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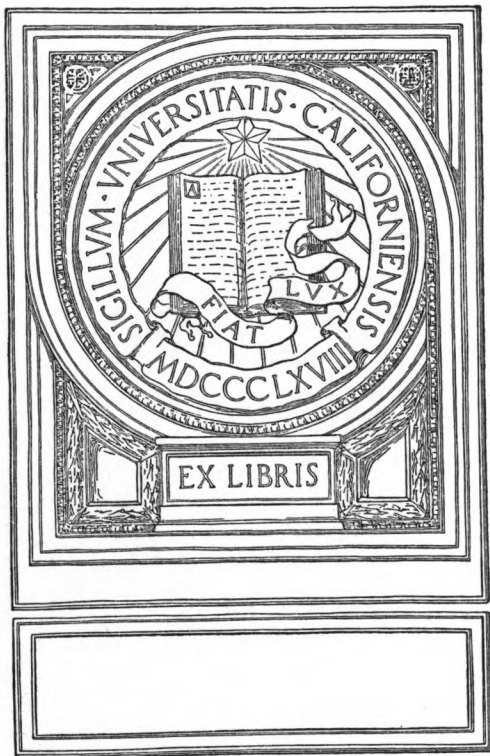
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**AN ACCOUNT**

OF THE

**NEW-YORK INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND;**

TOGETHER WITH A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE

ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND PRESENT CONDITION,

OF THE

INSTITUTIONS FOR THE BLIND IN THIS AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

OF SOME OF THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS BLIND.

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PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE MANAGERS.

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1833.



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THE NEW-YORK INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND  
FOR THE YEAR 1833.

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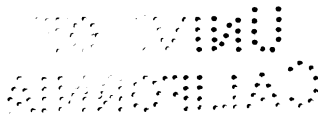
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A SKETCH  
OF  
INSTITUTIONS FOR THE BLIND.

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It is the duty of those who devise or present new plans for the exercise of benevolence, to show, to the satisfaction of the public, their practicability and value. This is the object of the following remarks: and should the writer succeed in arousing the public mind to a full consideration of the facts exhibited, and in exciting an interest in any degree proportionate to the importance of the subject, his object will have been amply attained.

To those who are not familiar with the matter in its details and extensive bearings, an *establishment for the education of the blind* may appear a work of supererogation. Such is the wise and benevolent character of our institutions, that the blind, in this country at least, are rarely obtruded upon the public gaze—their number therefore has hitherto been supposed too limited to require from the community any distinct action in their behalf, and the most enlightened charity has, in general, extended its views no farther than to a relief of their physical necessities. But when it is ascertained, as it has been, on examination, that their aggregate number is surprisingly great, scarcely a town, village or hamlet being without one or more of this unfortunate class; and when it is further ascertained, as in fact it has been, that they have capacities for improvement which richly repay all efforts for their cultivation, enabling them not only to gain an honorable subsistence for themselves, but to become the means of instruction to others, being changed by

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the process of education from a burden into ornaments of society; no doubt can exist that the generous sympathies of a virtuous community will rush to their rescue from the thralldom of perpetual night, and open up in their minds the fountains of moral and intellectual light. On the score of humanity, they possess *at least* equal claims upon the opulent and charitable with the deaf mutes; and, at a trifling expense for education, can be made as valuable citizens.

The census of the United States for 1830 presents the aggregate number of 701 blind for the state of New-York alone, and of 5385 for all the states. Unprepared as we were for such a result, it is yet believed to fall far short of the actual number. In a late address from the trustees of the New England Asylum for the Blind, it is stated to have been ascertained by actual enumeration, that in Middle Europe there is one blind person to every 800 inhabitants; in some Austrian provinces one to every 845; in Zurich one to 747. Farther north, between the 50th and 70th degrees of latitude, they bear a smaller proportion. In Denmark is found one to 1000. In Prussia one to 900. Egypt is the country most afflicted with this evil; and it may be safely calculated that of every 3000 inhabitants, ten are deprived of sight. Allowing the same laws of nature to operate, without any countervailing influence, here, which prevail in countries under similar latitudes in Europe, the number of the blind in the United States would, on the most favourable calculation, amount to 13,000. This happily is not the fact. Many causes combine to render this calamity more rare among us. Still the number is lamentably great, and we have no fears of being without the truth in fixing it at 7000, or about one to 2000 inhabitants. This statement we think will be sustained by a reference to the census of 1830. Although the census returns but forty-six blind for this city, yet on the first of October 1831, there were fifty in our Alms House, and twenty-six others (probably not half the actual number) are known to us to be residents in the city. If similar inaccuracies have occurred generally; (and in the country we have reason to believe they have been even more

frequent and extensive) we shall be constrained to the painful conclusion, that the preceding is a low estimate.

The capacity of the blind for attaining an intellectual and mechanical education is scarcely inferior to that of those endowed with sight. With the exception of painting and anatomy, there is no path in science, literature, or the arts, but has been successfully trod by them. It would be easy to present a long catalogue of illustrious blind, who have distinguished themselves in various professions and occupations; to some of whom a more particular reference will be found in the ensuing pages.

Europe and the civilized world are indebted to a heathen country for the origin of Institutions for the Blind. The first establishment of this nature, of which we have any account, was in Japan. In this country, says the Father Charlevoix, "academies are established at the public charge, degrees are conferred, and the blind are taught, not only to cultivate their memories, but to frame into verse that which they have learned, and to adorn, with all the beauties of poetry and music, the finest points of history. To them the charge is confided of preserving the records of the most important events. The annals of the empire, the history of great men, ancient titles of families, &c., are not more enduring and faithful monuments than the memory of these blind students. They communicate their knowledge to each other, and, by a sort of tradition, the correctness of which is never disputed, hand it down to posterity. They have their general and subordinate officers, enjoy a very high consideration, and are perhaps the only individuals among this people whose lives are devoted to literature." The method of instruction in this institution was entirely oral; and it was not until 1774 that Valentine Haüy, a Frenchman, and brother to the celebrated abbe Haüy, first conceived the project of teaching the blind to read. As this forms an important epoch in the history of their instruction, it may be proper briefly to relate the circumstances which gave it birth. In an evening walk, M. Haüy's attention was attracted by the sound of music proceeding from one of those houses of refreshment so common in Europe along the public promenades. Approach-

ing the spot, he discovered eight or ten blind persons, "*spectacles au nez*," seated behind a long desk, which was covered with music books, executing in concert various airs on different instruments, much to the amusement of the bystanders. The parade of music books was of course a mere farce ; but the active and benevolent mind of a Haüy converted this otherwise ridiculous circumstance into an event the most important in its results. The blind, thought he, readily distinguish objects by the diversity of their forms ; why then may they not distinguish fa from sol, or an A from an F, if these characters should be rendered palpable ? To this random thought are the European blind indebted for their ability to read, and consequent improvement. Following out the idea which chance had thus suggested, M. Haüy in a short time prepared and submitted to the Royal Academy of Sciences, a memoir, in which he proposed and explained a new plan which he conceived might be successfully employed in the instruction of the blind. This memoir was well received ; and in consequence an asylum was opened. The blind mendicants in the public streets, a prey to ignorance and vice, were by the exertions of the benevolent, collected and entered as members of this institution. As was well remarked by M. Rodenbach, an illustrious pupil of this establishment, and subsequently a deputy from one of the Belgian departments to their Congress, the moment was particularly auspicious for the erection of such a charity. At that period philanthropy had become a sort of *fashion* which, wonderfully enough, every body followed ; some from the pure impulses of humanity, others from the vain desire of popularity. Abundant subscriptions flowed in from every quarter ; and by the magic influence of *la mode*, the misfortune of the blind, plans for their relief, their capacities and their character, became the topic of every conversation, the rallying-point of philanthropic exertions. M. Haüy, with the devoted enthusiasm of a Howard, sacrificed his entire fortune in their behalf : in fact, the whole life of this distinguished individual was but one continued action of benevolence. It is to him alone that the European blind are indebted for the privilege of being able, by the assistance of art, to convert a calamity of nature into bles-

sings to society. The method of instruction invented and adopted by M. Haüy has undergone but few alterations since his day ; and though his system is undoubtedly susceptible of large improvements, it is yet a matter of astonishment, as well as of gratitude to heaven, that so much has actually been accomplished.

This system embraced both intellectual and mechanical instruction. Much of the intellectual instruction was oral. He however soon succeeded, by means of raised letters, in teaching his pupils to read with tolerable facility ; and by means of maps, on which the boundaries, rivers, &c. were delineated by small chords or wires, and cities and towns denoted by points, he was able to give them a general idea of geography. But the particular branches of science, literature, and the arts, in which the blind have made the greatest proficiency, are the mathematics, languages, music and mechanics. Professor Saunderson and Paigeon are distinguished examples of mathematical acumen, as they were also highly successful lecturers, once occupying chairs in the first universities in Europe. Singular as it may appear, the foundations of Professor Saunderson's lectures were Newton's Principia, Optics and Universal Arithmetic, which certainly offered him a noble but most unpromising field for the display of his genius. His lecture room, however, was always thronged—many no doubt impelled by motives of curiosity, and others prompted by a desire of instruction, crowded to hear a blind man lecture upon optics, discourse on the nature of light and colors, explain the theory of vision, the phenomena of the rainbow, and other objects of sight.

The blind are found generally to possess astonishing faculties of combination ; and after a little exercise of these faculties, they carry on in their minds the processes of arithmetical and mathematical calculation to an amazing extent, and with equal rapidity and accuracy. Professor Saunderson, however, in order to facilitate lengthy operations, and remove liability to error, invented a ciphering board, by means of which he was enabled to perform the most complex operations. This may

be considered as the first step towards a palpable method of instruction. This board was constructed by means of right lines running longitudinally and transversely, and intersecting each other. At each intersection the board was perforated so as to admit a small pin. The lines including four spaces were sufficient to express the nine digits. For this purpose, however, two pins were necessary, one having a small and the other a large head. The four spaces empty, represented cipher; the small headed pin in the centre, one; the large headed pin in the centre, and the small headed pin at the intersection directly above it, two; the small headed pin being moved to the next intersection on the right, three; the small headed pin removed to the intersection below on the right, opposite, and in a line with the large headed pin, represented four; and so on following the intersections round to the top. The professor used the same board to represent mathematical figures; and considering the pins as points, he rendered the lines and angles palpable by stretching chords from one pin to another. This method of Saunderson's was much improved by M. Haüy; and the blind are now enabled to solve the most intricate mathematical problems with perfect correctness.

