

A new era in the education of blind children : or teaching the blind in ordinary schools / by Alexander Barnhill.

Contributors

Barnhill, Alexander.

Publication/Creation

Glasgow : Charles Glass, [1875]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/yvnpy8fj>

License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

A NEW ERA
IN
THE EDUCATION
OF
BLIND CHILDREN.

M
104



22501344890

To Edmund C. Johnson Esq
With the Compliments
of the Author

2 Sept 1848
Glasgow }

⑤

8



*With the Compliments
of the Author
Sept 1878*

A NEW ERA
IN THE
EDUCATION OF BLIND CHILDREN;
OR
TEACHING THE BLIND

IN
ORDINARY SCHOOLS,
AN ABSTRACT OF WHICH WAS READ AT THE LATE MEETING OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE CONGRESS
HELD IN GLASGOW.

BY ALEXANDER BARNHILL,
Of the Glasgow Mission to the Out-Door Blind, Religious Institution Rooms, Glasgow.

"I was eyes to the blind; and the cause which I knew not I searched out."—Job xxix. 15, 16.

GLASGOW:
CHARLES GLASS & CO., 85 MAXWELL STREET.
JOHN M'CALLUM, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION ROOMS.
LONDON: HOULSTON & SONS, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS.
EDINBURGH: JOHN MENZIES & CO. ABERDEEN: JAMES MURRAY.

WW800 1875B26n

WILLIAMS LIBRARY
General Collections
M
104

TO THE
PRESIDENT, SIR JAMES WATSON
(Late Lord Provost of the City of Glasgow),

AND THE
DIRECTORS

OF THE
Glasgow Mission to the Out-Door Blind,

THE FOLLOWING ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN, ILLUSTRATE, AND PROVE THE NEW SYSTEM OF
EDUCATING THE BLIND, ORIGINATED AND DEVELOPED IN THE PROSECUTION
OF THE WORK OF THE MISSION

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE
AUTHOR.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION ROOMS,
GLASGOW, 1st Jan., 1875.



C O N T E N T S.

CHAPTER I.		PAGE
Educating Neglected Blind Children, - - - - -		9
CHAPTER II.		
Education in Ordinary Schools, - - - - -		12
CHAPTER III.		
Not Interfering with Teacher's Time and School Exercises, -		15
CHAPTER IV.		
Enabling all Blind Children to be Educated, - - - - -		17
CHAPTER V.		
Blind Children Sharing in Improved Character of Public Schools, - - - - -		23
CHAPTER VI.		
Giving Blind Children Common Associations and Cheerful Influences, - - - - -		25
CHAPTER VII.		
Competition with the Sighted Prompting and Stimulating Blind Children, - - - - -		27
CHAPTER VIII.		
Arithmetical Calculations with the Sighted, - - - - -		29
CHAPTER IX.		
Reading in Raised Type in Ordinary Schools, - - - - -		31
CHAPTER X.		
Appliances for Writing, Geography, &c., - - - - -		36
CHAPTER XI.		
Notices of Blind Children Attending Ordinary Schools, - -		42
CHAPTER XII.		
Testimonies of Teachers, Societies, &c., - - - - -		52
APPENDIX.		
The Higher Education of Blind Children, - - - - -		78



P R E F A C E.

“**A**S to the teaching of the blind in mixed schools, I can see this is *A New Era* in the teaching of the blind.” Such were the words of the late Rev. Andrew M^rFarlane, D.D., Secretary of the Greenock Society for Teaching the Blind to read, at a Meeting of that Society, held on 18th December, 1870, when, after two years’ trial of teaching the blind with the sighted, they were examined side by side, the blind maintaining a most satisfactory position.

How truly prophetic this remark was, may be estimated by the general acceptance with which the proposition has been received here and elsewhere ; by the many blind children who have been and are being taught within the sphere of the Glasgow Mission to the Blind ; and in other places in England and Scotland, where the system has been adopted ; by the satisfactory Testimonies of Teachers who have tried it ; and others who have had opportunity of judging it ; by the heartiness with which it has been welcomed by many of the adult blind ; by its formal sanction by a clause in the Scotch Education Bill, which was the outcome of the Greenock experiment ; by the testimony from London in the invitation last spring of blind children to the National Schools by the London School Board, through the negotiations of the London Home Teaching Society ; whose resolution of approval bore that the admission of blind children into the London National Schools, and their being taught by their teachers was described as marking *A New Era* in their philanthropic Mission to the Blind.

A few words in the way of preface may be said as to the discussion of the idea of educating the blind with the sighted. Mr. Bird, of London, has, for twenty-five years, advocated this cause, by publication and correspondence, under the name of the home and social system. Mr. Martin, Royal Blind Asylum, Edinburgh, has for fifteen years, there and elsewhere, urged the education of the blind in sighted schools, and the Directors of the same institution have used their influence in the same cause. Several books written about the blind have expressed approval of the principle; an individual schoolmaster here and there, each after his own fashion, has kindly received and taught any blind child he met, and it is known that several young men have passed through the Universities, which is an illustration of the same principle. Rev. Mr. Blackstock, the late teacher of the Mission, much encouraged the prosecution of this movement, and was at the head of a Society of the Blind in Glasgow, which entered heartily into the matter by sending circulars containing the first account of the Greenock system, and the testimony of Mr. Kay and others, to various Members of Parliament, and also a Memorial to the Lord Advocate. The President of the Glasgow Mission used most earnest means with various Members of Parliament, which did very much to secure the recognition of the claims of the blind in the Education Bill. To him, therefore, these named above and others, more especially the Greenock friends who wrought out the experiment, as well as to George Anderson, Esq., M.P., and Sir David Wedderburn, Bart., whose amendment was agreed to, making provision for the education of the blind, the thanks of the country are eminently due.

When this was passing through the press, attention was called to an extract from the Annual Report of the Edinburgh Institution for the Blind with reference to the education of blind children in sighted schools, which says that to it belongs the credit of the movement, as it is recorded that forty years ago the Directors sent a number of the blind boys to the Sessional School, where they made admirable and satisfactory progress. The public aspect of this question six years ago and its condition now, with a statement of what has been done in the interval, as detailed in these pages, is the best answer to the above claim for the credit of the movement. The claim goes back to something done forty years ago, and the Directors of that

period may be fairly congratulated on the education of these blind boys in the manner referred to, and for their early appreciation of the principle. But in a claim for the credit of the movement, the following considerations have some weight. (1.) There is little information given as to the extent of the work, and none as to the system of instruction adopted; and therefore its merits or demerits are quite unknown. (2.) That it is made a long time after the work seems to have ceased, and not until the Greenock movement was originated, proved, and generally accepted. (3.) Though early in time, it was but temporary in its character, existing for a few years and then passing away without any development or expansion.

With the discussion of the subject in a theoretical point of view, the author never intermeddled, as such discussion seemed to him to leave it very much where it was. He set himself in organizing the Greenock work to treat it entirely in a practical manner, but he frankly acknowledges his main aim to have been to educate those neglected blind children who came under his care, and not with any idea of establishing a new system; and he gives the name not as his own suggestion, but as the testimony given otherwise, which its extension seems to confirm as *A New Era* in the education of the blind. When forced by the necessities of the blind there to adopt some plan, he had no example of any education of this kind before him, and thus had to form his own model from common sense and the best judgment he could bring to bear on the subject. It can be well understood the difficulties he had to encounter, when he had to ask a teacher to enter upon this novel work of teaching the blind in his school without any precedent to appeal to of success elsewhere. The successful result of the experiment made it an imperative duty for him to call public attention to the matter, and it is very much to this that the extensive development of the system is due. Another reason which has led to its general acceptance is, that he has mainly treated the question as a means of overtaking the education of all blind children, and giving the opportunity to parents of having their children educated at home, but he has uniformly refrained from pressing it as in opposition to existing institutions, which he is convinced serve valuable purposes, and will still be required in large centres. Some may imagine that now that the principle has been established, teachers may be willing to put themselves to some trouble in the matter. This, if attempted,

will no doubt be an element of weakness that will operate to the disadvantage of the plan, and it seems to the author that its continued success very much depends in making the system as simple as possible ; and he humbly submits that the great benefit the children have received as already brought out, should not be lightly thrown away.

Although some children had been educated with the sighted, this plan was practically inoperative beyond a few isolated cases, when the experiment was commenced, and it must delight the friends of the blind that it is now getting extensive development through the country, as shown in the fact that there are fifty blind children now being taught in this manner in Scotland, while late inquiries revealed that there were only 102 being taught in the Institutions of the Blind. It is earnestly to be desired that the friends of the blind may see eye to eye in this matter, so that as much as possible one system may be adopted in overtaking the neglected blind. The good of the blind is the most important matter, and a general agreement in the best system would very much secure the education of all, suitable superintendence, suitable school books, maps, Braille frames, &c. The most essential part, no doubt, of the system is the putting of the blind children into classes, the acquiring of the common lessons at home, and repeating them in competition with seeing class-mates, so that apart from reading raised type in school, the practical results of such an education must be inestimable. But, at the same time, the experience of the author among the children, whose education he has superintended, and the great importance of their being good readers in raised type have compelled him to give no uncertain sound as to what he considers the best mode.

Sincerely thanking those who have kindly co-operated in forwarding this cause in any way, he commits the whole matter to the Lord, asking His interposition, that the best means may be adopted, and that all the blind children may be efficiently educated, and taught the knowledge of His will and His glorious Gospel.

A. B.





A NEW ERA

IN THE

EDUCATION OF BLIND CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I.

Educating Neglected Blind Children.

THE blind have a special claim to a superior education, in some measure, to counterbalance the unequal circumstances with which they have to contend. Hitherto it has been of a lower character than what the seeing have enjoyed, and many have been left without education at all.

Where the mental powers are not impaired by the cause which produces blindness, the blind have as active and vigorous faculties as others. They may be impaired by depression, idleness, and indolence, and these naturally flow from the withdrawal from the active, cheerful life which, favoured with sight, they had before. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that such persons should be early taken up and dealt with in a manner corresponding to their necessities. When so taken in hand, there is found to be nothing about their condition which prevents them being educated, well-informed, and fitted to take their place in society with others. In order to this, however, they must have something of their advantages, and the more they mingle with those having their sight in everything, the more will they be fitted to be intelligent companions.

No doubt genius will force itself upwards to the measure of the facilities within reach; but these facilities have been very limited to the great mass of the blind; and the question is now forcing itself on the minds of the community, Why should the blind not receive the utmost education of which they are capable? A kind Providence has arranged that special attention should be directed to the education of

the blind at the same time as the general question of education* has been promoted. As the first step to remedy neglect has usually been to discover that neglect, so the light that has been thrown in on the neglected condition of blind children in the country has led to the consideration how that neglect should be remedied.

The Glasgow Mission to the Blind was organised to search out the adult blind, and teach them to read in Dr. Moon's type. This had been previously prosecuted with great success by the London Home Teaching Society and the Edinburgh Society. The same result was attained in Glasgow; many became readers, who valued their restored privilege very much—some of them saying they read more after they lost their sight than ever they did before.

Many neglected blind children were also discovered. The adults, however, could almost all read before, and all that they required was to learn the shapes of the raised letters, and put them together to find that their power of reading was restored. But the children had received no education, and they therefore required the whole elementary instruction to be obtained. These children were a cause of great distress to our teachers. Even within our own city, where an excellent Asylum existed, a considerable number of such children were met with growing up without education—the parents either unable or unwilling to have them admitted as inmates to the Institution. Our teachers did the best they could for them, and gave them lessons in Dr. Moon's type as frequently as possible; but the progress made was not satisfactory, because they were not able to give the daily lessons which these children required.

