

**THE PHYSICAL, MORAL, AND  
INTELLECTUAL CONSTITUTION OF  
THE DEAF AND DUMB: WITH SOME  
PRACTICAL AND GENERAL REMARKS  
CONCERNING THEIR EDUCATION**

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The Physical, Moral, and Intellectual Constitution of the Deaf and Dumb: With Some Practical and General Remarks Concerning Their Education by James Hawkins

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**JAMES HAWKINS**

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BY JAMES HAWKINS.

'..... causa latet vis est notissima .....' OVID.

'..... Though it be certain that there is nothing in this treatise, of the truth whereof I am not fully persuaded; yet I consider myself as liable to mistakes as I can think thee; and know that this book must stand or fall with thee, not of any opinion I have of it, but thy own. \* \* \* \* \* IT WAS NOT MEANT FOR THOSE THAT HAD ALREADY MASTERED THIS SUBJECT.'  
*Epicletus to the Reader, Locke's Essay.*

LONDON:  
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, ROBERTS, & GREEN.

1863.

~~150. c. 77.~~  
151. c. 306.

## PREFACE.

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THE Author's principal motive, in writing the following little Work, is, an endeavour to convey to those who feel any degree of interest in the Deaf and Dumb, some specific knowledge of them, in relation to their physical, moral, and intellectual constitution; and some idea of the various contrivances which have been designed to develope and strengthen their torpid understanding. In treating of the physical constitution of the Deaf and Dumb, especially where so much rests upon sheer conjecture, any assertions differing in complexion from existing admitted opinions, are likely to be accepted with considerable caution. But, as the Author has ventured those speculations only which will stand the test of reason and probability, he trusts that part of his Treatise may meet with open and unprejudiced attention.

The present crude state of all physiological, as well as pathological science, necessarily renders very conjectural any remarks upon the *origo mali*, or the physical phenomena of disease. The fall of Adam is one of the most favourite of the theories which are nursed by Divines and others, in an excess of Hutchinsonian zeal; and to this 'excellent foppery of the world,' as Shakspeare has it, they like to attribute

every bodily affliction and mental evil that can happen to mankind. Argumentative reasoning, however (of this kind especially), shows 'an indiscreet zeal about things wherein religion is not concerned,' as weak as it is undoubtedly fallacious, and affords them but a poor 'coigne of vantage;' for the majority of our inborn and acquired calamities are oftentimes none other than the 'surfeit of our own behaviour,' the spontaneous results of injury done to the functions of the body, by throwing its natural and complex organization out of gear, and not, as many would make us believe, *always* direct constitutional imprints of the Creator's anger on his creatures.

Neither is it safe always to attribute these occult phenomena to the freaks of nature, nor the eccentricities of disease; as possibly they are more frequently (to use an expression of Paley) the operations of causes without design, or the offspring of apparently adverse influences, the effects, as well as causes, of which could be controlled, or at least mitigated, by man.

Pathologically speaking, both the innate and acquired forms of deaf-dumbness are in most cases decidedly incurable; but, taken in a physiological aspect, they are much more under the influence of man than is generally imagined. As it will be found remarked in the course of the following pages, one of the essentially predisposing sources of *innate deafness* is now generally believed to be, the intermarriage of close or blood relationship; alliances of this nature being directly opposed to those strange organic laws which are ever secretly acting upon the whole animal creation. Yet the open avowal of this doctrine (true

as it undoubtedly is) is looked upon as ultra-Malthusian and almost heterodox. Appeal is made to the Scriptures, and the case of Zelophehad's daughters, who '*were married unto their father's brothers' sons*,' instanced to us as a precedent which God himself had sanctioned and established, in the Pentateuch, under the Mosaic laws.

One of the essential, though indirect sources of *acquired deafness* is, the prevalence of zymotic diseases. Now, sanitary measures and medical precautions control these kind of diseases; consequently, man, in checking their progress, is at the same time diminishing another distinct malady (permanent in its nature) radiating from them. This has been evidenced in the cleansing and improving of the filthy purlieu of large towns, and in the introduction of vaccination as a check upon the ravages of small-pox, a disease that, prior to Jenner's discovery, was a very frequent source of after-birth deafness.

The Author's remarks upon the moral and intellectual constitution of the Deaf and Dumb are not the cursory issue of mere theoretical speculation; but such as have been deduced *from several years' actual observation* and attentive research. Practical observation has been, in fact, throughout the guide and monitor of his thoughts, without the slightest influence of any particular bias. He has nowhere stooped to the warping of any established opinions, nor to the garbling or reticence of any capitulated facts, to accommodate individual or esoteric purposes. In addition to the practical sketch of the various vehicles employed to develop the understanding of the Deaf and Dumb through the external senses, the Author



has also incidentally glanced at two very prominent collateral questions, connected with deaf-mute education and the importance of efficient teaching power; but salient points (as these truly are) demand more individual attention than could well be devoted to them here.

Particles of science, Dr. Johnson says, are often widely scattered, and he who collects these is very laudably employed. Notwithstanding, therefore, that this humble production is not intended for those *professionally* associated with the subject—but to supply a want which has been long experienced by the parents and friends of Deaf and Dumb children—it will, at the same time, be found to contain stray hints and waifs of information which even teachers—

——— Di ! ceptis ———  
Aspirate meis, ———

might accept with profit to themselves and advantage to their pupils.

This work, produced *invitâ Minervâ*, aspires to no literary pretensions whatever, and the Author,

——— no cormorant for fame ———

in issuing it to public notice, has been solely induced to do so from the idea, that it will prove a modest and truthful reflex of that sequestered class of humanity, which an inscrutable fate would seem to have decreed—shall hear not: speak not.

JAMES HAWKINS.

LONDON:  
May 1863.

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