The institution at Paris having been commenced by the individual exertions of Haüy, under the immediate patronage of the *Societè Philanthropique*, soon became an object of the highest public interest, and, in a degree, attracted the attention of all Europe. In 1784 an exhibition of the pupils took place at Versailles, in the presence of the Royal Family. Specimens of their work were presented to the delight of the spectators. To convince incredulity itself, the children were required to perform various mechanical operations on the stage, and to afford ocular demonstration of their capacity to receive instruction. They displayed their skill in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, music, &c. In 1791 by a decree of Louis XVI. this institution was taken under the royal patronage, and has ever since been supported at the expense of the state. The number of pupils was fixed at ninety, sixty of whom are boys and thirty girls. The appropriation for their



support amounts to sixty thousand francs, or 11250 dollars annually. Besides the pupils supported by the government, an unlimited number of pay pupils may be admitted. Under this liberal provision the institution has continued to the present moment; and the long roll of eminent individuals who have emanated from this establishment, is the brightest commentary on the wisdom and humanity of its founders, and the ablest vindication of its immense practical utility. Subsequently, in different parts of Europe, similar institutions have been created, and are now in successful movement.

In Germany these public charities exist to the number of five. They are differently conducted, both as to the course of studies and the principles of management, and with various degrees of success. That at Dresden is under the management of an excellent female superintendent; but little attention, however, is paid to the intellectual education of the pupils. That at Berlin is ably conducted by Professor Zeune, who has adopted music as an essential branch in the system of instruction. This study should always be cultivated by the blind, because of their peculiar aptitude for it. The susceptibility of the ear, and the powers of the voice, seem augmented by the deprivation of sight, though it is physiologically certain that this apparent improvement of the auditory and vocal organs is owing merely to increased exercise: a strong argument in favour of a constant and vigorous application of our faculties. We have no sense or organ but is quickened and strengthened by a judicious exercise; and this exercise goes on with accumulating energy. By the cultivation of music the blind are furnished with means, always at command, not only of innocent and beneficial recreation, but also of a pleasant and respectable livelihood. Having acquired the science and the art of music, they can impart their knowledge and skill to others. They are in general remarkable for facility both in the acquisition and communication of ideas. Music therefore should always be deemed an indispensable branch of instruction in every institution for the blind. Haüy was principally instrumental by his counsels in the establishment of the school at Berlin, and was the direct founder, at the request and under

the auspices of the Russian Emperor, of that at St. Petersburg. While the latter, however, under imperial patronage, has fallen into decay, the former, sustained chiefly by the munificence of the opulent and the hearty zeal of the middle classes, is flourishing with vigor. This school teaches not merely the first elements of education, but geography, history, languages, the mathematics, and various trades, so that the students are qualified in almost every way for usefulness to themselves and society. Professor Zuene uses types made with pins for printing, and is industriously increasing his library.

The blind schools at Vienna and Zurich are also in a flourishing state, and hold a high rank. That at London is extensive, though designed merely for the indigent. The superintendent doubts the utility of an intellectual education for his pupils, and of course directs their attention to the learning of trades. "It is indeed (says an eye witness) a delightful sight to see so many blind youths assembled in their workshops, all neatly clad, and with smiling faces, busily employed at their different tasks, learning their trades, and earning the means of livelihood by their own labor. Instead of the solitary helpless beings we so often see, we are here presented with the spectacle of an active, industrious and happy youth, who, finding constant occupation in the exercise of his physical powers, and being buoyed up by the hope of rendering himself independent of charity, has no time and no inclination for repining at his lot, or for drawing unpleasant comparisons between himself and those about him."

The school at Edinburgh is perhaps the best in Europe, as it more nearly attains one of the grand objects of these institutions, viz. enabling the pupils to support themselves in after life by their own exertions. This school owes its origin mainly to the persevering and unremitting exertions of Mr. David Miller, an eminent teacher in that city, and who was himself a striking illustration of what may be attained by a person born blind, through the influence of early culture and mental energy. By his exertions a society for the relief of the indigent blind was formed in December 1792. This society, the ensuing September opened an asylum, and nine persons were imme-

diately received. Mr. Miller during many years was an active and efficient member of this society, and greatly contributed to the success of the asylum by maturing and effectuating plans for its improvement. It contained, in 1825, seventy-five males and twenty-five females, engaged in various manual and manufacturing operations ; the males in making mattresses and cushions of hair, wool and straw, baskets and mats of all kinds, hair gloves for rheumatisms, nets of all sorts, cords and twine, and linen and cotton cloths. The females are engaged in white seam of various kinds, in net work, in spinning and knitting stockings, of which articles there is always on hand an assortment for sale at the asylum. The mats and mattresses, which are entirely the work of the blind, are described as a much better article, and as commanding a higher price than any others in the market. In basket making, also, the pupils display much ingenuity, and finish many very fine and difficult pieces of work, with a perfection truly astonishing. After leaving the asylum, the knowledge they have acquired there serves them as a stock in trade, on which they set up business for themselves, and earn a comfortable subsistence for their families. From its commencement this school has been supported by voluntary contributions, together with the profits arising from the sales of manufactured articles, and now affords the means of support to more than one hundred and twenty persons, including several old female pensioners. Pupils are admitted at the age of eight years. They are taught reading and writing after a method invented by two of their own number ; and so easy and successful is the plan that they can correspond with each other with almost as much facility as persons usually do by the common mode of writing. Grammar, history and geography are also taught by competent masters ; globes and maps have been constructed for their use, and they have regular classes for vocal and instrumental music.

A Blind school has recently been established at Glasgow ; but the advantages that it affords for acquiring an intellectual education are as yet inferior to those possessed at Edinburgh. The Liverpool school is distinguished for the great attention paid to the musical department ; the best evidence of which

may be found in the fact, that the receipts for concerts, in the course of a year, amount to about 3500 dollars. A school was formed in Dublin in 1809, but its sphere of usefulness has been limited by the want of funds. There are three or four other schools in Europe, but as they differ in no important particulars from those already noticed, further description of them is unnecessary.

It was not until 1829, that the public attention, on this side the Atlantic, was first directed to the education of the Blind, by a few benevolent individuals at Boston. Among these was Richard D. Tucker, Esq. ; who, having a blind daughter, felt and exercised a peculiar and most beneficent zeal in the cause. The same year, an act of incorporation was obtained, under the title of the "New-England Asylum for the Blind;" and funds were raised to the amount of about 12,000 dollars. \*Although incorporated so long since, it did not go into actual operation until about the month of August of last year. It has since, however, progressed with rapid success. It is under the direction of Dr. Howe. An accomplished Frenchman, by the name of Trencheri, who has been blind from very early age, conducts the intellectual department, and an ingenious blind pupil from the Edinburgh school, the mechanical department. This school, opened with only seven pupils, taken at random from various parts of the States, and varying in age from six to twenty years; and though they have been under instruction only a few months, they can now read correctly books printed for their use, and have made considerable progress in arithmetic, geography, music, and manual arts. "Some of the pupils can already fabricate moccasins and mats, which are as strong, durable, and handsome as those usually sold in the shops."

The New-York Institution for the blind, though its incorporation was subsequent to that of the New-England Asylum, went into earlier operation. It owes its origin more immediately to Dr. Samuel Akerly and Samuel Wood—the former so

\* The Legislature of Massachusetts, during its present session, has taken this establishment under its particular patronage, and with an enlightened liberality granted an annual appropriation from the public chest of \$6,000.

favourably known by his philanthropic exertions in behalf of the deaf mutes, and the latter a most worthy member of the society of friends. Through their influence a petition was prepared and presented to the Legislature in 1831, signed by many of our most respectable citizens;—and in April, of the same year, a society was incorporated by the title of the *New-York Institution for the Blind*. In the course of the succeeding summer, the attention of Dr. John D. Russ having been directed to the ophthalmia, then prevalent in the alms house of this city, he conceived a similar design, and was taking measures to carry it into effect, when he was made acquainted with what had already been done; and was invited by the President of the Institution to co-operate with the managers. He readily accepted the invitation, and was elected a member of the Board. The managers held their first meeting in the ensuing December, at which time the President communicated to the Board the measures he had adopted, to promote the objects of the incorporation, and informed them that he had written to Mr. Gall, the Principal of the Edinburgh school, for the necessary information, books, and apparatus. No step had yet been taken for the purpose of raising funds. A committee was therefore appointed at this meeting, for the purpose of preparing subscription books, and employing an agent to solicit contributions. The result of this movement, however, was but little satisfactory, and at a subsequent meeting in February, the managers still found the Institution without means. It was then suggested, as the most likely method of exciting an interest in the objects of the association, that the managers should procure and cause to be instructed, two or three blind children, with a view to their exhibition as soon as they should have made the requisite proficiency. Unfortunately, at this moment, no person could be obtained who was acquainted with the method of instruction; and the managers would have been obliged to relinquish their design of an immediate commencement, had they not been relieved from their embarrassment by the voluntary offer of Dr. Russ, who, though unacquainted with the method in detail, had obtained some general ideas upon the subject, and was willing to devote himself to

that object. The subsequent operations of the society, and the success of their experiment, are developed in the following report, submitted to the Board on the 31st of December, 1832: \*

The Committee appointed, agreeably to a resolution of the Board, dated February 18th, 1832, with powers for the purpose of making arrangements for providing for and instructing two or three blind children by way of experiment, to be taken from the Alms House, and also to make arrangements for a public exhibition, respectfully report—

That, in compliance with said resolution, the Committee made an early application to the Commissioners of the Alms House, from whom, on the 15th of March last, they obtained three boys;—that these boys were placed under the direction of Dr. Russ, who kindly volunteered his services, for the purpose of preparing them for a public exhibition;—that on the 19th of May last, three other children were added to their number, and a school opened at 47 Mercer-street; and that on the 13th inst., they were publicly examined at the City Hotel;—that the children have been instructed in all the ordinary branches of a common school education;—that their progress has been highly gratifying, and the success of the experiment thus far complete;—that, besides intellectual instruction, they have also been taught various mechanical employments, such as plaiting straw, covering bottles, making baskets, and weaving carpeting, specimens of all which (in the opinion of the committee highly commendatory,) are herewith presented; that although the Institution, from its commencement, has been labouring under very serious embarrassments from the want of the necessary funds, and, during the summer, from the then prevailing epidemic, which deprived the Institution of one of its most interesting and promising pupils, and for a period almost entirely suspended its operations, it affords the committee the highest satisfaction to state, as their deliberate opinion, that the two eldest boys (about 12 years of age) will be enabled, from

\* An effort, we believe, is now making, to establish a similar charity in Philadelphia, and an intelligent German, by the name of Friedlander, formerly a teacher in one of the European Blind schools, has been engaged as Superintendent.

the instruction they have already received, and are now receiving, in a very short period wholly to support themselves by their own industry;—that the pupils thus far have exhibited more than ordinary attention to their pursuits; and that the manual occupations introduced, so far from being considered by them as irksome tasks, are eagerly pursued as an agreeable pastime;—that education has already begun to shed its animating influence upon their countenances; and that, in the speaking intelligence of their present appearance, it is difficult to recognize the dull and inanimate objects that entered the Institution seven months since.