When the Directors of the Asylum opened the Day School free to poor children, they were only too glad to co-operate with them to get such children to attend, but failed, from a variety of reasons, until the Superintendent invited one of the Directors of the Asylum to visit with him all the blind children on the roll. He kindly agreed to do so, and the visitation was productive of the happiest results, cordially making all welcome as he did. About sixteen children were induced to attend, and their progress afterwards was most satisfactory, proving, in an unmistakable manner, in a short time, by their appearance and intelligence, the immense advantage of the education they received. It may not be out of place to commend the same course to all institutions for the blind whose rule is only to receive inmates to open a Day School, available for all blind children within reach who may stay with their parents, and also, like the Glasgow Institution, to admit free all who cannot pay, so that none may be without education.

Probably, had our connection been with Glasgow only, this might have been considered sufficient for our blind children; but, fortunately, the Glasgow Society's operations extended to Greenock and Ayrshire, and in these places many neglected children were found who were growing up in lamentable ignorance. Such as had been educated heretofore had been sent to the Asylum, which received inmates for board and education for £12 12s. per annum. Any expectation for the education of such children was from the same source. It was

attempted, and with some success, to collect means and use influence for bringing some children to Glasgow, and arrangements were made in one or two cases to get parents to come to the city to get the benefit of attending the Day School of the Asylum; but the number who could not be brought made the position very distressing indeed, and as these children were growing up without education, there was an urgent necessity for some means being devised to have them taught on the spot.





CHAPTER II.

Education in Ordinary Schools.

WHEN the means of educating the blind at the place of their residence had to be sought, all was dark. It was a natural thought to have them taught privately—some kind relative or friend, some missionary or Bible-woman, if such could be found. It would have been a great relief to have had such an opening. The parents were thought of. This was set aside as a scheme sure to fail, except when under the care of a very few intelligent persons, but, for the generality of parents, not likely to succeed.

The discovery of a blind boy in Greenock, who could not be taken to Glasgow, brought the matter to an immediate decision. Something must be done for him. The first step thought of was to teach him the raised letters. The only type likely to induce assistance was Alston's Roman capitals, readable at sight by any one. The father was desired to give lessons to his boy until he could spell and name words of three or four letters, while light was looked for as to the future course. The Alphabet and First Lesson Book were left with the father, who did his duty. The boy made encouraging progress in a very short time, and he was ready for the next step, viz., some settled form of instruction.

As the only hope seemed to be the ordinary school, the father was asked as to any suitable one, and as to any person who might have influence in regard to that school; and having named one, and a benevolent elder in the church with which it was connected, his kindly influence was sought and readily granted. The teacher was told that he was not expected to give his time at all, but first, to permit any advanced scholar to give the boy daily lessons in the Roman type raised book; second, to put him with the youngest class, and let him stand up with the other children, and answer questions with them, taking or losing places according to his ability to answer; and third, to give him a copy of the ordinary class-book, marked with the lesson for the following day, that the father might go over with him the lesson at home in advance, to be somewhat prepared to answer the usual questions. The mother, as requested, took her boy up to the school; but the answer was such as perhaps might have been expected

He was sent home again with her, and the earnest hopes were disappointed.

There was no recourse then but to call upon the teacher personally, to explain all that was wanted, and, if possible, answer any objections. The objection that he could not be responsible for the safety of a blind boy coming to his school was met by the proposition that his parents would get one of the other boys in the school to take charge of him in going to and returning from the school, and, of course, if any accident happened to him, he would not be responsible, that his parents would relieve him from anything of that kind. The objection that he did not know what to do with him was met by the small requests as to giving him lessons in raised type by an advanced scholar, and permitting him to join the youngest class, and to answer questions with the other scholars, as giving him suitable instruction, and not interfering with the school exercises. He at last kindly gave his consent, expressly disowning any responsibility as to his safety or his progress. On returning, it was felt to be great cause of gratitude for the opening made, although everything yet had to be developed.

The boy was put under the care of the female teacher, received his reading lessons as requested, and joined the youngest class. She was greatly pleased that he was able to read and to spell. He could spell many of the words the other children could not do, and frequently came home at the head of the class. He soon made great progress, became a favourite in the school, and his usual place was above the others. When once, for a fault, he was put to the bottom of the class so intensely did he feel the humiliation, that he at first refused to go down, and it was with great reluctance that he obeyed, but he soon recovered his place again. At the close of the Session, so satisfactory was his position, that he was awarded two prizes, and was a proud and happy boy. It would be difficult to tell who was the happiest at such a result, the boy, the parents, the teacher, or the proposer of the plan, the latter may be excused for thinking that he was the happiest at such a result, establishing so satisfactorily the principle aimed at, for which he thanked God and took courage.

The discovery of several other blind children rendered it necessary that provision should be made for their education. Mr. Young, of the Middle Parish School, Greenock, had done his part so well, that he was asked to receive these other children also, but circumstances prevented this, and another school had to be sought, where all the blind children could be taught together. Mr. Kay and the Directors of the Charity School, Greenock, kindly agreed to receive them, and arrangements were made for the admission of five blind children into the school, including the advanced boy, that any special assistance for their peculiar wants in appliances, &c., might be provided. How well Mr. Kay has done his part is now matter of history, the successful development of the plan is greatly due to his kindness, perseverance, and ability.

It remains now only to say that the plan originally sketched out has been found quite to answer the purpose, securing, as its main element, that the blind child shall share in all the common exercises of the

school, and make common progress with his fellows, frequently taking the lead. Some of the more prominent collateral advantages of the system will be noticed in subsequent chapters.

The two short daily reading lessons have been found, from their frequency and regularity, most efficient in training to correct reading of the raised type. The readiness of obtaining lessons by any of the advanced scholars, and the assistance of parents or friends at home, has given great facility for doing this, and thus the child has made great progress, and been much encouraged and stimulated thereby. After being about a year or two at school, and the child becomes a somewhat good reader, some other subjects might be gradually taught by the advanced scholar or pupil-teacher in one or other of the short private lessons. He might be taught to write in the common writing characters, if the teacher would kindly require the appliances afterwards described to be provided. Then, later on, it would be well if a raised map of the country, on which the geography lesson is being given, would be obtained for him, (constructed as afterwards explained) that he might get one of the private lessons upon it, to give some idea of the relative positions of the different places. Another means of filling up one of these short lessons might be profitably spent in learning knitting. In connection with this, it may be mentioned that Mr. Kay kindly attended to the two blind girls in his school in this department by handing them over to the female teacher, to this most gratifying practical result—that now they can knit for themselves and their friends, and frequently receive orders for knitted work.





CHAPTER III.

Not interfering with Teacher's Time and School Exercises.

IN the possible or probable interference with the teacher's time, and the exercises of the different classes, lay one great difficulty that had to be contended with in the admission of blind children to the ordinary schools. Even a slight obstruction to the 500 for the probable good of the 5 might be purchased too dearly.

For the sake of economy of the teacher's time, children are usually placed in classes, according to their progress. Whatever instruction he gives, thus tells on the whole case once for all. They answer in turn, any mistakes made or corrected in the presence of all, and thus all receive the benefit. There is not only economy in time in this, but efficiency is also promoted, because any error or slip made by a scholar, is almost sure to be detected by one or other. Each one is eager to give the correct answer, and thus the competitive exercises among the many have a wonderful effect in quickening the faculties of those so taught.

To teach the blind separately would manifestly interfere with the teacher's time and the school exercises, and it would be impossible to carry on such a work. But would there be any necessity for this, are not the lessons they must go through the same as the others receive, spelling, meaning, grammar, &c. ? If the blind child is placed along with a class suitable to his years and capacity, he of course joins with them in their exercises, and he will be treated as his seeing school-mates. There will thus be no interference with the teacher's time nor with the progress of the sighted scholars, whichever, sighted or blind, could answer speedily and correctly, would attain the position of merit in the same manner as if all had sight. Will it not, in fact, rather be a help by the presence of such an one giving a deeper interest to the whole exercises ?

It may be asked, would not the deprivation prevent the blind from taking his position in the class ? In all else but reading he would act as the others, but in present circumstances it would be impossible for him to read with the others, because the ordinary school-books are not printed in raised type. The inability to read with the others, however, would not interfere with the common reading lessons, if for the time he was asked to spell any of the words he would have other-

wise read, or give their meaning, and he were required to listen to what was read, so as to be able to answer any question upon it. Not unfrequently it might be that his better attention would prove a contrast to some who had all the advantage of sight in fixing the idea on the memory from the open page. If the blind boy could not answer, his inattention would be made apparent, and the usual consequences would follow. The fuller exercise of attention and memory called forth would be invaluable in training him to the habit of concentration of thought.

But although the blind child by taking his position in the class, and sharing with the other children in everything, would receive no special attention, and his instruction, therefore, so far, would not at all interfere with the class exercises, even when taught by the principal teacher, yet the separate lessons in raised type might not unnaturally be thought to be an interference; and so it would be if the teacher were expected to do it. In the institution of the scheme, however, it was seen to be an essential part of its practicability that the teacher must not be asked, nor expected to give, his time to these separate lessons. This might be readily undertaken by one or other of the older scholars without interfering with their own proper lessons, as they might sometimes be disengaged for a short time. Further, the advanced scholar or pupil-teacher could be changed at pleasure, because no new character had to be learned, the raised type being readable at a glance; thus the encroachment would be reduced to a minimum, and the amount of interference inappreciable to any one, and yet the benefit to the blind children efficient and complete. But there may be some advantages on the other side. These instructors, in teaching, would become learners; they would learn sympathy and kindly feeling; they would learn how to gain access to the heart; they would learn what it was to be apt to teach. Probably, instead of being thought to be a burden, it would be considered a privilege to get this duty to perform. Mr. Kay, of Greenock, said that he always found the more advanced children in the school very willing to give their blind friends assistance; and with regard to his own time, he said that his time was not taken up with them individually to any extent.





CHAPTER IV.

Enabling all Blind Children to be Educated.

IT is a great matter that the education of blind children in the ordinary schools can be pleaded on the ground that thus all the blind may receive education.

To show the strength of this plea, a few words perhaps may be said as to how they have been treated in the past. It is not necessary to blame any one for this, for it is the system that has permitted such neglect to take place. The system has been to leave the matter to charity, and what was not taken up, to leave undone. It will not surely be pleaded that the blind should be left uncared for, to give charity scope to help some day. Thanks are due to the kind friends who have come forward to help, but the cases are too numerous, and the necessity too urgent to be left to such a provision. Legal provision has been made that none shall be allowed to starve, is not this as clamant a case, that every blind child should be taken in charge and provided with whatever is necessary to enable him to meet his trying circumstances in the most effective manner.

Much difficulty or expense has usually stood in the way of the admission of blind children into institutions, and many have been entirely neglected. In these circumstances the plea of educating all the blind children in the ordinary schools must be acknowledged to be of the strongest character. There is cause of thankfulness that the day is near when the blot of the neglect of these children will be wiped away. Sufficient indication already appears that the country will not tolerate the education of 50 per cent. in institutions, and leave the remainder to grow up uncared for. This is said without the slightest wish to depreciate the advantages which many have received from being educated at institutions. These have answered valuable purposes in calling attention to the importance and necessity of education, and by doing something towards it, and they have been the means of providing the various appliances. They have usually good teachers, they inculcate and train to habits of order, cleanliness, and diligence, and have provided good homes and elevation for many who, but for them, might have been neglected in all that pertains to this world and the next, if not trained to positive evil. In addition to

their value as places for teaching trades and providing employment, it will be of importance that such places should continue, and be improved to the utmost, for the children of such parents as would prefer to have them educated at institutions, and for orphans and such as have not the beneficial influence of well regulated homes. But under the old system no one had any responsibility to see that all blind children were properly cared for. The institutions for the blind dealt with the applications made, if the queries were satisfactorily answered, the necessary number of votes provided, or the amount for board and education. But the friends of the blind have been quite unable to meet the necessary conditions, a favoured number got admission, and the rest were left to ignorance and neglect.

