, May 15—"ELIJAH."
Thursday, May 16—SYMPHONY CONCERT.

SOLOISTS—Mr. and Mrs. George Henschel, Dr. Carl Martin, Miss Adelaide Foresman and Mr. Paul Zimmerman.
Box sheet open THURSDAY, MAY 9, at Mellor & Hoene's, 77 Fifth avenue, 9 A. M.
Admission, $1. Reserved seats, $1 50.
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WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY 22,
Grand Miscellaneous Concert,
Introducing Madam Lilli Lehmann-Kalisch, Madam Terese Herbert-Foerster, Miss Helene von Doenhoff, Signor Jules Perotti, Mr. James T. Ricketson and Signor Guiseppe Campanari. The Great Orchestra and Chorus.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON,
GRAND WAGNER MATINEE,
Introducing Miss Emma Juch, Madam Terese Herbert-Foerster, Miss Helene von Doenhoff and Signor Guiseppe Campanari. Grand Orchestra and Chorus of Women.

THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 23,
Grand Miscellaneous Concert,
Introducing Miss Adele Aus der Ohe, Madam Terese Herbert-Foerster, Miss Helene von Doenhoff, Signor Jules Perotti, Herr Emil Fischer, Signor Guiseppe Campanari and Mr. James T. Ricketson. Grand Chorus and Orchestra.

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 24,
GRAND WAGNER NIGHT,
Introducing Mme. Lilli Lehmann-Kalisch, Miss Emma Juch, Signor Jules Perotti, Herr Paul Kalisch and Herr Emil Fischer. Chorus and Grand Orchestra.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON,
Grand Popular Matinee,
Introducing Madam Terese Herbert-Foerster, Miss Adele Aus der Ohe, Miss Helene von Doenhoff, Miss Agnes Vogel, Signor Jules Perotti, Signor Guiseppe Campanari, Mr. Victor Herbert and the Orchestra.

SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 25,
Grand Beethoven Night
And FINAL CONCERT, introducing Miss Emma Juch, Madam Lilli Lehmann-Kalisch, Miss Helene von Doenhoff, Herr Paul Kalisch, Herr Emil Fischer. The Grand Chorus and Orchestra.
Sale of Tickets for Single Concerts begins Monday next, May 13, 9 A.M., at Hamilton's.
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