Although the primary objects of this charity undoubtedly are, to meliorate the condition of the blind, without any distinct reference to rendering them adjuvant to their own support, it is nevertheless believed, that the best means for effecting this laudable purpose, is to introduce among them such occupations as shall afford the surest prospect of reward. Perhaps nothing is more chilling and degrading to the better feelings of our nature, than the consciousness of our own utter uselessness. It is this knowledge, forcing itself upon the blind with the bitter reality of truth, that tends more than every deprivation to render them unhappy. The committee therefore would recommend, that as the school increases in numbers, different mechanical employments should be introduced, and varied to meet the wishes, tastes and capacities of the pupils. Attempts have been already made to extend the operations of the Institution to the making of mats, moccasins, mattresses, &c. but fears of monopoly have frustrated our plans, by preventing us from obtaining competent Instructors. To obviate the recurrence of similar difficulties, we would respectfully suggest, that immediate measures be taken to procure a blind mechanic from Europe, who shall be competent to instruct in the various occupations usually pursued in Institutions of this character. Such persons, the committee are advised, may be obtained; and the plan seems to be recommended, by a view to both economy and ultimate success. The experience of more than forty years must have suggested many ingenious methods as substitutes for sight, in the performance of various mechanical



operations ; and it will certainly be sound policy in this Institution, to avail itself, at the earliest moment, of all such improvements. If a similar course is not adopted, the future operations of the Institution must be a continued series of experiments, expensive in their nature and perhaps disastrous in their consequences.

Your Committee further report, that the expenses of the Institution, from its commencement up to the present moment, amount to \$396 75 ; that the receipts during the same period amount to \$579, all of which, with the exception of a few dollars, accruing from the sale of manufactured articles, has been obtained from voluntary contribution and subscription :—leaving in the Treasury, on the first of January, 1833, a balance of only \$182 75 ; whilst the expenditures absolutely necessary for continuing the Institution in efficient operation with additional pupils, during the ensuing year, are estimated at about \$4,000. The immediate demands of the Institution must unquestionably continue for a time to be supplied by voluntary contributions ; but a charity of this extended nature has a claim upon the fostering care of our Corporation and State Legislature, and the Congress of the United States. Whilst then, an appeal is made to the individual benevolence of our citizens, to supply its present necessities, petitions for aid of a more permanent character should be addressed to each of those bodies.

The limited means at the disposal of the Board have prevented us from extending the benevolent intentions of this charity to new objects ; and, although frequent applications for admission are received, the number of our pupils has not been increased.

In conclusion, your committee take the liberty to recommend to the special attention of the Board, several improvements in the method of instruction which have been proposed by the superintendant, and which to the Committee appear to be of the highest importance. So far as they have had an opportunity of informing themselves, much of the apparatus used in the European schools is either exceedingly complicated, or but imperfectly adapted to the purposes for which it is design-

ed. These defects it is proposed to remedy by certain improvements, simple in their character, and which may be easily introduced as soon as the requisite appropriations shall be made for that purpose. These improvements do not present themselves in the dubious light of experiments; the superintendent having already, on a limited scale, tested their practical utility. The first and most important among them, is a new and improved plan for the construction of maps, the general principles of which are beautifully illustrated in the specimen herewith presented. Even if these maps possessed no other superiority over those in common use, than that of being less expensive, that alone would entitle them to a very high consideration;—but the cheapness of the article seems to be only a secondary recommendation. The maps heretofore constructed for the Blind, are useful only in conveying to the mind of the pupil a more accurate idea of the relative position and size of different countries, the courses of rivers, and the sites of a few towns and cities; nor can even this general idea be obtained, but through the aid of an assistant. One of the most striking characteristics of the improvement is, its complete adaptation to the purposes of a self-instructor. The boundaries are all distinctly marked, the courses of rivers traced, the sites of towns and cities indicated, and their names and population, in round numbers, given; and the whole is rendered as intelligible to the sense of touch, as maps particularly addressed to the eye are to the sense of sight. These maps are stamped with an engraved or stereotype plate, in the same manner as books for the blind; and one hundred of them may probably be afforded for a less price than five constructed in the ordinary way. A second improvement, which is now in successful operation, is a simple and more expeditious mode of ciphering; and the Committee recommend that the superintendent be empowered to have types cast according to his own plan, for the purpose of more completely carrying his designs into effect. At present the pupils are obliged to use wooden type, which are clumsy, and not so readily distinguished as they would be if made of metal.

A third improvement proposes a substitute for the complica-

ted apparatus hitherto in use, for guiding the hand in writing. It is perfectly simple, and to appearance admirably adapted to the purpose intended. Besides these, another improvement has been recommended; but, although in a state of forwardness, is not yet sufficiently complete for the Committee to speak of it with entire confidence. It proposes certain changes in the ordinary method of printing books for the use of the blind, which will reduce them to less than half their present size. This plan appears ingenious; and, if practicable, must be of the highest importance.

Respectfully submitted,

SAMUEL AKERLY, M. D., *President.*

C. BOLTON, *Treasurer.*

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*Description of the method pursued, and the apparatus used, in the  
Instruction of the Blind.*

Helvetius, or some other philosopher, was so forcibly struck with the superiority which the hand affords to man, that he was inclined to define the human race as animals with two hands, believing that their pre-eminence over the brute creation is mainly attributable to this circumstance. Although we may not feel disposed to adopt the definition, yet in observing the perfection of touch in an educated blind person, we cannot but admire that matchless wisdom which has provided us with instruments so admirably adapted to supply our physical wants, and even to act with great certainty and success as substitutes either for sight or speech.

With the blind particularly, the hands perform the most important offices. Their eyes are as it were transferred to the tips of their fingers, and the principle on which their education must be conducted, is to adapt the apparatus used in their instruction to this new kind of sight. For this purpose, a method of embossing has been introduced and substituted for the usual

method of printing, so that the letters, standing out in relief, become perfectly intelligible to the touch. The characters proposed by M. Haüy, and still in use in most European schools, are very similar to our common italics. In Edinburgh, an attempt has been made to present the blind with an alphabet which should be more tangible, and with this view, angular letters have been proposed and adopted. As this is the invention of a blind man, it might naturally be supposed to possess decided advantages over the alphabet in more common use; experiment however does not justify the inference. The only advantage it seems to afford, is a trifling power of condensation, allowing more matter to be presented upon a page. As books for the blind are now printed, their unwieldy size and exorbitant price, will always be an impediment to their increase. Hitherto they have been confined to some elegant extracts; a few choice selections from history and two or three of the gospels. This catalogue will not probably be ever materially augmented unless a plan should be devised for printing in a more condensed form. This subject has particularly engaged the attention of the superintendent of this (N. Y.) Institution, and though his plans are not yet completely matured, we have obtained permission to insert a general outline of the improvements proposed. Before entering into a particular explanation, it may be proper to premise that the grand object of books is to present ideas to the mind, and that the best method of writing them is that in which these ideas shall be the most intelligibly expressed. Books are composed of words or symbolical expressions for words, and words among almost all civilized nations are made up of certain elements called letters. These characters, which in English are twenty-six, either singly or combined by their different disposition, are made to represent all our words. But letters, though intended to facilitate the acquisition of a written language, are not absolutely necessary to it. The Chinese, though a written language, is destitute of letters. The sounds of words are represented by arbitrary signs. In our own language, notwithstanding we have letters, a great many written words are in fact merely arbitrary signs for sounds. Of this character are,

*though, bought, taught, rough, plough*, pronounced *tho, baut, taut, ruf, plou*; the first of which, *though*, although consisting of six letters, has but two pure elementary sounds, only one of which is directly represented in the written word. The second, *bought*, has six letters likewise, and three elements, two only of which are represented.\* Nor is this remark limited to the above words or those of a similar class. This anomaly is astonishingly frequent, and may be repeatedly found in almost every sentence in the English language. We pity the Chinese youth who, before he can aspire to the dignity of mandarin, must be master of twenty thousand characters; but his task is not more difficult than that which every person who acquires a good knowledge of our own language has to perform. He possesses, besides, this advantage over us, that his knowledge is certain; his characters are invariable. Our letters are always varying, and their sounds uncertain. To place this subject in a fair light, let us suppose a person merely to have seen the word *pharmacy* written, and that he wishes to pronounce it. The letters *ph*, may be pronounced separately, or together; together they have the sound of *v*, as in *Stephen*, or of *f*, as in *sphere*; separated from the *h*, *p* has two sounds, as in *play* and *cupboard*—thus we have *pharmacy*, *varmacy*, *parmacy*, *barmacy*, four varieties—next *a* has eight sounds, as in *name, hall, hat, what, said, recital, tillage, father, quay*, and each of the four sounds takes eight new varieties; the first, *phaer-macy, phawr-macy, phar-macy, phor-macy, pher-macy, phur-macy, phir-macy, pheer-macy*—the second, *vaer-macy, vawr-macy, &c.* eight varieties; and, in like manner, the third and fourth, making thirty-two different ways of pronouncing the three first letters; next, *r* has two sounds, as in *ripe, far*, and each of the aforesaid words admits of two variations, which make sixty-four; then *m* has two sounds, as in *man, accompt*, and each of the aforesaid sixty-four words admits of two variations more, making 128; *a* has eight sounds as before stated, and each of the aforesaid 128

\* The word *quay* has four letters and two elements, neither of which is represented in the written word—usually pronounced *ke*.