There seems little appearance that any system will meet the necessity, except teaching them in the ordinary schools, which is not without many advantages. But it will not do to leave the matter to depend on the father to take the necessary steps, and to provide the necessary means. A certain standard of education has been common for the children of paupers, somewhat in accordance with their position. It has been left with working people to educate their own children according to their will and their ability. This seems a suitable place to urge that some special cognizance should be taken of the education of blind children, that it should be of a very good character, and that they should go as early and continue as long as possible at really efficient schools. To secure this, and that the expense should not in any case be a hindrance either in regard to the amount of the fees, the time to be spent at the school, or the expense of appliances, all these should be paid from the public school fund, and there should be presented a complete set of appliances to the child on leaving school. Any parent who desired to pay such expenses, should be permitted to do so on application. Were such a system adopted, the blind would be in some measure better prepared to meet their position, and would form a very different portion of the community from what they have done. This should not be looked upon in the light of pauperising the blind, but as an expression of sympathy for the calamity, on the part of the community, with the afflicted family, in view of the life's blindness in prospect, effectively to guarantee an efficient education. A similar provision should be made for all the children of blind parents who meet with such a crushing blow in being deprived of their means of support by their blindness.

Teaching blind children with the sighted has not been advocated for the purpose of withdrawing children from institutions, but to overtake those not being educated, and to give any one an opportunity of having his child taught at home. Which may be the better education need not be inquired into at present. Not that there is any reason to fear for education in sighted schools if rightly conducted. It is, however, more important to develop and to improve such education to the uttermost, and leave the result to be determined on as shall be found to be best. The great matter is to get a good education for

all. At first, when teaching in this manner was proposed, it was a great thing to receive any education for these neglected ones; but with the result now realised, it would not be right to be satisfied without great efficiency, and to this we may look forward.

Perhaps it may be suitable to notice here the opinion expressed by some that education in the ordinary school would only be applicable to the simplest elements. It is difficult to see a limit to any of the ordinary branches of education, let it be history, grammar, natural history, arithmetic, &c. Blind children have now been taught in such schools even in the higher classes,* and have maintained a good position, with satisfaction both to teacher and scholar. The blind can and will make progress if they get justice in preparing the lessons at home, in appliances, &c.; and so far from being a hindrance to the progress of others, it will be the reverse. In some questions, such as mental arithmetic, and where abstract thought is required, the blind boy may probably lead the others by excelling in his answers. Education is essentially a mental process; the children have to be instructed by explanations and exercises frequently repeated. The question will be, have the blind the mental powers of understanding, judgment, and memory, to think and act intelligently? Such as have come into contact with them and other children who have had equal advantages, will readily acknowledge that their faculties are as acute and retentive, and in many cases more so.

It may be expected that many things in this new course of instruction may require to be adjusted. Officials may raise difficulties as to examination, certification, &c., on the ground that authority from head-quarters is needed. It will surely be unnecessary to claim that an Inspector visiting any school for examination should take a blind child on for trial as well as another child. If he can be taught with other children, he can surely be examined as well. A teacher who has done his duty in progressing his blind pupil should surely receive the full credit of it; in fact, it should be a higher mark of merit if, notwithstanding his disadvantages, a blind child can be made to stand on a position of equality. Perhaps there may be some adjustment required as to the relative merit of certain branches, which could very easily be done. Then a blind child should not be rejected from any juvenile institution because of any supposed physical defect when the child has been found to be quite competent to be educated in the ordinary schools along with children who have their sight. If the occasion should call up the legal question as to such cases, the authorities who feel themselves hampered would render a good service to the blind and to the country, before incurring the responsibility of rejecting such cases, to report the state of matters to head-quarters; for it is only thus that such things may be expected to be remedied.

It is matter of great satisfaction to find a growing favour to the plan of having the blind educated with other children. It is of importance to make this system as perfect and complete as possible, and

* See Chap. xii. Letter of John Adam, Esq.

therefore it is well to encourage a free interchange of opinion as to any improvements. Many proposals may be made which may threaten to do damage to the good cause; but in the end good will result. The plan of teaching the blind with the sighted is now a thoroughly practical one. It has been many years in operation; it has received the testimony of many teachers and persons competent to give an opinion, and it is not very encouraging to hear new views under the name of improvements, which seem to be a going back in the direction of the old state of things.

It has lately been suggested by some friends of the blind, while approving generally of educating them with the sighted, "that blind children who have not been educated in blind schools are not nearly so helpful as those who have had this advantage. What we seem to want, then, is a school of first instance where the child shall be taught to read and to be helpful to itself; also to dress and eat, &c., with ease. The child having become able to read and to be helpful, will then go home to receive its education along with other children at the Board Schools." This view has been presented by friends so justly esteemed for their long and useful interest in, and efforts on behalf of the blind, that anything of a contrary character is very unwillingly indicated, and yet it seems to be so much fitted to interpose a hindrance without any apparent necessity to the system of the education of the blind, in the common schools, with which the writer is so much associated, that it is hoped they will kindly consider the following thoughts written under a sense of public duty. Before mentioning these, however, it may be well to state that it is not intended to say anything in these pages derogatory to institutions, or fitted to hinder any one from sending his child to one. There are some parents who would desire to send their children to such places for various reasons, and there are other children who should be sent for the whole course to prevent them from being utterly neglected or trained to bad habits. But to affirm that, children require first to be sent to a school for the blind before going to an ordinary school, does not agree with the experience of the past few years. There seem to be three points stated, for the sake of which he blind child should go to a blind school: first, to be taught to read; second, to be helpful to himself, or to take care of itself; and third, to dress and eat, &c., with ease. Let us consider these points in their order.

First, the supposed necessity of sending a blind child to a blind school to learn to read. What is all the experience at Greenock and other places to show but that the children can and have been most successfully taught to read, to read fluently, without ever being in a blind school? It would rather be going backwards if, notwithstanding the six years experience and testimonies in this direction unfolded in these pages, that, after all, the children should have been sent to a blind school to be taught to read. It will surely not be necessary to send them to learn to read after they are excellent readers; and if they can be taught to read without going to a blind school, where is the necessity? It has been thought advisable to have the child taught the Alphabet, and to read words of two or three letters, before going to

school. By the Roman type, this has easily been done by the parents and friends at home. It is unnecessary to repeat with what efficiency the child has progressed by the simple aid of the advanced scholar. It may have some weight in the consideration of this matter to state that, in having to do with the admission of blind children into, and their education in, between thirty and forty different sighted schools, the supposed want has not come up, nor has there been any complaint on the part of teachers of such a want, which is the more remarkable as almost all of these children commenced their education at these sighted schools. One thing is sure, then: there has been no necessity manifested in the development of this plan which at all needed the aid of a blind school to teach the blind child to read.

Then, second, the child is supposed to need to be taught in a blind school to be helpful to itself, or to be able to take care of itself. This is the natural duty of the parents, and he will be as well taught this department at home as he could be taught in a blind school. The boy will very soon be taught by his mother to attend to all his little wants; he will come to know everything in the house, to know where all his things lie, and be a useful aid to his mother in many ways. He does not need to be sent to a blind school to learn to walk. The children who were never at a blind school can walk quite as well as those who have been in one. A pretty extensive experience of such children never at blind schools gives clear testimony that, to send a child there for such a purpose, is quite unnecessary. Usually, in the first instance, in going to an ordinary school, he is kindly taken to and from by one with his sight attending the same school. His sighted companion is proud of the honour of conducting him, and often those with sight have competed which would have the blind boy to take home. But soon he feels himself independent of such aid, and comes to be a safe, because a careful, walker alone. The idea of the helplessness of blind children not taught at a blind school has apparently got its foundation from the photograph of a blind child utterly neglected; but the contrast between such an one and a blind boy attending an ordinary school is of the widest description. One who has never seen it would scarcely believe the great change that comes over a blind boy by a year or two's attendance at school and education with sighted companions—in his appearance, his cheerfulness, his intelligence, and his smartness. The change is far greater than comes over a boy with his sight attending school.

The third point is, that the blind boy should be sent to a blind school to be taught to eat and dress, &c., with ease. The training of a blind child in these matters will be quite as well conducted in his parents' house as anywhere else. He will be taught to act like his brothers and sisters in washing, dressing, eating, &c. Very possibly the whole household might stand an improvement in these matters, and particularly the children; but who would think of sending them to a boarding-school for such a purpose? The greatest danger lies in over indulgence, and in doing for him what he should be taught to do for himself. A good way of aiding the parents in these matters would be to circulate an excellent little book by

J. G. Knie, of Breslau, translated from the German by Rev. W. Taylor, on "The Management and Education of Blind Children," giving very good directions, from infancy onwards. This book is written from a thorough knowledge of the subject, and contains so much practical common sense, that it readily commends itself to parents; and it might be well to print and circulate a cheap edition for their information. But to send these children to a blind school for such purposes seems really uncalled for, and of little practical benefit. The adoption of the proposition of sending blind children to a blind school before going to the common school would interfere with the whole plan of education, tend to bring back the days of ignorance and neglect, and to raise again the barriers to their education, which are only now breaking down, by which they are being so much restored to society.





CHAPTER V.

Blind Children Sharing in Improved Character of Public Schools.

IT has been already noticed how the blind can share in the education of our ordinary schools by taking their places in the same classes with the sighted, and joining in all the lessons. The efficiency of the education they thus receive may be seen by their sharing in the improved character of our public schools, from the high attainments and thorough training of our teachers, and, by consequence, from the superior manner in which our schools are carried on. Any one who has been present during the exercises of many of our public schools must have been delighted by the extensive range and varied character of the information given, and the interesting manner in which it was communicated in explaining and illustrating the lessons. None but qualified and effective persons will be permitted to retain their positions under our School Boards; and we may look forward to continued improvement, now that everything is under the eye of the country. By being taught with the sighted, the blind children, besides the sympathy of numbers, get the full benefit of all these advantages. Even the very mistakes and errors of the class-fellows will give occasion to render the exercises more profitable, by confirming what was right and detecting what was wrong.

Then the blind have the advantage of the present superior style of class or text-books. Without drawing any comparison of what the blind have had in the past, it will be gratifying to learn if the education at present in institutions is generally equal to the ordinary schools in respect to school-books. Probably some of them give their principal lessons from raised type books, which will not stand comparison with what the ordinary schools have. It must rejoice the hearts of the blind and their friends to know that, by access to the common school, they have the full benefit of the school-books now in use in such school.

From the blind child being continually under notice, and progressing with the other children, it cannot fail that his necessities and wants will secure proper attention. The teachers who have the care of blind children will esteem it to be a privilege, from their interest in them, to do what they can in any way to further their education, and will be glad if they can devise new appliances or improve those existing. And

there cannot be a doubt that, however simple and satisfactory it is at present to carry forward such an one with his class, it will be much improved by this continual, thoughtful attention. Many thus interested in the blind will do much to arrest public attention to their condition and prospects, and probably lead the way to some substantial improvement on their future course, as well as produce a deeper sympathy for the whole class.

