

VI.—TRAINING COLLEGES.

Although the teaching of deaf-mutes is clearly a speciality,¹ opinion on the advisability of colleges for the training of teachers is very divided.²

Great Britain has two, Germany but one, and Italy only one, but there is not one in France,³ Switzerland,⁴ Belgium,⁵ or the United States,⁶ and it is reported that the large majority of professors, at least in England, France, Switzerland, and the United States,⁷ do not sympathise with the establishment of normal schools for training deaf-mute teachers.⁸

The two training colleges in Great Britain are respectively at Fitzroy Square, London, Great Britain, founded in 1872, by Baroness Mayer de Rothschild—to whom the public introduction into England of the “pure oral” system is due—and superintended by Mr. William Van Praagh;⁹ and at Ealing, near London, established in 1877, by Mr. B. St. J. Ackers—who has been a most benevolent friend to the deaf¹⁰—and superintended by Mr. A. A. Kinsey,¹¹ of which college Dr. Buxton was the Secretary.¹² According to the return for the year 1885, there are at these institutions one male and 26 female students. A two years’ course is recommended; but the average length of stay at the respective colleges is 18 or 15 months.¹³

As supplementary, but expressly for the purpose of examination, not for training, there was established in London, in July, 1885, a College of Teachers of the Deaf and Dumb; the training colleges “to prepare the teacher for the work, the examining college to test the teacher and the work.”¹⁴

The course at the English colleges consists of one year’s study, and the finger alphabet, and all artificial signs are rigidly excluded;¹⁵ for it is urged that the “combined system” must be an utter failure.¹⁶ By the courtesy of Mr. Van Praagh I was present at one of his lectures to students on the proper method of imparting instruction,¹⁷ and also visited the classes of deaf-mute pupils in the institution; and the ingenuity of the “pure oral” system, and the apparently intense anxiety of the deaf-mute pupils to learn, greatly impressed me. Whether the method be applicable to all the deaf, whether its use is practicable in everyday life afterwards for all purposes, and whether all pupils are sufficiently quick witted to be able to utilise their knowledge after leaving school, I had, of course, no practical means there of testing. But I saw and heard sufficient at this and the London Board schools, to which I will refer presently, to convince me that the boon for those who can acquire the system thoroughly is invaluable; and that it is of vital importance that a teacher do not articulate with such exaggerated facial expression as to render intercourse with others strange.

The Royal Collège at Milan is the recognized one for Italy.¹⁸ There young teachers in Italy, an “*école de méthode*” are trained for one year; and if successful at the ensuing examination, a special certificate is granted for the teaching of deaf-mutes. They usually belong to normal hearing schools, and are sent to the Milan college at the expense of the State;¹⁹ and between 1865 and 1879 the college issued diplomas to 96 students, of whom 53 devoted themselves to teaching deaf-mutes. It was in view of the above circumstance that the professor (Fornari) at the head of the institution said at the Milan Congress: “*Voilà donc l’Italie à la tête de l’enseignement des sourds-muets, du moins pour ce qui regarde les écoles normales.*”²⁰

In Germany there is only the Royal school at Berlin;²¹ nevertheless it is reported that Germany, there are to be found a good number of excellent professors who have not been trained in a

¹ See T. C. for full discussion, pp. 93–114, and espec. 129, 133, and 140. But note a medium course recommended—

(a) Official Report of N. Y. Convention, 1884 (hereafter termed N.Y.O.R.), pp. 17–23; and

(b) A.A., Oct., 1884, p. 255.

² Note (a) T.C., p. 116;

(b) O.R., pp. 44 and 48;

(c) Paper as above of 30th May, 1882;

(d) O.R., pp. 9 and 31.

³ See also T.C., pp. 124 and 259.

⁴ T.C., p. 124.

⁵ T.C., pp. 124, 129, and 135.

⁶ This is also the case in Holland, Austria, and Spain. See T.C., pp. 124 and 259.

⁷ But see—

(a) A.A., Oct., 1884, p. 255; and

(b) Paper by Mr. Kinsey in “For their Sakes,” p. 157.

⁸ See also T.C., pp. 116 and 259, and note the Low Countries also.

⁹ See (a) Report for 1883, p. 16;

(b) O.C., p. 44; and

(c) D.R., p. 32.

¹⁰ See (a) Dr. B.’s paper as above, pp. 192 and 193; and

(b) Paper by Mr. Ackers in “For their Sakes.”

¹¹ O.C., pp. 43 and 44; pamphlet by Miss Hull, 1884.

¹² Note presentation to him on giving up Secretaryship, Q.R., April, 1886, p. 54.

¹³ For fuller details see Table for 1885, above referred to.

¹⁴ See Q.R., Jan., 1886, pp. 8–17.

¹⁵ O.C., p. 44.

¹⁶ See, for instance, Conference paper as above of 10 Jan., 1878, &c.

¹⁷ See “Lessons for the Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Children in Lip-reading and Writing,” by Mr. Van Praagh, p. 1; C.R., p. 196.

¹⁸ See also—

(a) T.C., pp. 127 and 291; and

(b) Last Rep.

¹⁹ See also T.C., p. 28.

²⁰ T.C., p. 123.

²¹ T.C., p. 116.