words admits of eight new variations, making 1024; *c* has five sounds, as in *suffice*, *cider*, *ocean*, *cat*, *such*, and each of the aforesaid 1024 words admits of five variations more, which make 5120; finally, *y* has three sounds, as in *yearn*, *tyrant*, *liberty*, and each of the 5120 words admits of three more variations, making 15,360. When therefore each of the letters which compose this word and all their several sounds have been learned, and the pupil attempts to apply his knowledge to the pronunciation of the word, he is liable to pronounce it wrong in more than 15,000 different ways. Another difficulty to be encountered in learning the English language, is the frequent use of different letters to express the same sound. Every vowel in the alphabet has the sound of short *i* and short *u*, and we have besides various combinations of letters to express the same sound. Let us suppose a person has heard the word *fatal* pronounced, and wishes to write it—there are five different ways of writing the first sound, as in *field*, *sapphire*, *half*, *seraph*, *laugh*,—the next sound, long *a*, may be written seven different ways, as in *day*, *trey*, *neigh*, *great*, *traitor*, *staple*, *feint*, making thirty-five varieties—the fourth letter, *a*, has the sound of short *u*, which may be written twenty-one different ways, as in *Messieurs*, *nut*, *cheerful*, *myrrh*, *sturgeon*, *word*, *heard*, *prodigious*, *vital*, *Britain*, *third*, *gorgeous*, *Isaac*, *blood*, *enough*, *cupboard*, *does*, *region*, *answer*, *shepherd*, *guerdon*. Multiply the aforesaid 35 by 21, and we have 735. The next sound may be written in three ways, as in *all*, *able*, *let*. Multiply 735 by 3, and we have 2105. Thus we have 2105 ways of representing the five simple sounds in the word *fatal*, all of which are established by authorized usage. How much then in fact is our language superior to the Chinese? If Cadmus did the world any service by the introduction of letters into Greece, it was by substituting for hieroglyphics expressions for elementary sounds; but the wisdom of modern days has set the philosophy of Cadmus at defiance; and most written languages, instead of following up and perfecting the philosophical principles of the great inventor of letters, are, like our own, a mere jumble of arbitrary signs and elementary sounds, most admirably adapted to embarrass the progress of the learner. To

bring back our written language to its philosophical purity, would be one of the most glorious achievements of any age. Habit and prejudice, however, combine to perpetuate its anomalies, and our children, like ourselves, must be content to grope through the mazes of orthography with no other guide than the *ignes fatui* of error. But the blind are placed in a different relation to society; books must be printed expressly for their use. They have no prejudices of education to overcome. They have no libraries to reform; and it matters not whether others can read their books or not, so long as *they* can perfectly understand them.

It would seem then, that if there are any advantages attending a different mode of writing our language, we should be justified in introducing it in their case. This brings us to the plan proposed by the superintendant, which, though particularly designed to condense the language, is based on philosophical principles. It must be obvious to every one, that if we can exactly represent the sound of any word in the English language, by a less number of characters than is at present used, we shall condense the language. This may be done to a limited extent, with our present alphabet; thus we can exactly represent the sounds in the word *beaux* by the letters *b-o*, and in *belle* by *b-e-l*; but we have more simple or elementary sounds than we have characters to express them, so that were we disposed to throw away our system of arbitrary signs, we could not completely effect the object, without introducing at least fourteen new characters. In the characters proposed for the use of the blind, this is attempted, and their alphabet is made to consist of forty characters, each of which is intended to represent an elementary sound, and which is never varied, whatever may be its position—so that every word must be spelt with exactly those characters or letters which represent the sounds made in pronouncing it; and every word must be pronounced according to the sounds of the characters by which it is represented. Thus, a person having made himself master of all the characters, can, after a few hours' practice, spell correctly, almost any word in our language, whether he has ever seen it written or not; or, seeing it properly written, can pro-



nounce it. Thus far this method seems applicable to printing for those with sight as well as for the blind; and, were there no objections to its adoption, but the increased number of characters, might be advantageously introduced as an improvement of our present system. We have, however, too many books to re-print, too many prejudices to overcome, and habits too inveterate to encounter, for the reveries of the wildest enthusiasm ever to anticipate such a change. Further to condense the written language, characters are introduced to represent a few compound sounds and the most common prefixes and terminations, making the whole number of characters sixty-four, each of which, when standing alone, is intended to represent some one of the most common words in the English language. By this method, the size of books will be reduced more than one third, and although a few arbitrary signs are employed for the sake of abbreviation, yet they invariably represent the same sound, and bear but a trifling proportion to those at present used in writing our language. For the purpose of enabling persons with sight to read the blind characters, as few new letters as possible have been introduced; and to represent the different sounds (for no new sounds are introduced,) of the same letter, the shape has been only slightly varied, and in some instances the distinction is even made by the use of the capital, italic, and roman lower case, forms of the same letter. There is perhaps no advantage in this adherence to the old letters, and in many instances their places might be supplied by snugger characters, which would still more condense the language. A method of representing the different letters by means of dots, and upright, horizontal, slanting, and curved lines, is proposed; and, should it succeed on trial, it will further condense the language nearly one third. These curved lines and dots are to be placed above and below a continuous line, and each of them is intended to represent an elementary sound. Thus a dot above the line might represent *A*, a dot below the line *B*, &c.

But besides diminishing the size of the books, the new alphabet will materially facilitate the operation of reading. If the same sounds are expressed by half the number of charac-

ters, the time necessarily spent in running the fingers over them, will be proportionably less; and as the sense of touch is not so intuitive as that of sight, this will be a most important advantage. Many objections will be raised to the proposed improvement, especially in the imperfect state in which it is here presented; nevertheless, the experiment which has already been made in this institution has been highly satisfactory, and it is believed that it will be found to answer all the important purposes for which it was designed.

*Writing.*—That the blind may be enabled to record their own thoughts, to communicate with distant friends, and if engaged in business, to keep their own accounts, writing has been introduced as another branch of their instruction. The acquisition of so simple and mechanical an operation may, on a hasty examination, appear to present but few difficulties: this, however, is far from the fact, and it is only by a long course of patient and persevering efforts that the blind are enabled to acquire this art. The shape, size, and disposition of the letters, their connection and proper distances, are matters so entirely regulated by the eye, that, when this guide is removed, under ordinary circumstances the writing will be crooked, the lines crossed, the letters crowded together or overlaid, their size unequal, and their forms imperfect. Many ingenious contrivances for obviating these difficulties have been proposed, and some of them found to answer a good purpose. One of the earliest inventions, and that which, though clumsy, seems best adapted to beginners, consists of a frame resembling a slate frame, about the usual size of a sheet of writing paper, connected by means of hinges with a thin board of similar dimensions; the board is perforated with two holes on each side for the purpose of receiving the same number of pegs or pins inserted in the corresponding part of the frame. On the outer face on each side of the frame, small holes or grooves are bored or cut for the purpose of receiving a notched rule which passes across it. The apparatus being thus constructed, a sheet of paper is placed between the frame and the board, so that its edges will correspond with the edges of the board, and be secured in its position by the pins in the frame. Having adjus-

ted the rule, with a loaded pen or pencil, the pupil commences the operation. The upper edge of the rule serves to direct his hand in a straight line, and the notches to indicate the proper distances for the letters and spaces between words. The first line finished, the rule is removed to the next hole below, and so on. A simple contrivance in more common use answers equally well at a more advanced period of the instruction. Thus, with a sheet of pasteboard, with raised lines placed under the paper, it will be easily conceived that one might be enabled to write straight. In this institution a method of stamping the paper has been introduced and adopted, which entirely supersedes the necessity of any apparatus. The paper thus prepared, presents on one side continuous elevated lines, and on the other corresponding depressions. This method requires no particular adjustment of the paper, no effort to retain it in its place; and the little finger resting on, and following one of the under lines, together with the nib of the pen or pencil, is a double guide to the line.

Various attempts have been made to enable the blind to read their own writing. For this purpose experiments have been made with thick and gummy inks, which, though thin enough to shed freely, would speedily dry and leave a firm and elevated character; or which, while in a liquid state, might be made tangible by sprinkling them with sand. But these experiments have, for the most part, been unsuccessful. The best method for effecting this object, is to prick the letters through paper; after which, they may be easily read by feeling on the opposite side. To expedite the operation, the letters of the alphabet are formed by small types, made with pin points, which being pressed through, leave the characters in relief on the opposite side.

*Arithmetic, Geometry, &c.*—There is no branch of instruction which seems so peculiarly adapted to the capacities of the blind, as mathematics. The exclusion of visible objects is peculiarly favorable to abstraction and analysis; and the frequent occasion which the blind have to exercise the memory, by strengthening its powers, enables them to exert their faculties of combination to a surprising extent. A few days since,

a visitor to this Institution proposed to a little boy only seven years of age, the following question, viz.—To eighty, add the half of my age, twice my age and one seventh of my age, and the sum will be 265—How old am I?—which the little mathematician answered promptly and correctly. Now we may venture to assert that very few boys of his age, whatever may have been their advantages, would, even with the *assistance of pencil and slate*, be found competent to the solution of so intricate a question.

All the common operations in arithmetic, and even in the higher branches of mathematics are performed mentally—the more complex, as has already been observed, by means of a ciphering board, the construction of which is as follows:—a thin board, from 18 to 20 inches in length, and from 12 to 14 inches in breadth, is divided by means of a number of thin and narrow strips of wood inserted transversely and longitudinally into a great number of small and equal compartments;\* these compartments are designed to admit and secure the type necessary to the operation—on each of the type, one or more of the common arabic figures is carved in relief. These type are arranged in small boxes on each side of the slate, so as always to be in readiness for use. The apparatus being thus prepared, questions are solved in the same manner as on a common slate, only substituting type for figures.

A new method of writing numbers has been introduced in this institution; which is thought considerably to facilitate the operation. Two types and four characters by a change of position are made to express the nine digits, cipher and the signs of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, a period, and proportion.

A more accurate idea of this plan may be acquired by the following illustration, viz:—

T	represents	one
⊥	do.	two
⊥⊥	do.	three
⊥⊥⊥	do.	four
V	do.	five

\* See the plate.

V	do.	six
Λ	represents	seven
∧	do.	eight
L	do.	nine
└	do.	cipher

The characters from one to eight, represented on one piece of wood or metal, are arranged on one side of the board, and those above eight, on the opposite side. This favours dispatch, as the pupil, instead of feeling through a number of boxes for the type required, can, from knowing its exact position, seize upon it at once. Geometry is taught by means of diagrams, raised and lettered in the same manner with the reading books.

*Geography* may be taught orally, but without the aid of a map no very definite ideas of the relations, bearings and positions of cities, provinces, countries, rivers, seas and oceans can be acquired. Attempts were therefore made at a very early period of the instruction of the blind, to construct maps for their use; these attempts were to a certain extent successful. Until the opening of the New-York Institution, no very near approximation had been made to the maps in use for persons endowed with sight.\* Immediately, however, after the opening of this Institution, the superintendant introduced a plan which he had previously invented, of stamping maps on paper, so that now maps for the blind, though not quite as compact, are as intelligible and expressive as those in common use. These maps have been so accurately described in the Annual Report of the Board of Managers, that we need only remark that the names of towns, rivers, &c. to prevent confusion and embarrassment, are represented on the face of the map by figures referring to the margin, opposite which figures will be found the names required, and at the end of the name, the population of the town or length of the river expressed in round numbers. This stenographic method of representing numbers, is not precisely arbitrary, as will more fully appear from the following illustration, viz.

The simple figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, &c. are made to represent hundreds; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, &c. slurred on the top thus, 1̂, 2̂, &c.