Some teachers who agree to take a blind child into their schools from sympathy seem disposed to think that the best course is to give him all his lessons separately. Although admission was specially asked, on the ground of receiving his lessons with the other children in classes, whether from indifference or imagining that it is easier or better to have him so taught, the fact has been that some have been so treated. It cannot be easier, for separate instruction must take up far more time than by teaching him as one of many. This limiting the general lessons to give special attention to him must hinder the general progress of the school, and by so much tend to his exclusion from the school. Besides, the child must thus receive far fewer lessons, and be unable to share in the common education of the school. He will also be kept in wearisome dullness and idleness waiting for his next lesson. It is so injurious, that it would be better that he were taken out of the school than permitted to remain where he is a hindrance to others and unkindly treated himself.





CHAPTER VI.

Giving Blind Children Common Associations and Cheerful Influences.

EDUCATION in the ordinary school gives the blind children common associations and cheerful influences, and counteracts any feelings of isolation or despondency.

One of the greatest blessings this plan gives the blind boy is in his continuing to enjoy the society and happiness of home. With kind and loving parents, having a deep interest in his progress, and in the supply of all his wants, are there not reasons why he should be retained in the domestic circle, and receive his education under home influence, if this can be effectually done? There may be two or three brothers or sisters linked together in happy affection and sympathy. To send him with them to the nearest efficient school, must contrast favourably with breaking the home tie at an early age, and sending him out of the house as unfit to be educated with them. This isolation in a strange house with many other children affected by the same calamity, can scarcely but have a depressing and enervating effect. Persons so situated are naturally disposed to form peculiar notions of themselves as one class, and those outside as another, taking a very superior master to counteract such a tendency. The thought comes naturally up in such circumstances that there is no place like home. The ability of such a child to remain at home is bound up with the success of this effort to have him taught with the sighted.

Education in the common school has a cheerful and enlivening effect on him, as he mingles with his school-mates in their gossip, their fun, their lessons, the common incidents of the school, the whole course of the day's lessons, as class after class is examined. He will remember when his turn comes, and know what the lesson is. Nothing can be happier than this social influence, or more fitted to dispel the natural despondency of his affliction. By mixing freely with those who have their sight he comes to think and feel as they do, seeing very much with their eyes.

Then there is the home influence in his education. His lessons for the following day being marked, the friends feel an interest in his going well prepared. There will probably be one or more going to the same school from the family, how cheerfully they will go together to enter upon the duties of the day and return reviewing many

pleasant reminiscences. And when it happens, as no doubt it frequently will, that a brother or sister is in the same class, the pleasure of learning their lessons together at home and competing in the school must give an interest of no ordinary description.


The fear that such children may be laughed at, mocked, or ill-used, foolishly thought by some parents, has been amply refuted by experience of the very opposite character, they very often becoming the favourites of the school. The kindly feeling thus promoted between those so differently circumstanced naturally leads to friendship and attachment enduring through life greatly to the benefit of those blind persons. This will also be greatly to the advantage of those having their sight from the sympathy and interest called forth towards those afflicted, not only to those persons personally known, but more or less to the whole class from the tender associations thus promoted. It is probable that the reason why the blind have not obtained that consideration which their position entitled them to, has been because they have been so isolated from the community. This change will tend very much to restore them back to society.





CHAPTER VII.

Competition with the Sighted prompting and stimulating Blind Children.

OMPETITION with the sighted prompts and stimulates the blind, improves their mental faculties, and gives them higher aims.

The teacher's part, on the admission of a blind child, will be to place him in a class suitable to any advancement he may have made. When he enters for the first time, he will, of course, take the youngest class and join with the other children in their lessons. In any thing of the nature of reading, he will be, of course, excused; but he will stand with the rest at the reading lesson, listening to what is read, and answering any questions on the part read. He will be called upon to spell, to give the meanings of the words, &c. It is of importance not to place him in a class above his years, rather let the opposite course be adopted, leaving him to show his superior ability and the consequent necessity of his being placed in a higher class.

Naturally timid and shrinking, he may need something to draw him out, probably entering upon this new sphere with downcast countenance and tremulousness, and he may need encouragement at first. This in an especial manner his father and mother should give him. But they should beware of petting him or making a baby of him, or making a great deal of any little thing he may do. Certainly when he makes progress by every means encourage him without making him a prodigy. As he will be dependent on those at home for going well prepared with his lessons, let nothing stand in the way of his going out able to maintain his own when called upon. The parent will be amply repaid and encouraged when he comes home in the afternoon, having said his lessons well and kept his position in the class.

The presence of a blind boy joining in the common lessons brings interest and zest to the exercises, especially when excellence on his part places any of the others in a subordinate position. This will prove a stimulus and an incentive to share the honour of superiority with their blind companion. As the practical result of this competition has often placed the blind boy in this position, he

has been not unfrequently held up as an example to the others. But his presence in such a class has a greater effect upon himself. It will be the teacher's part to see that he suffers no disadvantage in his class by reason of his blindness, that he gets his proper turn and the full benefit of any attainment, that any mistake or defect be corrected and put right. It will be at once seen there should be no extreme severity in dealing with him. Usually he will feel keenly any loss, and sometimes a tone of surprise may both encourage and stimulate. But, on the other hand, there should be no favouritism shown him above the others unless in exceptional cases where clearly called for. He will be quick to notice any favouritism, and so will the other boys, and this will destroy his position in the class. If he come prepared with his lessons, and get full scope for competition, judging from past experience, he will maintain a good position, and be much disappointed when any untoward circumstance places him down.

The habit in many schools of taking places is well suited to the blind boy, because it shows in a tangible manner the effects of diligence and earnestness when he is put on his merit, as well as the consequences of not being prepared. The happiest result may be expected from competition. When a failure in correctly repeating the lessons occurs in an ordinary school, there is usually an eagerness on the part of the others to show the possession of the necessary knowledge. This is brought out more particularly where taking places is the rule, and thus is seen how much the attainment of a higher position encourages and stimulates. It will be readily believed that this will operate in a much stronger degree with one who is blind, when he is contending with those who have their sight. Such an one cannot but feel his privation, he remembers that his companions have what he has not, but if he can show his equality with them a great matter is gained in encouraging him. If his superiority comes out a higher position is obtained, he takes a higher aim, he finds success obtainable by efforts, he gets accustomed to get what he aims for, and when he finds this is the case, notwithstanding his privation, he looks forward with hope to the future that what diligence and perseverance have obtained for him already may be repeated in opening other doors. Thus he is stimulated and inspired, his mental powers are developed, and he enters upon the world accustomed to succeed, and is thus prepared to spare no effort for his onward progress. This will be specially manifested in arithmetical competition, where his mental powers will have full scope.

As the blind boy usually takes a good position in the class, what has been depicted above seems but the natural result of the training and habit he acquires among his sighted companions. Such a training is the very thing needed for him, and he obtains it as one of the accompanying advantages of this mode of education, being a training for his future life, not less than a good education.

As corroborative of the advantages of competition and sympathy, it may be mentioned, that a number of sighted pupils have been admitted to the College for Blind Sons of Gentlemen, Worcester, for education together, with satisfactory results.



CHAPTER VIII.

Arithmetical Calculations with the Sighted.

ARITHMETICAL calculations in ordinary schools with sighted children can be satisfactorily accomplished. It is easy to see how blind children can compete with those having their sight in mental arithmetic. It requires no appliances, a thoughtful exercise of the mind, when properly instructed, enabling the blind to answer as well as another. The habit of abstract thought acquired by their blindness, may, as we have seen, give them even some advantage. But lengthened arithmetical calculations might naturally be thought to be beyond the reach of conjoint education, as the blind would require special appliances to put down and read quickly the figures in consecutive order. This might be supposed attainable in separate instruction, or in a special school with other blind persons, but that it could not be accomplished along with children who had their sight.

The advantage of knowing the mode in operation at the Glasgow Asylum, by the kind explanation of Mr. Aitken, the teacher, at once suggested that it was quite applicable to be wrought along with the ordinary mode of calculation by slate and pencil. The mode was this: the teacher gave out the account verbally; the children, by means of the board with pentagonal holes and pins (to be immediately described,) took down the account. They then made the necessary calculations, and placed the result down by their pins as required. It was seen that nimble fingers from use, and quickened apprehension, would make great progress, and probably leave many slate-pencil workers behind who were not quick at their calculations. Then, further acquaintance with the mode made it plain that a blank line separated pounds, shillings, pence, and farthings from each other, &c. Before the teacher was asked to take any part in this department, boards and pins were provided, the system was thoroughly explained to the blind children, and they received several lessons till they mastered it. A very few lessons taught them the figures, and they were soon able to do small sums, and shortly made such progress that they were able to join the youngest class.

The application of the system to joint calculations with sighted children lay in desiring the master to read out the question somewhat slowly and distinctly at first, that the blind child might copy down the figures correctly; after which, with a sufficient number of pins, he could work out the account, and hold up his board as a token of readiness. Although the master at first did not know the figures, yet the blind boy, being fully conversant with the pins, read off the answer, after having completed his calculations, and it was seen whether he

was correct. If wrong, the correction was made by his reading line after line till the wrong one was come to, and then, by going over that line figure by figure in calculation, his error was detected. The teacher soon studied the system for his own information, and then he became more and more interested in giving the blind their lessons with the other children. It would be most hurtful to the blind children not to give them the full benefit of the common interest and competition received in these calculations. The experiment was faithfully and efficiently wrought out in a school with from 500 to 600 scholars, and the blind child took his part in the calculations along with his class, with what simplicity and satisfactory results will be found in Mr. Kay's testimony (Chapter xii).

The following is the explanation of the board with pins. The board, covered with sheet tin, contains a series of five sided holes, and the pins exactly fit into these. By the one pin all the figures are made. Projecting upon the one end of the pin is a triangle, this end uppermost is made to represent the odd figures, according as the pin is placed in the five sided holes. The centre of the triangle is put on the top side of the hole at the left hand, this represents one. The same centre is moved one point round to the right hand for three, another point in the same direction for five, the next point for seven, and the remaining point for nine. Then the pin is reversed, this end has an oblong projected, the outward side of this oblong is placed parallel to the top side of the hole, and stands for two, by being moved round to the next side on the right for four, to the following one for six, then for eight, and lastly, for nothing.



The accompanying diagrams explain more clearly how the figures are placed, and how an account is wrought out.

The figure at the left hand represents the end of the pin uppermost, used for making the odd numbers.

The figures at the right hand shows the end for the even numbers.

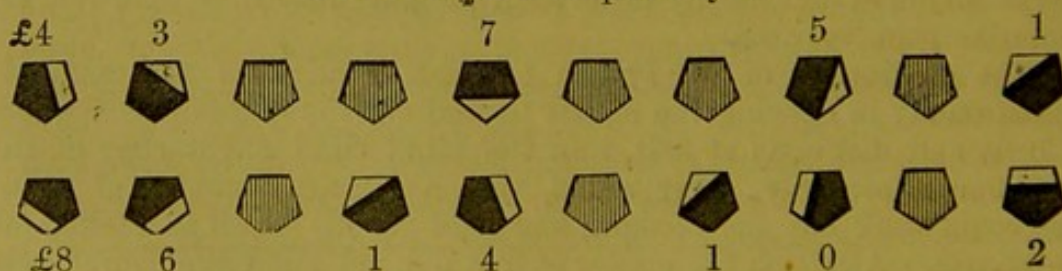


The figures are made in the following manner,—



The following is an account wrought out,—

£43 7s. 5½d. multiplied by 2.



Another system invented by the Rev. Mr. Taylor enables 16 marks to be used instead of 10, and can be used for algebra.



CHAPTER IX.

Reading in Raised Type in Ordinary Schools.