\* For a description of these maps, see page 17.

represent thousands ; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, &c. slurred underneath thus,  $\underbrace{1, 2}$ , represent tens of thousands ; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, &c., dotted above thus,  $\overset{\cdot}{1}, \overset{\cdot}{2}$ , represent hundreds of thousands ;  $\underset{\cdot}{5}, \underset{\cdot}{6}$  or any other of the characters with a dot on the right of them at the bottom, are increased one quarter in value ; with a dot at the top one half, and with a dot at the top and bottom three quarters, thus  $\overset{\cdot}{2}$  represents 2250,  $\underset{\cdot}{2}$  represents 2750,  $\overset{\cdot}{3}$  thirty-five thousand,  $\underset{\cdot}{3}$  thirty-seven thousand five hundred, &c. A similar plan for the construction of maps, has more recently been introduced into the Boston school ; but, though involving the same general principles, it is not a mere copy of the plan described. The marginal reference has not been adopted, and instead of representing rivers and lakes in relief, their relative position in relation to the land is attempted to be more correctly illustrated by means of sunken lines. This may be truer to nature ; whether an improvement or not, we are not competent to determine. Perhaps as much is lost in distinctness, as is gained by the nearer resemblance\* to nature.

*Music.*—Paganini, whose matchless performances on the violin, have of late excited so much interest in Europe, declared, after hearing the musical performances of the pupils at the Blind school in Paris, that he never before had an idea of correct accord in time. Indeed, the Blind never sing out of time, and the greater precision of their ear more than compensates for the disadvantage of not being able to read notes and perform at the same time. The usual method of instructing them in music is, first, to teach them the notes by means of raised characters. These characters are similar to those commonly used for writing music, and though more particularly addressed to the sense of touch, are equally intelligible to the sight.

\* To those who may unfortunately have blind friends or children, to whom they may be desirous of communicating some general idea of Geography, and have not the means of procuring stamped maps, we would suggest the following method—Trace from a common map the outlines of the country, rivers, &c. reversed, upon a sheet of stout pasteboard, and then prick the lines through so that they may be felt upon the opposite side. The sites of towns, and names of rivers, may be represented by figures having a marginal reference. This makes a very convenient and useful map, and is easily prepared.

*Mechanical Employments.*—Let any one whose sight has been dimmed by declining years, unassisted by art, attempt to thread a needle, and he will form some just estimate of the difficulties which the blind must encounter in undertaking mechanical occupations. “I cannot see,” is constantly upon the lips of those with sight, as an excuse for the non-performance or ill performance of their handicraft. Yet the blind, unaided even by the twilight of sight, by proper education are capacitated, not only to thread a needle with facility, but to perform almost every mechanical operation. Numerous instances might be adduced of their surprising attainments in the mechanic arts; but these examples, though they bear honorable testimony to the capacities of the blind, are only useful as affording us a decided indication of their capabilities for improvement. For though blind men are occasionally found, who, by consummate address and ingenuity, can construct musical instruments, repair watches, or make machinery; yet it is not to such marvelous achievements that a judicious education of the blind should be directed. Do what we can, the loss of sight still deprives us of an important auxiliary in the performance of mechanical labors; and the ingenuity of man, however benevolently directed, will probably never devise a substitute, which, in the more difficult operations, will enable the blind to compete with those who see. It is, therefore, only to the simpler and coarser kinds of manufactures that the attention of the blind should be directed. To those only, in which but a moderate exercise of the organ of sight is ever necessary. Our object being not to make blind prodigies, but intelligent and useful members of society—to render individuals who are physically disabled, competent to their own support. With this view, many mechanical branches have been introduced into schools for the blind, which have been afterwards prosecuted with greater or less advantage. Among the most successful of these may be enumerated chair-seating, mat-making, basket-making, rope-making, net-making, weaving bottles, spinning, sewing, plaiting straw, weaving, and the fabrication of moccasins and mattresses. Other occupations are occasionally taught, such as shoe-making, joinery, book-binding, &c.



all of which are either of more difficult exercise, or less profitable to the imperfect beings, whose advantage is designed, than those previously mentioned. The manufacture of mats, mattresses, and the weaving of carpeting, are probably the most lucrative employments for the blind, and the experience of this and other institutions, we think fully warrant us in stating, that with ordinary capacity and adroitness, a blind boy of sixteen years of age, may, by the exercise of either of these trades, realize from six to eight shillings a day for his labor. This being the fact, how imperative a duty it becomes for every true philanthropist to step forward to their succor. By this means, society may be relieved from a burden, and a large amount of inert capital be rendered active and productive. But aside from all considerations of a pecuniary nature, they will accomplish a higher and nobler object—they will effect a more benevolent purpose. They will pour the balm of consolation into the wounds of the unfortunate—they will shed living light upon physical and intellectual darkness. How forlorn, how hopeless is the present condition of the blind throughout the United States. Their uncultivated minds are a dreary waste—their uneducated hands are a useless appendage, and every ennobling sentiment in them is dejected and broken down by a constant and degrading sense of dependence. But we trust a brighter day is breaking upon them; and that the efforts now making in their behalf, will go on, increasing in strength and usefulness, until the blind shall find a solace for their misfortune, in the warm and tender sympathies of a benevolent community.

*Method of communication between the blind and deaf mutes.*—It may perhaps appear surprising to many, that any means should have been devised for communication between the mutes and the blind. With the one, conversation, to be intelligible, must be addressed to the eye; with the other, it seems equally necessary, that it should be addressed to the ear. How then, can the mute speak to the blind, or the blind hear the mute? The only remaining sense by which we can imagine it even possible, that ideas could be conveyed from the one to the other, is that of feeling; and even this sense might naturally

be supposed inadequate to the purpose required. Nevertheless, it is feeling that on this occasion becomes *ears*, as on ordinary occasions it is *eyes* to the blind. The blind man addresses himself through the language of signs, to the eye of the mute, and the mute, through the sense of touch, to the feeling of the blind. This method was first discovered by the blind and mutes themselves. In 1791, the institution for the blind at Paris, was located, by an order of Louis 16th, in the same building with that of the deaf mutes. By this measure, daily thrown in contact with each other, ingenuity was not tardy in devising the means of communication. And after a short period, the deaf and the blind found but little difficulty in conversing together. For this purpose, however, it was first necessary for the blind to learn the alphabet and conventional signs of the mutes; and then, with the assistance of these, they wrote in the air, or made signs which were understood by the mute, and the mute responded by writing on the back or in the hand of the blind.

“While on this subject, we may notice a question which is often asked, viz: Whether blindness or deafness be the greater evil? are the blind or the dumb most unhappy? These are questions asked every day. If we should give our own opinion, it would be, that blindness is the lesser evil, and that the blind, as a class, are much happier than the mutes. If, however, one should consult the mutes, they will express their preference for their own lot, and give him to understand, by eager signs, with what horror they should look upon an exchange of their seeing for the speaking faculty. On the other hand, if you consult the blind, they will answer, readily and decidedly, that their lot is infinitely more enviable than that of the deaf and dumb. What an admirable regulation of Providence, by which the affliction of each class is the means of comparative happiness to the other!”

“It has been well said, that for a poor man, it would be preferable to lose his hearing and speech—but that to a rich one, the loss of the eyes would be infinitely preferable; and this, because the dumb can earn a livelihood by the labor of their hands; and the blind, with money, can supply most of their

wants, and with a guide and a reader can have much enjoyment."\*

*Character and capacity of the blind, remarkable facts, &c.*  
 —The uneducated blind are generally dull and inactive. Misfortune, in depriving them of sight, as in some degree it has deprived them of the ability, seems also to have deprived them of the desire to move. Every step for them is fraught with danger, and their only safety seems to lie in inactivity. Whilst, therefore, the busy world without is gay with life and motion; whilst an ever-changing variety amuses the eye and gives activity to the mind of him who sees—they sit in listless vacancy at home, a prey to never-ceasing regret, or borne down by poverty and disgrace, occupy a seat in the public ways, and with outstretched arms, cry unceasingly, "pity the poor blind man." But let education exert her magic influence, and how changed the picture! They are at once transformed into happy, intelligent beings. In the labor of their hands they find a ready support, and the exercise of a retentive memory affords them a never-failing source of profitable amusement. Their vacant hours are thus passed in agreeable communion with their own thoughts. The power of attention is increased by the abstraction of visible objects. Habits of reflection are acquired; and the awakened mind, ever on the wing, is actively engaged in analyzing or combining ideas, or continually busied in grasping at new truths. Cheerful, contented, they envy us not our eyes.

The blind have been charged with atheism and infidelity; and though we would not lightly lay this charge at their door, yet if there be any foundation for the accusation, may it not be supposed a natural result of their ignorance? Who has not had his admiration excited, his heart warmed, and his faith strengthened by the contemplation of the works of nature. To us, each tree, each plant, each flower proclaims a God. Earth, sea, and air, the glorious sun, the countless stars, the varied year, are full of a divinity. But to the blind, the book of nature is forever sealed. They see not in each budding plant,

\* *New-England Magazine* for March.

each joyous flower, the great mechanist, who hath so wonderfully made them. Earth may unlock her richest mines, the sea give up its hidden treasures, and all the countless orbs of heaven roll on in majesty sublime, unseen, unknown to them.

“ Their rayless darkness hath no moon,  
Their midnight knows no dawn.”

How imperative, then, becomes our duty, not only as philanthropists but as christians, to afford them the means of education—to let

“ Celestial light  
Shine *inwards*; and the mind, through all her powers,  
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mists from thence  
Purge and disperse, that they may see and tell  
Of things invisible to mortal sight.”—*Milton.* ;

But we have an additional inducement, if inducements are wanting, to afford to the blind the means of education. Their capacity for receiving instruction is fully equal to that of their more fortunate fellows. Indeed, in the acquisition of music, mathematics, and perhaps the languages, they far surpass us; and their astonishing success in these branches has been alike the wonder and admiration of every age. Thus they may become competent instructors, and pay back to society in usefulness, the debt of gratitude which their infirmity may have contracted.

To persons unaccustomed to observe the blind, there are some facts in their history so remarkable and so interesting, that we cannot forbear making them a subject of special notice. It is no uncommon occurrence to find persons deprived of sight, speaking with as much certainty and exactness of the size and age of individuals whom they have casually met, as persons enjoying the organs of vision unimpaired could do. They judge correctly of the size of an apartment by striking on the floor. They recognise a person whom they have once heard speak; they judge of the proximity of fire by the degree and extent of its heat; the

fulness of vessels by the sound of the liquid poured into them ; their approach to objects, by the action of the air on their faces ; they judge of the duration of time ; recognise places where they have once been ; their hands serve them as balances ; and with a delicacy of feeling, perfectly incomprehensible to us, discover when a cloud is passing over the disk of the sun.\* In walking about, “when they come to an opening in the street, they know by the sound of their footsteps, whether it is a court closed up at the end, or whether it is a wide or narrow street. They can tell, by the feeling of the atmosphere, whether a house is immediately upon the street, or whether it has a space and a railing between it and the sidewalk. In fact, if one follows them he will be surprised, that, instead of groping along, as it would be supposed they must do ; and feeling, with their hands or their cane, the houses and the corners, that they walk boldly forward, seeming to see with their ears, and having landmarks in the air,† if we may speak so paradoxically.” But what appears to us still more remarkable, they seem to read, as it were, by intuition, the very hearts of men. By what delicacy of discernment do these attentive observers discover those slight shades of character, which are inappreciable to us ? “Beware how you converse with a blind man, if you have any thing on your mind which you would wish to conceal, or if you attempt to counterfeit a character that is not your own ; for depend upon it, he will perceive it quicker than a person with two eyes.”

“Most persons are more or less hypocritical in their intercourse with the world, and have the habit of dressing and be-decking their countenances just as they do their persons ; and they think if they only smile and look complacently on those to whom they speak, they have drawn a curtain over the only opening by which their minds can be perceived ; but the blind

\* Saunderson being engaged in making some astronomical observations, at Cambridge, after the telescope was adjusted, and every thing in readiness to commence the observation, requested his assistants to wait a moment until a cloud which obscured the sun had passed over.

† A young lady of this city, with whom we are acquainted, whenever she is at a loss to find her way in any place in which she has previously been, directs herself by the sound of her voice. Whenever, therefore, she cannot discover her course she immediately utters a cry, and is thus directed by the sound.

man is not imposed on by appearances ; he is not dazzled by a smile or a bright glance ; nor can mere words weigh with him, unless they bear the impress of sincerity in their tones."

"There is not, we will venture to say, more variety in the shades of the human countenance, than in the intonations of the human voice ; and as the countenance varies with every varying emotion of the mind, so does the tone of the voice change, as the chords of feeling are stretched or relaxed. Most people pay no attention to this fact ; they can keep their countenances under control, but think not of the voice ; and it is upon this thread that the blind man seizes, to guide him through the labyrinths of the human heart ; hence, we say, many blind persons will pronounce with more shrewdness upon the character of an individual with whom they have conversed ten minutes, than most seeing persons with the aid of eyes and ears both."\*

We have, undoubtedly, been led into grave errors, by considering the blind as mere objects of pity. But he that in passing them, has dropped the tribute of a sigh at their calamities, or showered gold into their tattered hats, though he may have relieved his own bosom, has not done all that either justice, humanity, or society demands of him. The cry of Bartimeus, while sitting at the gates of Jericho, "thou son of David, have mercy on me," has been the appeal of every blind man since that time. But where are they, who like the Saviour of men, bid them go to the pool of Siloam and wash ? Where are they even who have provided fish gall to anoint their eyes, that the scales may be removed ? Is there not among us one pitying angel ? one dutiful Tobias ? Alas ! this touching appeal has only been met by cold and chilling neglect. The charms of nature, the fascinations of sense, have spared not a moment to reflection. You who roll in wealth—the pride of whose eye is the decorations of dress—who delight in splendid equipages, or rear gorgeous domes to gratify the sight—you, whose delight is in the flowery mead, or on the grassy lawn, by streams that sparkle as they flow, at noon or even-tide to

\* New-England Magazine.

gaze on nature—you who prefer the wild sequestered dell, the cloud-capt mountain, or the yawning gulf,—you who love at midnight hour, in heavenly contemplation wrapt, to sit and watch the planets as they rise and fall—you that cull the flowers “imagination bodies forth,” or dwell with rapture on Isaiah’s hallowed page—recollect the *source* from whence these pleasures spring ; and whilst your hearts ascend in grateful adoration before the altar of the living God, let your *incense* fall like genial suns upon those who

“ From the cheerful ways of men  
Cut off ; and for the book of knowledge fair,  
Presented with a universal blank  
Of Nature’s works, expunged and razed”—— *Milton.*

dwell in “ever during dark.”

WE are indebted to Mrs. SIGOURNEY for the following beautiful lines, composed expressly for the children of the New-York Institution for the Blind :

### APPEAL FOR THE BLIND.

YE see the glorious Sun  
 The varied landscape light,  
 The moon, with all her starry train,  
 Adorn the arch of night ;  
 Bright tree, and plant, and flower,  
 That deck your joyous way,  
 And face of kindred and of friend,  
 More fair, more dear than they.

*For us*, there is no Sun,  
 No green and flowery lawn ;  
 Our rayless darkness hath no moon,  
 Our midnight knows no dawn.  
 The parent's pitying eye,  
 To all our sorrows true,  
 The brother's brow, the sister's smile  
 Must never meet our view.

We have a lamp within  
 That knowledge fain would light,  
 And pure religion's hand would touch  
 With beams forever bright ;  
 Say, shall it rise to share  
 Such radiance full and free,  
 And will ye keep a Saviour's charge  
 And cause the Blind to see ?



## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF BLIND MEN.

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THE following brief notices of some of the most celebrated blind, have been collected from various sources. Some of them are translations from a letter by M. Rodenbach, "Sur les Aveugles," and others extracted from the *New-England Magazine* for March, and a letter by Mr. Friedlander, of Germany, addressed to Roberts Vaux, and others, Philadelphia. We regret not having it in our power to give some satisfactory account of our own Shaw, whose musical attainments have secured him a large fortune, and acquired for him a brilliant reputation. Though comparatively few may have listened to his masterly performances, yet his melodious notes have been the admiration of thousands.

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"HULDERICH SCHOENBERGER, born at Weider, in 1601; became blind in his third year. He was very much neglected in his youth, his parents and friends, believing that his misfortune had completely incapacitated him for future usefulness, and that an attempt to instruct him, would be to mispend both time and money. Fatigued, however, by his inquisitiveness, and overcome by his importunities, they finally sent him to school; the rather to relieve themselves from a burden, than from any expectation of his improvement. But, with his ears ever open, and aided by a tenacious memory, he drank up knowledge in torrents, and speedily surpassed his more fortunate school mates in the extent of his acquirements. This astonishing and unexpected progress procured for him a place in the Academy of Altdorf, where the opportunities for instruction were greater. He was made a master of arts at Liepsic, and afterwards went to Holstein, where he taught with approbation, and in a short time became a public lecturer. He understood, not only his native language, but also the French,

Latin, Hebrew, Syriac, as well as the Arabic, in which he gave instruction. He wrote the oriental languages by means of letters formed of wire, in which he likewise instructed. In mathematics and natural and moral philosophy, his knowledge was extensive. He played upon different instruments, and particularly excelled on the organ, which he manufactured himself. At Koenisbergh he held disputations about colors and the rainbow, and explained the origin of colors. He played well at nine pins, and shot at a mark with astonishing accuracy when its place was pointed out to him by knocking."

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"PETER HURENG, of Caen, in Normandy, became blind in his ninth year. This ingenious mechanist could repair all kinds of watches. He discovered their defects by the sense of feeling."

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"GEIPELS, a blind man in the paper mill at Plauen, is the inventor of a water press, by which two men, by the help of water power, in one minute and a half, execute as much as six or eight men, previously to this invention, could accomplish in five minutes. The paper prepared after his prescription, by the water press, becomes more firm and receives the sizing better."

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"JOSEPH KLEINHARS, born at Nauders, in Tyrol, became blind in his fourth year. He manufactured crucifixes and holy figures of wood, which were accurately proportioned, and which expressed affection, delight, and other affections of the mind. He made statues from six or eight inches in height\* to the common size of the human body, which in expression and execution would do honor to many clear sighted artists. He also carved, in great perfection, heads or busts of living persons, which he copied, either from casts or from nature, solely by the aid of feeling."

\* Some years since, there was a blind man in Boston, who supported himself by the manufacture of toys and figures, representing men, women, animals, &c. many of these articles were well executed

**GAMBASSIUS DE VALTERRE.**—This interesting individual and accomplished statuary, lost his sight at the age of twenty. Apparently doomed by his misfortune to a life of inactivity and uselessness, he remained for ten years in obscurity ; ignorant even of the elements of sculpture. His mind, however, which at first appeared paralyzed by the magnitude of his calamity, seemed gradually to recover its activity, and in tossing about for some employment to occupy his vacant hours, his attention was attracted to a statue of Cosmo de Medicis, to which he had free access. After having touched it in every direction, and making himself perfectly familiar with the different parts, he conceived the design of copying it in clay, in which he so exactly succeeded, as to excite the wonder and admiration of every beholder. Encouraged by success, he renewed his efforts till his talent for statuary developed itself to such a surprising degree, that Prince Ferdinand, grand duke of Tuscany, sent him to Rome to model a statue of Pope Urban the 8th ; in the execution of which he was peculiarly fortunate. He afterwards made many other statues, in which he was equally successful.

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“During the last century, there flourished at the University of Cambridge, in England, a distinguished philosopher, named NICHOLAS SAUNDERSON, who lost his sight at a very early age, from the small pox. This man became one of the professors in the university, and lectured most admirably upon mathematics, and every subject connected therewith. He was a man of most extensive erudition, and a great philosopher ; but what most astonished those who knew him, was the perfection to which he brought his remaining senses ; his hearing was so acute that he could detect the minutest intonations of the voice, and judge very shrewdly of the character of any one with whom he conversed ten minutes ;—on coming into his room, he could tell by the sound of his cane on the floor, or by the echo of his voice, whether any of the large furniture of his room had been removed, or changed from one side of the room to the other. The perfection of his touch was often tested in the examination of ancient coins ; for he could run over a cabinet of Roman medals with his fingers, and distinguish the true from the false ones, when the difference was so slight as to puzzle connoisseurs with both eyes open to find it out.”

Saunderson enjoyed the friendship of Sir Isaac Newton. The royal society of London elected him a member of that body, and after his death the university of Cambridge published his mathematical works. He married, and had a daughter who could see.

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“Another distinguished man of letters, who has flourished within a few years, was the Rev. Dr. BLACKLOCK, of Scotland, who was born blind; and yet became a most chaste and ripe scholar; an able divine, and a beautiful poet. He published a volume of poems which bear all the marks of genius, and in which, by an extraordinary power of description of the visible creation, he proves to us, that had Homer and Milton been born blind, instead of losing their sight in after life, they might still have reared those splendid monuments of mental power, the immortal Iliad and Paradise Lost.”