THE following short review of raised type is only for the practical purpose of considering what system may be best for blind children, now being taught in the ordinary school, and does not, therefore, enter upon a historical sketch, or notice any of the different systems except as bearing upon the question in view. It is becoming, however, to notice the great debt of gratitude due to James Gall, Esq., Edinburgh, the pioneer in this important work, in rousing the country to the necessity of providing this great boon for the blind, and in devising and putting it into practical shape. It was easy to follow when he led the way, and to propose changes and modifications to any extent, but the fact that many blind persons are still met with who prefer his system to all others, speaks much as to its value and legibility. It is gratifying to be able to state that now, at an advanced age, as a veteran taking his rest, he has the warmest interest in all that concerns the blind, and has earnestly watched, and cordially welcomed, the progress of the plan of teaching blind children with those who have their sight. *

The question now for consideration is how raised type may be best taught in the ordinary schools. The discovery of Dr. Moon's type has been an epoch in the history of the blind. Before it few of the adults, who are by far the greatest number of the blind, could be taught to read, and he is, therefore, well entitled to the gratitude of his country. This led to the formation of Home Teaching Societies, which revealed the sad condition and great number for whom there was no provision. Many neglected blind children were discovered whose wants were met as far as possible, but they had every thing to learn from the very elements, and what would do for blind persons who could read before they lost their sight would not do for them.

It was the felt want that a reading lesson or two in the week, such as the visiting agents of the Home Teaching Societies could give,

* Within a few days after the above was penned, this eminent philanthropist was called to his higher rest and his reward, at the ripe age of 91, after having well served his day and generation.

would not meet the necessity, that compelled the plan of asking their admission into the common school to receive daily lessons. About six years ago this plan was inaugurated at Greenock, and it has been carried on successfully ever since, increasing its sphere in various places year by year.

The admission of the blind into the London National Schools is an encouraging token of development. It was very gratifying to learn of the kind action of the London Home Teaching Society in this matter, by the earnest efforts of the secretary, G. Martin Tait, Esq. This Society having been formed on the basis of Dr. Moon's type exclusively, instead of taking that part of the Greenock system which adopted the Roman character for the advantages of instruction, made arrangements by which its teachers would visit the London National Schools twice a week, and teach the blind children Dr. Moon's type, which they read themselves. It is to be hoped that this will meet the expectation of its proposers; but, as it is a very important change on the plan found so efficient during the last few years, we may inquire, whether the blind children may be expected to be better taught under this mode. Surely all will agree in saying, let no hindrance stand in the way of these blind children receiving the very best education possible; whether by the blind teachers or by seeing schoolmates—whether by Dr. Moon's type or by any Roman type.

As, however, it is an essential change, it will be well to inquire what special reasons led to the adoption of Mr. Alston's Roman type for teaching the neglected blind children in the ordinary schools. In Glasgow, such children were at first taught in Dr. Moon's type, in the same manner as the adults, as frequently as possible. A difficulty was felt in instructing them, because of their having everything to learn, and because they could only obtain occasional lessons. Little help could be got from many of the parents, because they did not know the characters. The Home teachers were therefore very glad to send the children to the Day School of the Asylum when it was opened, where they soon made great progress, from the frequent and regular lessons they received.

When their admission into the ordinary school was proposed, the question of raised type had to be considered, to prevent any hindrance to success. It was clearly seen that there must be no encroachment on the teacher's time, and yet the reading lesson had to be given separately. The teacher could not be asked to do this; the only prospect of this being done was by his appointing an older scholar to give a lesson as required. A great barrier would be interposed if new characters had first to be learned before they could be taught. The change of reading from left to right, and from right to left alternately as done in Dr. Moon's type, would much increase the difficulty of one teaching by sight, reversing the words, as it continually did. Even with all the advantage of the Roman type, the admission of the blind child was with the greatest difficulty conceded. If the other character had been admitted, and had been attempted to be wrought out, the children must have received very little attention. The main matter was, how could the child receive most attention in

the school? In fact, it was not treated as a question of type at all, but as a matter of necessity; and the result has shown the wisdom of the course, both in the progress of the children and in the facility of getting blind children elsewhere admitted into the schools of their several localities. The teacher is enabled to give the blind child the utmost benefit in the reading lessons. He is not confined to any advanced scholar or pupil-teacher, but the whole school is open to choose an instructor for the blind scholar, who can thus easily get a short forenoon and afternoon lesson. Then there is something in the child knowing and being taught the character that the sighted use. Further, he has the home sympathy of parents and friends interested in his progress and able to help him in preparing his lessons. Then there is the confidence in the Roman type, from the successful experiment already made at Greenock, and the instruction of so many blind children by it in various other places.

This is not in opposition to Dr. Moon's type, as the following result will show. When the children were two or three years at school, and could read freely in Mr. Alston's character, Dr. Moon's Alphabet was put into their hands. Usually a couple of private lessons were sufficient to teach them the new characters, and a fortnight's practice made them fair readers. Several were also taught to read and write the Braille type. All the children should be taught this, so that they might receive every advantage. The boy who was first taught at Greenock was in about three years able to read in four different types—Alston's, Worcester (double case), Moon's, which he acquired in a week's time, and the Braille character, which he could both read and write. These types he was taught privately, not to interfere with the school exercises; but he soon came to read all as easily as he could do the first. The thoroughness of the education the blind children received in reading Alston's type manifested itself in the readiness with which they came to read in the new characters, thereby showing that the power of reading once acquired, needed but the learning of the new characters to make them able to read them also. It would not be difficult to show that, were the matter to make the most efficient readers in Dr. Moon's type, a better plan could not be devised than to have the children taught first in the Roman character, for the sake of the superior advantages received in the school and at home.

But Dr. Moon's character occupies a most important position as a standard type for general reading. It has been found very well adapted for adult persons from its simple and well raised character, and, therefore, also meets the growing infirmities of those becoming aged. Persons who have been educated before have this great advantage that they need no lessons in spelling, meanings, grammar, &c., their power of reading has been lying dormant, and only requires the knowledge of the raised characters, to be restored, and as a large proportion of persons lose their sight in these circumstances, there is a great facility in teaching them. Then, children taught other types at institutions will very easily become readers, the thorough elementary education they receive will enable them readily to master it. It

would, however, be very inadvisable to attempt to put down any of these types for the sake of uniformity, the solution of the matter should be made in another way. If any one has learned a particular type, which he finds to be useful, and if he has books in it, let him continue to use these books as long as he finds he can do so profitably, but as Dr. Moon's type has the great advantage of having a considerable variety of books, let him by all means learn it also, and thus obtain the benefit of this variety. The writer of this has had considerable experience in introducing such persons to it. Having met with many taught in the asylum in Alston's type, he proposed the addition of their books to the Glasgow library for their advantage. They very much appreciated this kindly feeling, and soon came to know of the variety of books in Dr. Moon's type, and almost all became readers in it. On the same principle, all the children taught in the ordinary schools are soon introduced to it, and have become among the very best readers. By acting on this liberal principle there may be expected to be a great addition to the number of readers, and its usefulness be greatly increased thereby.

It may be well to consider the circumstances of the Home Teaching Societies, whose great work is among the adult blind, teaching only in Dr. Moon's type. The neglected blind children will naturally be discovered by the teachers of these Societies, and they will not have books in the Roman type to teach them by. But if it be true, as has been attempted to be shown in these pages, that the best place for teaching blind children outside of institutions is at the ordinary school, and if it be true that they can be taught to most advantage by the Roman type, the mere fact of the teachers having no books in it, and no knowledge of it, need not stand in the way; if the friends of the blind agree among themselves, it would be very easy to get suitable books in that type. The teacher's duty would then be a very simple one, he would apply for the alphabet and first lesson book, and have the child admitted into the common school. It would not be necessary for him to give lessons in the school, because the book, being readable by all, could be taught by any. In the other case the Home teacher's duty would be to teach reading to the blind child in Dr. Moon's type, in the school as often as he could attend. How this could be done by a county teacher, travelling over a great extent of country, it is not easy to see, the lesson may be once a week, once a fortnight, or once a month, as he can find time, whereas, by teaching the blind child in the Roman type, the difficulty is solved, he is thoroughly taught without trouble to any one, and he joins the readers of Dr. Moon's type when convenient. Even in the cities and towns the advantage is very great of being taught the Roman character, as has been found by practical experience in the sphere of the Glasgow Society.

No one can say that Dr. Moon's type is the most suitable for education in the ordinary schools, it is apparent that it must limit the reading lessons of the blind children, and will thus be an injury to them. Is it fair to these children not to give them the very best system possible for their education, which is clearly some form of the

Roman type, by which they would get frequent lessons, because of assistance from any one in the school or at home? They are well entitled to have a full and complete set of books in this character, in which they readily become good readers. As to their learning Dr. Moon's type, they will be dull scholars, indeed, if they will not learn to read it in a fortnight, after they have been a couple of years attending school.

As to the supposed evil of having two systems of raised type, Dr. Moon's character has so manifested its superiority for the adult blind that it cannot be dispensed with, there will probably be none that would ask to set it aside. On the contrary, all will desire its increase and further development. On the other hand, as no system can be so efficient for teaching blind children in the ordinary schools as the Roman character, then it can be as little dispensed with, and it is to be hoped that it will not be necessary to require blind children to be educated in a character not so suitable for them, merely because it suits adults better, and to save the trouble of printing in another system. Blind children are entitled to any expense necessary to their education in the best manner, with the prospect of a life's blindness before them. Their school books would generally be quite of a different character from those the adults require, and a great increase of such books is needed for them.

If there be any force in these views some means should be adopted to choose what Roman character may be best, in which would be printed suitable books for education. And, if possible, there should be some attempt to systematize school books into a standard series, so that the books used by sighted scholars may be also printed in this educational type, permitting the blind to read with the other children, and to learn their lessons at home with the intelligent oversight of their parents. When this is attained, and the other appliances improved, as would soon follow, then the education of the blind will be somewhat commensurate with their necessities. And the Roman type, so far from being looked upon as a hindrance, will be one of the best auxiliaries to Dr. Moon's type, by the superior education imparted to the blind children.





CHAPTER X.

Appliances for Writing, Geography, &c.

WRITING.



A SIMPLE means of giving instruction in writing, &c., is suggested in chapter ii., which may also be applicable to the various kinds of appliances noticed here. There is a considerable variety of writing appliances for the blind. Let us notice,—

I.—Those that make provision for using the ordinary writing characters. Those who have been taught writing before need only a guide to keep their hand in a straight line. It is a great comfort to them to be able to write to their friends as before, and it is very easily accomplished. There are several kinds of guides for this purpose, some of a very simple description, having lines stretched across a piece of cardboard or wood, half an inch apart or so, these lines may be made either by being indented into the material, or by thin twine stretched across it. When the paper is firmly placed upon such a guide, and written upon by a pencil, the line will easily be recognised in writing, the hand moving from line to line as the letter advances. Another kind is by a frame, with a wire covering folding down upon the paper, the writing being between each wire, about half an inch apart as before. There are other kinds, more expensive, made to draw the paper upwards as each line is finished, by turning a roller. In such cases the hand moves always in one line, an elastic cord stretched across is used to keep the hand straight.