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“Dr. HENRY MOYES, professor of chemistry and philosophy, in Manchester, England, was another striking exemplification of the great powers of the blind; for without the least sight, he became a most able and interesting lecturer, and gained the love and esteem of all who knew him.” Dr. Moyes was in this country about the year 1793; and at that period attracted much interest and attention, by proposing to give a course of lectures on natural philosophy, in this city; but the appearance of the yellow fever compelled him to relinquish his plan. A syllabus of his lectures has recently been found among the papers of the late Dr. Mitchill.

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“JOHN METCALF, concerning whom, papers may be found in the transactions of the philosophical society of Manchester, is another striking illustration of the capacity and capability of the blind. Metcalf being blind from infancy, was very much neglected, and roamed all over the country during his boyhood. His first occupation was that of a teamster and guide. During the winter, when the earth was covered with snow, or during dark nights, he used

to act as guide from one place to another, to those people who had eyes, but could not see.

“This blind man became so perfectly acquainted with every hill and valley; every tree and rock, even about the Peak of Derbyshire—He knew the bearings and distances of places so well, that he formed plans of the country, he proposed and effected many advantageous changes in the directions of the roads, and actually laid out the route from Wilnslow to Congleton himself.”

A writer of veracity remarks of him—“His talents for taking plans of the country are so extraordinary, that he finds constant occupation. Most of the routes on the Peake of Derbyshire have been changed according to the directions and indications given by him. Having met him one day alone, as he usually is—and feeling out the lay of the land—I questioned him about his new road, and was utterly astonished at the precision and minuteness with which he described the different kinds of soil over which it passed. Having observed to him that there was one place where it was marshy, he said it was the only one about which he was anxious; fearing lest his positive orders for the deposit of a large quantity of gravel there, would not be fully obeyed.”

“This is an extraordinary case, but it is well attested. Indeed, we have ourselves seen so many extraordinary instances of the great powers of the blind, that we have no doubt of those of Metcalf. We have known young men who roamed all over the country alone, by the help of a cane and a pocket compass; who rode fearlessly about on horseback; and who could mingle with ease in society, and take their part in many of its amusements, such as the waltz, chess, cards, &c.

“Indeed, one may every day meet blind persons who have been properly neglected, if we may so express ourselves—for neglect is better for a blind child, than the excessive attention which they generally receive, and which prevents the development of their faculties;—we say you may meet such persons almost every where, who go about the streets\* and from town to

\*A gentleman informed us a few days since, that about eight years ago he met John Ross, a blind man, passing the aqueduct at Rochester, on the side unprotected by a railing, with his cane shouldered, and marching almost as fearlessly as he could have done. He asked him if he was not afraid to walk thus without his cane, in so dangerous a place? Slipping one foot over the side, he answered in his queer style, “why, it is a pokerish looking place, isn’t it?”

town alone. We know of an instance in our immediate neighborhood of a young man, entirely blind, who accomplishes every year, long journeys on foot and alone. If it be asked how he avoids running against objects? we can only say, it is by bringing his sense of hearing to a degree of perfection which makes it differ from ours: if he approaches a tree of any size, he perceives that the air sends back a different feeling to his face, and in the open air he can easily avoid an object as large as a horse or a man.”—*N. E. Mag.*

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“M. ROCQUES, a native of Montauban, in France, is a distinguished scholar and poet. Before entering the *Musée des Aveugles* at Paris, he had learnt to read by means of palpable characters, which he had himself invented for this purpose. He adopted a similar plan for learning music. He has translated the odes of Metastasius into French verse, and the public journals are frequently enriched by literary articles of his composition, which are particularly characterized by a warm and brilliant imagination. He manifests great sagacity in recognizing the characters and defects of the individuals with whom he is associated. If he wishes a domestic to read to him, he has recourse to an advertisement, which not unfrequently brings a crowd of worthless applicants, who imagine that they can take advantage of his infirmity, to promote their own interests. He always demands of them their certificates; but aware how frequently bad servants obtain letters of recommendation, feigning attention to their papers, he questions them with so much shrewdness and address, that he is rarely deceived in the selection he makes, and in which he is entirely governed by their answers.”

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“Mlle. P. PETRONILLE MOENS, born at Cubart, in Holland, in 1765, lost her sight at three years of age. Her father, a protestant minister at Aardenbourg, early discovering in her a talent for poetry and belles lettres, encouraged her inclination for these studies. She has written many pieces of considerable merit, among which are *Esther*, *Hugues Grotius*, *Jean d'Oldenbarneveld*

and *les freres de Witt*. But her productions of most merit, are the *Printemps*, a poem in three cantos, published in 1788; *L'Histoire de l'Humanité*, and *Reflexions sur le 81e siecle*.

“Her poems are particularly distinguished by bold and brilliant touches peculiarly characteristic of the great poetical talents of their author. On different occasions she has obtained academic honors. She received the first prize at the Hague for her poem, entitled the *Vrai Chretien*; she was crowned at Gand for her poem upon the battle of Waterloo. Mlle. Moens has also published *le Patriote Victorieux* and many other occasional pieces. This blind Sapho has not only courted the muses, but has equally distinguished herself by her prose productions; and the romance entitled *Caroline d'Eldenberg*, or *la Fidelité conjugale éprouvée*, is an honorable monument of her talents. Notwithstanding her advanced age, she has not yet hung her harp upon the willow, and her melodious notes still fall in sweetest harmony upon the ear. Lately, she has published at Amsterdam *son Bouquet a' la Junesse*, which does her great honor.”

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“WEISSENBURG, of Manheim, became blind at the age of seven. He learned to read and write with great facility. He was a remarkable geographer, and constructed maps which were in high estimation at the time. Seas and rivers were represented by glass ingeniously cut, and different countries distinguished by sand of different granulations. He played chess after a method of his own invention.”

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“Mlle. PARADIS, of Vienna, lost her sight at two years of age, by apoplexy. She came to Paris in 1784, where she immediately became celebrated for her masterly performances on the harmonica. This Virtuoso, who was an able composer, invented a method for writing out her own compositions, by pricking the notes with pins upon thick paper or pasteboard. This process was afterwards much simplified by M. Kempillen, the inventor of the automaton chess-player; who made a press with which she printed music notes in relief. At her suggestion, maps were embroidered,

by the means of which she was enabled to acquire a good knowledge of geography. She was the intimate friend of Hauy, and this philanthropist was undoubtedly indebted to her for many valuable suggestions in relation to his plans for instructing the blind."

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"PETER PONTANUS, or DUPONT, called the blind man of Bruges, flourished at the commencement of the sixteenth century. He lost his sight in his third year; but this misfortune, though it perhaps impeded, could not prevent his making splendid attainments in science and literature. Such is the luxuriance of genius, that nothing seems capable to repress its growth—it shoots without culture—it buds and blossoms amid misfortunes and poverty, and bids defiance to the impediments of circumstance. He taught belles lettres at Paris with unexampled success, and published many works which augmented his reputation and celebrity. Among other productions, one on rhetoric, and a treatise on the art of making poetry, in which he attacked Despautere, are the most esteemed. Pontanus was a profound philosopher, enlightened and religious; an enemy to duplicity, and the friend of truth. Speaking of himself in one of his works, he says that he has always warred against voluptuousness, and recommended piety and love to God."

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"M. HUBERT, of Geneva, a learned naturalist, is author of one of the best works extant upon the history of bees and ants. One is astonished in reading his book, to find a blind man giving so exact and minute a description of these insects. He was assisted in his labors by his domestic, who, however, only indicated the particular colors, M. Hubert distinguishing their form and size by the delicacy of his touch, with the same facility that he recognized the insect by the noise it made in flying."

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"HERMAN CORRENTIER lived about the middle of the fifteenth



century. He was professor of rhetoric at Groningue, and for many years taught belles lettres in his native city. He died about the year 1520, and left a great number of works written in Latin, among which may be mentioned an historical and poetical dictionary, published at Paris, 1541; and which, in succeeding editions, has been successively augmented by Charles Etienne and Frederick Morrel."

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"CLAUDE CORNIERS, born at Embrun, was professor of mathematics at Paris, and for some time associate editor of the *Journal des Savans*. There are few subjects with which he did not occupy himself. He wrote on medicine, mathematics, physics, and engaged deeply in controversy. He was, in philosophical attainment and erudition, far in advance of his age, as may be seen from his discourse upon comets, published in the *Mercury* for January, 1681. His three discourses upon the art of prolonging life, a kind of satire, directed against the editors of the *Gazette of Holland*, are highly esteemed. Corniers died in Paris at the *Quinze Vignts*."

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"M. PFEFFEL, of Colmar, lost his sight whilst very young, by a violent attack of ophthalmia. He was author of some very agreeable poetry, and composed a number of fables, some of which have been translated into French by M. Degerando. He was private counsellor to the Margrave of Baden, and established a military school at Colmar, in which children from the first families were educated. The Prince of Schwartzemberg, and the Prince of Eisemberg, who were pupils of this institution, esteemed it an honor to have had this distinguished individual as their preceptor."

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AVISSE, a distinguished poet, commenced his career at an early age, as captain's secretary, on board a ship. By different accidents he lost one eye in Africa, and the other in America; after

which he became a member of the institution for the blind at Paris, where he soon became professor of rhetoric. He wrote the *Ruse des Aveugles*, and several other pieces of merit. He died at the age of 31, regretted by his friends, and especially by his wife, who was also blind. This lady was subsequently married to M. Heilman, who was likewise blind; and by her second husband she had a daughter, whose lively and sparkling eyes appear abundantly capable to see for all three. Her mother, who instructed her in music, in which she has made great proficiency, possesses surprising address in mechanical occupations. She threads her needle with as much facility and dispatch as a person with sight, even without having recourse to suction, as is commonly the case. Madame Heilman is a good cook and housewife, remarkably neat and particular.

“It may appear strange that the blind should marry among themselves, but there are many examples of similar marriages, most of which have proved fortunate.”

## BY-LAWS.

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### ARTICLE I. TITLE.

1. This Society, in conformity with the act of incorporation, shall be entitled the *New-York Institution for the Blind*.

### ARTICLE II. MEMBERS.

1. The payment of twenty-five dollars at one time, or of two dollars annually, shall constitute a member of this Society.

2. All members shall be eligible as Managers, and shall have the privilege of voting at the annual election.

3. If any person shall be chosen a manager, who is not already a member, his election shall be void, unless immediately thereafter, he becomes an annual or life subscriber.

### ARTICLE III. MEETINGS.

1. There shall be an annual meeting of the Society, on the last Monday in each year, for the election of Managers.

2. The managers, when elected, shall hold a meeting on the same day, or as soon thereafter as may be convenient, for the election of officers for the ensuing year.

3. At the annual election, the officers shall be chosen from the managers previously elected.

4. All elections shall be by ballot.

5. At the annual election of officers, there shall be chosen a President, one Vice-President, a Treasurer, a Corresponding and a Recording Secretary.

6. The officers and managers shall hold their offices one year, or until others are elected in their places.

7. If from any cause, there should be no election at the regular period, the managers and officers shall hold over until a new election.

8. The managers may supply vacancies in their Board, at any time, and in any manner they may determine upon, between the periods of the annual election.

#### ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS OF THE BOARD.

1. The managers shall hold a monthly meeting on the last Monday of every month, and special meetings may be called by the President, or at the request of any three of the managers.

2. At all meetings of the Board, *five* shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

3. At the first meeting of the Board of managers after the annual election, there shall be appointed a *finance committee*, a *committee of instruction*, and such other committees as may appear necessary to the Board.

#### ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES.

1. Each standing committee shall consist of three members, and shall have the privilege of choosing its own chairman.

2. The finance committee shall devise and recommend ways and means to create a permanent fund, and to preserve and increase the income of the Society. They shall examine all accounts, and if approved by them, the signature of their chairman shall constitute an order on the Treasury for their payment. They shall also examine and certify to the correctness of the Treasurer's accounts.

3. The committee of instruction shall visit the Institution, at least once a month; shall examine into the general state of the school, and the manner in which it is conducted, and from time to time report thereon to the Board. They shall inquire into the methods pursued in the instruction of the Blind in other places, and in conjunction with the Superintendent, recommend such improvements and alterations as may appear necessary.

#### ARTICLE VI. THE PRESIDENT.

1. The President, or in his absence, the Vice President, shall preside at all meetings of the Board, and in case of the absence of both, a chairman pro. tem. shall be appointed.

#### ARTICLE VII. THE TREASURER.

1. The Treasurer shall have charge of all the funds of the Society.

2. He shall present a yearly statement of his accounts with the Institution, at the annual meeting in December, and at such other times as he may be required so to do, by the Board of managers.

3. He shall pay out of the funds of the Society, all bills against the Institution, when ordered by the Board, or when approved by the finance committee, and signed by their chairman.

#### ARTICLE VIII. SECRETARIES.

1. The corresponding Secretary shall perform such duty by corresponding with other institutions or persons, as may from time to time be required of him.

2. The Recording Secretary shall attend the meetings of the Board and keep a record of their proceedings, which he shall carefully enter in the book of minutes. In case of the Secretary's absence from any meeting of the Board, a Secretary pro tem. shall be appointed.

3. He shall give notice to the managers of all meetings of the Board, and shall advise new members of their election.

4. He shall inform the members of the society by a notice, to be published in three of the city papers, at least two days previous to the annual meeting, of the time and place of holding said meeting.

#### ARTICLE IX. THE SUPERINTENDANT.

1. The Superintendant shall reside in the house with the pupils, and under the supervision of the managers have the general direction and control of all persons concerned in the institution.

2. He shall take such part in the instruction of the pupils as may from time to time be assigned him, and direct the course of studies and mechanical employments.

3. He shall have full power at all times to make such rules and regulations for the government of the Institution as in his opinion may be requisite; but the rules may be modified, altered, or abolished at any regular meeting of the Board.

4. He shall pay over to the Treasurer all monies received by him, on account of the Institution.

5. He shall, under such limitations as the Board may adopt, have full power to receive and act upon all applications for admission to the Institution.

## ARTICLE X. THE TEACHERS.

1. The Teachers shall perform such duty as may be assigned them by the Board of Managers or the Superintendent.

## ARTICLE XI. THE MATRON.

1. The Matron shall have charge of the domestic department of the Institution, and shall perform such duties as shall from time to time be assigned to her.

## ARTICLE XII. THE PUPILS.

1. It shall be the duty of the managers at all times to receive gratuitously as many indigent blind pupils as the funds of the Institution will allow; but farther to extend the benefits of the Institution, pay-pupils shall be received at a reasonable compensation.

2. The pupils shall be boarded in the Institution, under the direction of the Superintendent and Matron.

3. Such children as have parents or friends residing in the city, may under particular circumstances be received as day scholars.

4. No pupil shall be received under the age of eight, nor over that of twenty-five years.

5. All applications for admission must be addressed to the Superintendent.

6. No pupil shall be received for a shorter period than one year, unless earlier removed by the Superintendent or Managers.

7. The parents or guardian of each pay-pupil on entering the Institution, shall pay the established price of board and tuition for the first term in advance, and in like manner at the commencement of every succeeding term.

8. Every pay-pupil on entering the Institution, shall be provided by his or her parents or guardian, with a suitable bed or mattress, pillow and bedstead, and at least two pair of good sheets, three blankets, a counterpane and four napkins.

9. No pupil can be removed except at the end of the term.

## ARTICLE XIII. ALTERATION OF BY-LAWS.

1. The by-laws of this Institution may be altered or amended as circumstances may require, at any regular meeting of the Board of Managers.

## A P P E N D I X .

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IN noticing the New-England Asylum for the blind, we ought in justice to have mentioned Dr. John D. Fisher, of Boston, as among the first and foremost in suggesting and promoting the establishment of that charity. This gentleman, having visited similar institutions in Europe, on his return to this country, took a most active and leading part in establishing the institution at Boston.

We are gratified to learn that that interesting institution is in the full tide of successful experiment. Our neighbors of Boston and its vicinity, already so distinguished for their philanthropy, seem determined to add new gems to their crown of merit.

Thomas H. Perkins, Esq. formerly an associate in business, and brother ther to the late James Perkins, who so munificently endowed the Boston Atheneum, has lately, with a liberality worthy the name of Perkins, presented his own mansion, a convenient and durable building, most desirably located, together with the adjoining lands, to the institution for the blind, upon condition that fifty thousand dollars should be collected before the ensuing June in aid of the same object ; and it affords us high satisfaction to state, that no doubt remains but this offer will be met by the public with the same spirit of liberality in which it was conceived. We observe that J. P. Cushing, Esq. has already given five thousand dollars, and it is intimated that his example will be speedily followed by similar donations from Peter C. Brooks, Esq. John Parker, Esq. and others. We cannot but hope that the same enlightened liberality which warms the bosoms of the Bostonians, will prompt the wealthy citizens of this city to come forward in support of so meritorious a charity.

### *Asylum for the Industrious Blind of Scotland.*

“ At the hour appointed, one o'clock, the examination commenced with the boys, whose education is still under the superintendence of their very clever teacher, David Macbeath, joint-inventor of the string alphabet, by means of which the blind can correspond with each other. One youth gave a clear solution of a problem of Euclid, proving that if one line of any triangle be produced, the exterior angle is greater than either of the interior and opposite angles. There was an obvious improvement in the working of questions in the higher branches of arith-

metic, and a very surprising proficiency displayed in English grammar, geography, the use of the globes, astronomy and history.

One youth repeated, with good emphasis, a general description of Switzerland, and was followed by another, who recited the history of William Tell, the founder of Swiss liberty and independence. A poem, the production of one of the youths, William Meikle, about twenty years of age, expressive of the gratitude of the blind to the patrons and directors of the institution, was recited by one of their number, and was much applauded. One of the original inmates, (John M'Laren, of whom we spoke in one of our earliest notices,) was brought forward, who has **THE ENTIRE BIBLE** fixed on his memory, and who answered a number of questions, variously put by Principal Baird, with perfect accuracy, not mechanically, but with sound knowledge.

“The examination of the females embraced pretty much the same course of education as the boys, and was satisfactory in the highest degree, particularly the knowledge they displayed in bible history. There was one little blind wonder, whose examination excited intense interest; her name is Jean Biggs, only five years of age. She repeated the names of the kings of Scotland, in chronological order, the books of the New Testament, spelled, and gave a considerable number of the introductory rules of grammar, and solved numerous questions on the terrestrial globe with astonishing readiness, all having been acquired during the short time she has been a pupil in the institution, and in a great degree taught by Sarah Home, one of her companions. But the knowledge displayed by one of the senior girls in the sublime science of astronomy, Margaret Baxter, of whom we have had occasion to make frequent honorable mention, was the most striking feature in the examination. Of the splendid orrery belonging to the institution, she is perfect mistress, as also of the celestial maps,—but, accustomed as we have been to these annual examinations, and acquainted as we have been with blind persons who had all the advantages of expensive education, we were startled at the question, “What star is at this moment over Calcutta?” To solve this question on the plans of the heavens she behoved to know what was then the hour of the day at Calcutta. To shorten the operation, this she was told by one little girl announcing the longitude and latitude of the place, and another working the question as to the time, both on the terrestrial globe: the girl Baxter then, in a wonderfully short period, pointed to and named the stars. The same questions and operations were repeated as to other places, and with equal success. These are truly triumphs of knowledge.

“This interesting examination was closed by a concert of instrumental and vocal music, in which the performers exerted themselves in a style that reflected great credit on their teachers, and obtained for themselves much applause.”



*Explanation of the Plates.*

## PLATE I.

*Figure 1*, represents a writing frame complete, as described on the 24th page.

*a*, the rule for guiding the hand.

*b, b, b, b*, the grooves for the insertion of the rule.

The jagger appearance of the upper edge of the rule represents the notches used to direct beginners in regard to the size and position of the letters and the spaces between them.

*Figure 2*, the writing frame open.

*d*, the board upon which the paper is placed.

*a*, the frame into which the rule is inserted.

*b, b, b, b*, four pegs in the frame *a*; used to secure the paper.

*c, c, c, c*, perforations in the board *d*, into which, when the frame is closed, the pegs *b, b, b, b*, must enter.

## PLATE II.

Map constructed agreeably to the plan explained on pages 17 and 27.

## PLATE III.

Represents three different methods proposed for printing books for the blind—the first used in France—the second in Scotland,\* and the third adapted to the method proposed, (see page 23,) as a substitute, for the present mode of printing. As, in representing the elementary sounds of our language, this character will be more intelligible to the general reader than dots, perpendicular, slanting, horizontal, curved, and other lines of a similar description, it is here used in preference to them, though we are by no means sure that the latter method, while it affords great advantages for condensing the size of the book, will not at the same time be more palpable to the blind, and consequently more easily read. The experiments which have been made in this Institution with this character seem to confirm such an opinion.

## PLATE IV.

*Figure 1*, diagram of the 47th proposition, 1st book of Euclid.

*Figure 2*, method of printing music for the blind.

N. B. The New-York Institution for the Blind, is established at 62 Spring-street, and will be open every Thursday afternoon for the reception of visitors. Application for admission at any other time must be made at the Institution, to Dr. J. D. Russ, Superintendent.

\* We believe that we were in error in stating that the triangular character was an invention of two blind individuals. It is the string alphabet, and not the triangular character which they claim to have invented.

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