Teaching writing in ordinary writing characters is growing in use among the blind. To give the blind children a correct idea of the form of the letters, there are embossed shapes of different sizes printed, both capitals and small letters. To assist them to make the letters equal, a piece of cardboard, about the size of a sheet of note paper, is used, across which strips of the same material are placed, about five-eighths of an inch broad, and three-eighths of an inch apart from each other. The space between these strips will be on a lower level, and the main part of the writing will be in this place, thus forming a guide to make the letters without loops, of a uniform size, the pencil for loops, above or below, passing to the higher level, returning for the next letter. The card-board guide will be kept

firmly in its place by being put between the two leaves of the note paper. This mode of writing is subject to the disadvantage that the blind cannot read the writing to correct any errors, nor can they read any letters they receive written in this manner, and thus require to call in the aid of others to read for them. Letters may also be printed by the blind in the ordinary printed character, by expensive but very useful machines, of which there are different kinds. On a disc are contained all the necessary letters, figures, &c., any one of which, as required, being brought to the proper point and pressed down, the relative mark is printed upon paper by means of carbonized paper, or some other equivalent.

II. There is a system in use at the Glasgow Institution, and elsewhere, that can be read by both blind and seeing. Roman capital letters are made of pin points, inserted into small pieces of wood. These letters are pierced into paper, with a cushion below, and perforate the letters on the reverse side of the paper. They are written from right to left, but when the paper is turned up, they are felt and read from left to right. Such letters are frequently sent to a distance, and even pass through the Post-Office, addressed with the pin-point letter perforations as correctly as if written by a pencil or pen. Mr. Gall, of Edinburgh, brought out this plan more than forty years ago in his character.

III. But the latest improvement is the Braille dotted system, by which the blind can quickly write their own thoughts, so as to be able to read the notes afterwards. The pocket brass frame by which this is done consists of a moveable cover, containing two rows of oblong openings; corresponding to each of these openings, in the under part of the frame, there are six little grooves. A piece of paper is inserted between the grooves and the moveable cover. By perforating any of these grooves by a small awl, a piece of the paper is pitted into each groove. These, when taken out, can be distinctly felt on the reverse side. The different letters and various contractions are made according to the number and position of the marks, as required. The letters are written from right to left, and read on the opposite side from left to right. This has been found to be a very valuable means of taking notes, keeping accounts, writing letters, hymns, or exercises for the school, and is also used for musical notation. Some difficulty has been felt in obtaining a supply of these Braille frames at a moderate price; but efforts are being made to remedy this defect, which, it is hoped, will be successful, as this instrument will be of great use in educating blind children in the ordinary schools. Dr. Armitage is entitled to great credit for the active part he has taken in introducing the Braille character.

GEOGRAPHY.

In learning Geography, the blind child will acquire much in going over the lessons at home, and in the exercises in the class with the sighted scholars; but it is of importance that he should have the assistance of raised globes or maps, to give him a distinct conception of the position, magnitude, and form of the different places, as well as

their distance from each other. In institutions there is often a large globe of the world, sometimes about four feet in diameter, which can be turned round on its axis. By this any place may be traced, and a good impression formed of the countries, continents, seas, islands, coast-lines, and the course of travelling from one place to another. The size of such a globe makes a good deal of stooping and reaching necessary. There are smaller globes, about 18 inches diameter, on which may be noted more readily, because more accessible, the relative positions, magnitudes, forms, &c., of the different places. A very complete one of this sort is made at Berlin.

There are several raised paper maps printed by Dr. Moon—Europe, England, Palestine, &c. The outline is raised, and also some of the details, places, mountains, &c. But maps printed in outline as raised type will not do for the blind, the whole land must be raised, with special marks for towns, county, divisions, and mountains. The rivers and inland lakes must be depressed to the same level as the outside sea. Cheap maps of this kind are much needed. The British Blind Association has provided some good physical maps.

A very good map is made by taking an ordinary coloured map and cutting out the land and islands from the surrounding sea, and also the inland lakes from the land—these last being specially kept by themselves. The land and islands thus cut from the sea should be fixed upon paste-board, not very thick. Any part of the paste-board not covered by a portion of the map should then be cut away, and the places of the inland lakes as well. The sea portion of the map should then be placed upon a board, the land and islands should be put in their proper places, and, if all is right, the whole should be fixed to the board, taking care that each portion is in its right position, as the damping of the paper and consequent expansion may leave room for some adjustment. The cut out paper portions of the inland lakes are then inserted. The sea is thus depressed all over, showing the firths, bays, lochs, and rivers, and the inland lakes as well, in their proper places. The land comes out on a higher level, showing the contour of the whole country, if bounded by the sea. The headlands will come out distinctly, and the elevated configuration of the coast-line will guide to the coast-towns, firths, bays, &c. The positions, shapes, and magnitudes of the islands will also be clearly defined. The large cities may now be marked by large brass-headed nails, the principal county towns by small nails, and the county divisions by a continuous row of the smallest tacks, about a quarter of an inch apart. The chief mountains might be marked by a drop of glue and sand pressed upon the place. It will be a still more useful map by tracing the principal railways by thin brass wire bent to the various windings, fixed down at the railway stations by a small piece of the same wire inserted into the wood. Several maps have been so constructed for our own blind children. This last addition will be found most useful in enabling the blind child to trace his course with readiness to any desired place, now that travelling is so universally by railways. The marking of the railways on his maps brings the blind child up to modern times. Without this he would be made to live half a century behind. The first of these

maps was ordered from the Society for Providing Cheap Literature for the Blind at Worcester, and it was very well made, although not in all the detail delineated above. But as such maps are expensive to order, and so simple to make by friends of the blind, it has been thought proper to describe how they can be constructed. In Chap. ii. it is suggested how the blind child may receive lessons on such a map, without interfering with the classes.

MATHEMATICS.

Having noticed the appliances used by the blind in writing and geography, it may be suitable to say a few words as to the study of mathematics, and the necessary appliances. There have been remarkable blind persons in the mathematical world, and it is difficult to say what is beyond the reach of a blind child by application and perseverance. It has been found that he can be taught in sighted schools, even in the higher classes, and there does not seem an insuperable difficulty to his progress in this branch in the same manner. If he has the capability of mind, and the facilities of the necessary diagrams, he may do in this as he has done in other classes, as mentioned in Mr. Adam's Letter, chapter xii., go over the proposition along with a class-mate in preparing for the following day's lesson, by taking his book of diagrams, while the other reads over the problem or theorem, till both master it. If this is unattainable, an elder brother or other relative might patiently read over the letterpress words while the diagram was referred to, till its meaning and proof were grasped, and it is not at all unlikely that what began with interest in the boy, would end in delight in the study, to the mutual profit of both. Several persons have passed through a collegiate course among students with sight in our Universities, and the study of mathematics, as suggested, might be a suitable introduction to higher departments.

Diagrams for the blind have been printed by various persons, it may, at present, be necessary to notice only a few of those more recently printed. Dr. Moon has prepared very good diagrams for the first Book of Euclid. W. Pumphery of York, published, some time ago, a volume of the diagrams for the first six Books of Euclid, as mentioned by W. H. Levy in his book on Blindness and the Blind. These were beautifully raised and well developed, the only defect being that they were somewhat too large. It would be desirable, of course, that the explanations of the figures, the demonstrations, &c., were printed in raised letters as well, which, however, has not been done, but this would be so bulky and, perhaps, so difficult for the child to trace the figures and read the description at the same time, that it may be the better way to have the diagrams only printed in relief, and the description and proof read to the blind child till mastered. The writer above referred to suggests that diagrams may be made for private use by the wheel with teeth found connected with one of the pairs of compasses in the box of mathematical instruments. With this wheel straight lines might be made by using a roller, perforating the paper with marks, which would be easily felt on the reverse side. Circles could also be made at any width of the com-

passes. By another way string might be sewn through card-board in any direction, and thus any figure could be constructed. In these cases the necessary letters might be pierced with pins, to be read on the reverse side.

NATURAL HISTORY—MUSEUM FOR THE BLIND.

This may be the proper place to notice how the blind may be best instructed in a thorough knowledge of the various objects which can only be well known by personal examination. It is difficult to give any clear idea by pictures, because usually these are mere outlines, and although an outline may give a tolerable idea to one with his sight from the knowledge which he has otherwise, it is different with one not having that advantage. Mr. Alston, in a school book of fables, produced some illustrative pictures, but they were very faint and small. Dr. Moon has given some pictures of various objects, such as the vessels of the tabernacle, the encampment of the children of Israel, &c., also of Balmoral Castle, in the Queen's Book on the Highlands, and of various animals. These are better raised, and are a contribution that might well be increased, but they give a very imperfect conception of the reality to a blind child. Where a child has had opportunities of seeing various objects, and can remember what he has seen, it would be a good plan to illustrate these and other things which he has not seen, by what he can remember of having seen; but the child who has not that advantage will profit little by such pictures alone. Coins, medallions, and bas-relief figures give a better idea of what is intended, but do not come up to what is required.

For those children who cannot recall the appearance of the many objects in the visible creation from having lost their sight very early, the most effectual way would be to bring them into contact with the living animals and the objects themselves. No doubt this is continually being done with domestic animals and common things, and they have, of course, examined them thoroughly and profited much thereby. The same principle might be advantageously adopted with all blind children in regard to what they imperfectly know or do not know at all. This personal examination, with explanations, would be so helpful in giving them an intelligent knowledge of the objects. But as parents might not have access to many articles which it would be important that their children should come to know and handle, such as stuffed animals, skins, shells, models, statuary, precious stones, &c., which are usually to be seen in museums, and give much information to visitors, it would be of great use if such collections, or portions of them, were made available for the blind, where they might handle the objects under proper inspection. If objections were made to the blind touching them or inspecting them as frequently as might be necessary, then there would be a clear call to have a museum for the blind in large towns, where they might have access to examine such articles, and thus extend their information. This matter was vividly brought under the notice of the writer on a visit to the London Normal College a few years ago, when he had the pleasure of hearing an object lesson. A stuffed bird was put into the hands of one of the blind boys, and he was told to go over it in detail.

He did this in a simple, regular, and thorough manner, from the head and the bill to the tail and the feet, in fact giving a lecture upon the object; and to keep all the children engaged, they were asked, at the close, to say, if anything was omitted. The boy had, of course, been previously instructed in all these details, but it will be seen how impossible it would have been to have given him such a complete knowledge of the whole structure and functions of every part without a personal knowledge of the object. A collection of articles suitable for illustrating objects in natural history is being formed at the Worcester College for the Blind Sons of Gentlemen, to which Mr Harris, of Leicester, has kindly contributed stuffed birds, minerals, specimen of wood and skins, &c. The blind who cannot receive the advantage of such higher education should surely have the privilege of examining such objects, and thus share in the benefit which such a valuable means of information gives. The writer will thankfully receive contributions of objects suitable for such a collection, at the Religious Institution Rooms, Glasgow, and he will be glad to make them available for the inspection of the blind.





CHAPTER XI.

Notices of Blind Children attending Ordinary Schools.

GREENOCK.

1868.
Oct. 28.



It is a great pleasure to be able to report the admission of a blind boy to an ordinary school. For some years there has been great anxiety in respect to blind children in such a place as Greenock, where there was no special school for the blind. Success crowned an effort for getting parish aid to enable a poor mother to take her blind boy to Glasgow, that he might attend the Day School of the Asylum. There has been another boy (J. L.) discovered in Greenock, a few weeks ago, where the course above described could not be followed. The father, on account of his business, was unable to remove to Glasgow, that his boy might attend the Asylum Day School. He was also unable to pay the £12 12s. per annum to have him sent as an inmate at the Asylum, and he was unwilling to entertain the idea of the boy's leaving his home at his early age. Only occasionally visiting Greenock, it was impossible to give him those frequent lessons he required. It seemed, therefore, necessary to devise some mode of teaching him in the town; and it was thought the best plan to give him Alston's Roman raised type, being readable by any one. It was suggested to the father to teach his boy the letters and small words, and it might be tried to get him into one of the common schools. He thankfully agreed to give his son daily lessons, and soon after the teacher of the Mid Parish School agreed to receive him. The boy has now been a short time at school, and is quite delighted with his new position. He was put under the care of the lady teacher, and she took a great interest in him when she found he could read a little in his raised book. He was put along with the youngest children, and being able to spell the words of two or three letters better than the others, he got above them, and went home at the top of the class, greatly overjoyed. She said he need not bring his book in the afternoon; but he said, "I think I will bring it, for you might wish to hear me read again;" so anxious was he to get on. The mother had not yet got the class-book of the other children, as she was desired to do, thinking his own book would be quite enough; but she was told very plainly that, if he was to say lessons with them, he must have their book, and learn the same lessons at home, otherwise there was no need for him to go to the school at all.

1869. *May 24.*—Called with Mr. S., at the Mid Parish school, Greenock, where the blind boy, J. L., is being taught along with the sighted children. He read a portion of John in Alston's Roman raised type very fluently. His teacher said he was getting on well, that he was almost always at the top of his class. He was well prepared with the lessons acquired at home, and must be well attended to there. He was very quick and ready with his answers in the class examinations upon the portion read, and it was intended to give him a prize. The female teacher, under whose care he is, said she took a great interest in him, and was quite pleased at seeing him get on so well. Thus has the effort of teaching the blind in the ordinary school got a most successful illustration in this young boy keeping at the top of a class of about twelve or fifteen children of his own age. For some fault, he was told one day to go to the bottom of the class, but it was too great a trial for him, and he would not go until compelled. He was not, however, long ere he was up again to his old place. His father and mother are quite delighted at the progress he is making. The companionship of his school-fellows, and the competition in the classes have made him a smart, cheerful, and intelligent boy in the short period of seven months, which could not be excelled, if it could be equalled, in any institution.

Nov. 24.—Visited Greenock. The number of blind children in Greenock having increased, it has been necessary to make arrangements for their education. The teacher who did so well with the first boy was asked to receive them, but he did not see his way to undertake such a charge. The teacher and directors of the Charity School were asked to receive them, and kindly agreed to do so, and application was made for the admission of five children, including the boy who had been already at school, as it was thought necessary that they should all be together. These children had been taught the raised letters at home in anticipation of this arrangement. They have now all gone to school, and Mr. Kay, the teacher, expresses himself as pleased with their progress. A great debt of gratitude is due to him for so kindly undertaking the charge of so many blind children, and for the deep interest he has taken in their advancement. From being acquainted with the appliances in operation in the Asylum School, the counting board with pins has been provided for the advanced boy, and he is now able to place the metal types correctly into the five-sided holes, and to read them, so as to be able to do small sums in addition, which prepares the way for being taught every department of arithmetic. What a blessing to blind children throughout the country if they may thus be taught in the common schools in their several localities. Some progress has been made in Ayrshire in the same direction.

1870. *Dec. 19.*—A public meeting of the Greenock Society for Teaching the Blind to read was held to-day, when there was an examination of the blind children taught in the Charity School, Greenock, side by side with those having their sight. There were present several

of the Greenock Committee, a good number of ladies, and the President and Secretary of the Glasgow Mission to the Blind. In the absence of Sheriff Tennent, Robert Little, Esq., occupied the chair. After the Rev. Dr. M'Farlane opened the meeting with prayer, the chairman stated that there were about 46 blind persons in Greenock and Port-Glasgow, that some time ago six blind children had been received into the Charity School under Mr. Kay.

The President of the Glasgow Society (Bailie Watson), who had to leave early, said he had great pleasure in visiting the school that day, where there were several blind children taught with the seeing ones, and he was more than astonished at the progress made, the blind children actually outstripping those with their eyes.

The blind children were then put through an interesting examination by Mr. Kay, the teacher, first in reading raised type, and afterwards in spelling, meanings, and general exercises, with the sighted children, upon a portion read from the ordinary class book. The blind children acquitted themselves quite as well as their companions, and this not only in the English department, but in arithmetic with their boards and pins, while those with sight used their own mode.

Mr. Barnhill explained the system that had been started of placing blind children side by side with the seeing, and moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Kay, the teacher, for the kind and efficient manner in which he had taught the children, and to the directors, for opening the school to them. Mr. Miller, the Secretary of the Glasgow Society, seconded the motion, and said that Mr. Kay deserved the thanks of the community. Greenock was the first town in which the idea of teaching the blind and seeing together in one school was given effect to. Mr. Kay replied with thanks. He did not deserve the vote of thanks, for he had only given about ten minutes a day to the work. He had always found both boys and girls in the advanced classes in the school anxious to devote half an hour in giving lessons in reading to their blind schoolmates. The Rev. Dr. M'Farlane, the Secretary of the Greenock Society, moved a vote of thanks to the Glasgow friends. He expressed his gratitude to Mr. Kay, and considered the idea of Mr. Barnhill an admirable one. As to the teaching of the blind in mixed schools, he could see this was a new era in the teaching of the blind. He did not see why this society should not send a deputation to the Lord Advocate, who is entrusted with the framing of the new Educational Bill. He believed this was a fair field for the Government to come in and do something advantageous for these children. Mr. Miller replied for the Glasgow deputation. After a vote of thanks to the chairman, and the benediction by Dr. M'Farlane, the meeting separated.

(From the Greenock Advertiser, Thursday, 22nd June, 1871.)

1871. June 20.—The annual examination and meeting of subscribers of the Greenock Charity School was held on Tuesday in the school-room, Ann Street. The scholars, of whom there would be about 500 in all present, wore a smart and clean appearance. Seated among the other

children were a number of blind pupils, whose comfort seemed not less an object among their more fortunate fellows blessed with sight than their demeanour and attainments were the admiration of visitors. Tolerable smartness was displayed in the answers, many of the blind bearing themselves with much credit in this respect. It has been often remarked that where one sense is deficient nature supplies the want in great measure by heightening the acuteness of other facilities; and under the favourable circumstances of a contrast of the blind children in this Charity School with the seeing ones side by side, an opportunity was presented of noticing this fact more distinctly than usual. In the exercises requiring the greatest effort of the mind, as arithmetic, the little blind fellows showed such promptitude in giving answers generally correct as almost to suggest, compared with the slower replies of seeing comrades, that the melancholy condition of physical darkness was after all the best for downright mental concentration, so thoroughly had nature apparently restored the balance of loss of power in one direction by renewing it with interest in another.

After the examination, prizes were distributed to meritorious pupils. One or two of the blind got prizes, and it is but fair to say that all the other scholars loudly applauded them, as if they did not grudge the honour.

Mr. Leitch referred to the experiment introduced into the Greenock Charity School of teaching blind pupils along with seeing ones. The idea had often been scouted, but he was proud to see the practical proof he had witnessed that day of the fact that it is quite possible for blind pupils to be taught side by side with those enjoying the advantages of sight. More than that, it was exceedingly gratifying to him to find that these boys or girls could be not only taught with seeing companions, but actually so taught as to attain a proficiency which beat those who saw. (Applause.) It might have been thought if a blind child could be taught a few letters that was all; but instead of that, the blind children were to be found coming to the front of the whole school in mental exercises. The experiment, he was glad to know, had been first tried in Greenock, and its complete success induced him to hope that ere long the scheme would be adopted throughout Scotland, so that poor blind children would be no longer left in ignorance in consequence of the want of means to teach them. Greenock's experience in the Charity School showed that to teach this class of the blind it was not necessary that there should be expensive contrivances, the scheme's simplicity was such that it might easily be carried on throughout the country. Mr. Leitch concluded by drawing the attention of the scholars to a little blind fellow in the front seat, who had been very successful as a prize-taker, and he called for a round of applause for little Johnny. It is needless to say that at once a forest of hands was clapping to the praise of little Johnny, who sat demurely, but evidently much pleased, looking, indeed, as if he would like to make a speech in reply for the unexpected honour.

Mr. Kay bore testimony to what had been said by Mr. Leitch.

It had been urged that much time would be lost to teachers by the introduction of the blind children, but he had no such experience owing to the kindly assistance of the seeing scholars, and the aptitude of the blind children themselves. Mr. Kay pointed to Johnny as an example, saying that Johnny had come to the school less than a year ago, and now he could do addition and simple multiplication, and read the Bible and Shorter Catechism. (Applause.) From his own experience in the matter, he was confident that there was nothing to hinder blind children being taught with seeing ones, if teachers throughout the country would only give the scheme a trial. (Hear, hear.)

1871. *October 30.* At Greenock. It was interesting to witness in the school to-day two blind boys, in a class of about 40 boys and girls, able to maintain their own in the grammar class.

1872. *January 31.*—At the Annual Meeting of the Mission to the Blind, held this day in Glasgow, J. L., who has been about three years taught with the sighted in Greenock, read in raised type four different characters—Alston's, Worcester (double case), Braille (the new dotted system, which he also printed in presence of the meeting), and lastly in Moon's type, which had been acquired in a week's time. The same boy was examined in geography upon a raised map of Scotland, and easily pointed out the islands, firths, principal towns, and traced his course along some of the chief railways from Carlisle to Glasgow, Inverness, and Aberdeen.

June 25.—Attended the public examination of the Charity School, Greenock, which was held in the Town Hall. The blind children who have now been taught for some years with those having their sight, took their part among the other children in the ordinary lessons—spellings, meanings, grammar, general exercises, and arithmetic—in a creditable manner, and their reading in the raised type, when they were examined separately, was very satisfactory. Mr. Kay has rendered a great service to the cause of the blind far beyond these children he has taught, in undertaking this good work, and for the manner in which he has prosecuted it. There were exhibited two pairs of knitted stockings, one pair wrought by each of the blind girls, showing the result of their instruction in this useful art, giving promise of as great proficiency as in the other parts of education they have been longer studying, and giving substantial proof of the kind and attentive interest of the female teacher.

October 16.—Exchanged books to the blind children, and was much pleased at the continued progress made by them in their education in the sighted school at Greenock. One of the boys has unfortunately been withdrawn from the school, as his parents need for his support any little he can make at sack sewing, but he receives and values his continual exchange of books, which his instruction in the school has enabled him to enjoy. The other five children were all present at the school. The advanced boy was working out sums in practice, the second boy was in the next class with a large account in compound multiplication—both of their answers were correct. The three young children were multiplying, with three figures, a sum that came up to billions in the answer. They work out the sums in the way sketched

out at the first, the account being given out verbally by the teacher, and the seeing and blind left to work out the answers in their own peculiar manner, the blind as quick and sure as the seeing.

A Y R S H I R E.

1871. *January 25.*—At Kilmarnock and Riccarton Moss. J. S. is in delicate health, and lives at a considerable distance from a school. She is thus unable to join a class with others. I was glad to observe the considerable progress she has made since I saw her last. When I asked her how many lessons she got each day, her father said sometimes as many as ten. It is her first thing in the morning and last at night. It is a great loss that she lives so far away from school. The mixing up with other children would do her much good.

May 8.—I am very much pleased at the progress of M. B., Ayr, has made in reading since she went to the sighted school, about three months ago. Born blind, her education much neglected, and about 14 years old, I asked her some time ago to come to my house daily for lessons, which she agreed to do. Afterwards she became so irregular that she made little progress. I then endeavoured to get the parish on which she had a claim to send her to the Blind Asylum at Glasgow, but did not succeed. I then called on the Newton F. C. schoolmaster, and asked him if he would receive her into his school. He at first hesitated, never having heard of blind children being taught along with seeing children; but, on my explaining to him how it was done in other schools in Ayrshire and elsewhere, he very kindly consented to receive her, and, on hearing of her circumstances, without charge. A great change has taken place in her since she went to school; besides being now a fair reader, her former timidity and ignorance have given place to activity and intelligence. She says she likes the school, and the children are very kind to her. At first she required some one to take her to and from the school, but now she is able to go and come herself. When I last visited her I gave her an arithmetic frame, and she is now able to work short sums in addition.

September 12.—At Dailly, I saw A. L. to-day at school, and heard her read. She is greatly improved since my last visit. She is being taught knitting, and I was much pleased with the sample of her work I saw. She attends school very regularly.

November 8.—I am glad to be able to report, that of the sixteen blind children in my list, in Ayrshire, ten of them are being taught, seven in school, and three at their homes. Of the remaining six, four of them are weak-minded, and two are too young to learn. These children are scattered over the county. Some of them have made very good progress; they can read and count as well as most of their more favoured classmates who have been attending school for the same length of time, and their general knowledge is equally extensive. The girls are taught knitting, &c. Mr. Barnhill's letters, which appeared a few months ago in the Glasgow and other papers, have given great publicity to this interesting work among the blind children, and have been the means of leading the public to take a greater interest in them.

1872. *December 4.*—At Alloway, Ayr. Since R. D. went to the

sighted school his progress has been very rapid. In a few days he mastered the alphabet, and now, although he has been only five or six weeks at the school, he is at arithmetic. The teacher at first was somewhat doubtful about taking him into school, but, as he said, trial proves all things, he agreed to give him a trial. This has removed all his hesitation about children being received into sighted schools.

December 13.—There are 19 children under my care in Ayrshire; 7 of these attending the common schools in different places; 4, from infirmity and distance from school, are being taught at home, but under great disadvantages in comparison of the others who take part in the common exercises of the several classes. The remaining 8 are either too young or weak-minded.

1873. *November 3.*—Having had my interest drawn out on behalf of a young lad, near Kilmarnock, who has returned from the Glasgow Asylum, to the effect that he should not consider his education completed, but should attend the best school within reach, and go on with the sighted boys to the very highest classes. His mother has responded to my desires for her son, and to-day I felt it to be a duty and a privilege to write to the teacher as to the best manner of continuing the boy's education, so as to give him hope and self-reliance by successful competition with those having their sight.

LANARKSHIRE.

1874. *March 6.*—Visiting in Carluke. Called upon the teacher of the Yieldsheid's School to inquire for J. E., who is being taught there. It was with difficulty his parents were induced to send him, but they at last consented, provided a teacher could be found to take in hand with him. The teacher of this school at first hesitated, upon being applied to, as the thing was entirely new to him. But after I had fully explained the plan of teaching the blind children with others, he seemed to like the idea, and was willing to take him. The boy has now been nearly a month at school, and, I am glad to say, that the teacher reports favourably of the experiment, saying, that the blind boy's progress (for the time he had been with him) was just as great as the smartest sighted boy in the school, and was attended with very little special labour on his part.

April 13. I am glad to report that J. who was received into St. John's Grammar School, Hamilton, about four month's ago, is making rapid progress. As he had been partially educated before losing his sight, and was able to read, all that was necessary was to give him the knowledge of the characters. He was, therefore, taught Moon's type at once, which, in a few weeks, he perused very creditably. He was then taught the use of the pins in the Arithmetic Frame, and was greatly delighted with the seeming difficulty of making figures. Clapping his hands with great glee, he cried out, "Oh my, this is fine! it's better than a Chinese puzzle," but in less than an hour he could make the figures correctly. I called upon the teacher of the class to ascertain if the boy took his position in the class according to ability, and I found he had been kept at the top of the class, for the purpose of encouraging him. I suggested that it would be much better for him

to take his position according to merit. The teacher had him then removed to the bottom, but in two days he was in his former place, where he continued three days, without losing it, and that is usually his position now.

November 16.—At Hamilton, I am glad to report that J. is making very rapid progress in reading, spelling, meanings, and he has gone through the fundamental rules of arithmetic, and is at present working questions in practice. He also receives instruction in grammar, geography, Bible and Shorter Catechism. In all of these subjects he occupies a high place among his sighted class-mates, and in some of them he fairly outstrips them. He is receiving the very same education he would have done if he had had his sight. The sending of this boy to school has been attended with the happiest results, both to body and mind. He is much healthier and happier than when at home doing nothing, and is daily growing in self-respect and self-reliance. In his circumstances it is both an education and a training fitted to encourage and prepare him for a future course of usefulness. See Mr. Adams' Letter, Chapter xii.

November 23.—At Symington, Lanarkshire. Made arrangements to-day for a little blind girl to be admitted into the public school. The child is 11 years of age. She was discovered some little time ago, and has been since then receiving lessons by her friends in Alston's raised Roman type, to prepare her for the school. She is a very timid girl, and shrinks from the society of strangers, but from what I have seen, in other cases, I am sure that a month or two's contact with the sighted scholars in the village school will completely cure her. Mr. Hamilton, the teacher, upon the matter being explained to him, at once gave his consent to receive her as a pupil, and heartily entered into the idea of teaching her along with those having their sight.

There are 16 blind children under my care in the county of Lanark, 7 are unable to attend school from infirmity, distance, and being too young, 9 are being taught along with seeing children in the ordinary schools, and they will bear favourable comparison with their class-mates. Frequently doubts have been expressed on being asked to take in a blind child, but a short trial removes their difficulties, and interests them very much in the work.

WESTERN AND SOUTHERN SUBURBS, GLASGOW.

1871. *June 8.*—Called on Mr. Wallace, Partick, who has kindly taken A. M'C. into his school, to be taught in a class with some sighted children, and was sorry to hear that the boy was unwell. The teacher told me that his little pupil was making remarkable progress, and was becoming the favourite of the whole school, and that each of the boys in his class requested in turn to lead him home when school was over. When I called at his house he was in bed; but as soon as he heard my voice he started up, and began to tell me how far he was on in his new book. He could spell many of the words in the black letter book he has, in common with the other children; and so inter-

ested was he in the lessons, that he could repeat one of them from memory.

December 27.—Making efforts to get two blind boys in Anderston, unable to go to the Blind Asylum, admitted into a sighted school. Called at their own houses and examined them as to their progress at home with our teacher's help. As the sister of one of them was at a school in Carrick Street, I called on the teacher and asked him to take her brother. He at first hesitated, until it was explained how little was asked of him. When he consented to take the one boy he was easily induced to take the other.

1872. *June 14.*—Visited Mr. Small's school, and heard G. M'C. go over his reading lesson. He has carried the medal belonging to his class for three weeks. None of his sighted school-mates can get above him at the spelling lessons.

October 16.—A penny subscription has been opened in the school where G. M'C. is, towards the expense of procuring a free bed for the blind in the Dunoon Home. This is a touching incident, showing the kindly feeling called forth by the presence of a blind class-mate.

November 15.—Visited Mr. M'Lardy's school at Strathbungo, S. S., who has kindly received a blind boy, whose education was previously quite neglected. With the Roman raised letter he said it was very simple to instruct the boy, as any scholar can readily be made available to give a reading lesson when required. In answer to my inquiry, he told me the boy was taught in a class with the other children, and had the benefit of competition and taking places according to the correctness of his answers. The boy was happily enabled to tell me that he was dux and had been so for several days. The teacher readily agreed to collect the class together and put them through the exercises of the day—spelling, meanings, and general questions upon the subject. I was much pleased to see how eager each child was to give the correct reply, and how the blind boy fully shared the beaming countenance of conscious readiness to answer. In fact, the putting the blind boy into a class with the sighted, is the turning point of the whole system, by which he gets spirit and life from competition with the others, in exchange for the idleness and dulness of isolation. The teacher told me that the other children were quite proud of their blind class-mate, and rejoiced in his success. I left a counting frame and pins, and explained the system of operations.

1873. *June 25.*—Attended the examination of Mr. S.'s school in Kinning Park, where two blind boys are being taught in classes with the seeing. From the superior school books, the varied exercises of their respective classes, the stimulus of taking places and maintaining a good position, and the hearty interest of the teacher, they are getting on very well with their education, and obtaining such a thorough training as cannot fail to have a material effect upon their future career. Each of the blind boys proved his merit by taking a prize.

May 17.—J. P., the little boy who is at the common school at Strathbungo, is making excellent progress both in reading and counting. He is always at the top of the class. When repeating his questions he commits them to memory from the book given to him by

the Superintendent. He came in when I called at his house to-day. I asked him if he could multiply by three figures. His reply was, "Yes, I can do it like fun." There was another person there, he got a slate, and Johnny his, with pins, and they tried the same account. Johnny was done a good while before the other, and called out, "Done!" His neighbour, when finished, desired Johnny to read his answer, on hearing which, he said, "You are wrong." Johnny said, "No fear of that," and, turning to his grandfather, who had the book from which the account was taken, asked who was right? The old man replied, with pardonable pride, "You're right, Johnny," who said at once, "I kent it," and gave three jumps on the floor, and went away to school.

1874. *October 15.*—Found G. M'C. at home and thus had an opportunity of examining him as to his progress. Heard him read a portion in Moon's raised type, which he did very fluently. He now takes the full course with the best readers in that type, namely, two large books and one small one each month, and enjoys them very much. About six months ago, the alphabet was put into his hand, and in two days he was able to read, so thoroughly had he been taught in Alston's Roman type, by the assistance of sighted scholars and friends at home, in the couple of years he had been at school. It was the easiest matter imaginable to learn Moon's type. His sister is in the same class with him. They learn their lessons at home together, go to and return from school, and join in the same lessons. The boy is twelve years and the sister is ten; he maintains a better position, especially in arithmetic. I said to him she was two years younger, but he said, "she can see and I do not." He was dux in the class. I am very much pleased with the education he had received in Mr. Small's school.

1874. *November 23.*—In taking a review of the advancement of the mode of teaching blind children in the ordinary schools, it may be mentioned, that besides a number who have passed through and received some years education, there are about thirty children attending various schools within the sphere of the Glasgow Mission to the Outdoor Blind, and about twenty others known of as being educated in the same manner in other parts of Scotland.

As it is of the utmost importance that these blind children should receive all the appliances needed for their education, these would seem to be a legitimate charge upon the public school funds. Maps, utensils, and other school furniture are provided for the other children; teachers of blind children should, therefore, apply to their several school boards to provide Arithmetic boards, Braille frames, maps, &c., so that the children may have every advantage in prosecuting their education. There can be no doubt that School Boards will become very much interested in this branch of their work when they are aware of its importance.



CHAPTER XII.

Testimonies of Teachers, Societies, &c.

I.—TEACHERS.

Testimony of MR. KAY, Greenock.

Extract from the Annual Report of Mr. Kay, the head master, to the Directors of the Greenock Charity School, Greenock, 11th March, 1871.

*Blind
Scholars.*



HIS being an entirely new feature in the operation of the school, it may be well here to make a special reference to it. The introduction of blind children was brought about through Mr. Barnhill, Superintendent of the Glasgow Mission to the Out-Door Blind. This gentleman had frequently visited our school, and he being thoroughly convinced of the practicability of educating the blind in the common schools along with sighted pupils, pressed me to try the experiment. Having consented to make a trial on condition that it should not interfere with the proper discharge of my ordinary duties, Mr. Barnhill consulted with your secretary, and the proposal having been submitted to you, it was agreed to admit the blind children in the usual way. Schedules being filled up by a subscriber, and the circumstances of the parents found to be such as to give them a claim to the charity, they were accordingly admitted,—four boys and two girls. One of the boys had been for some time at the Mid-Parish School, and had made very good progress; another could read a little, but the other four had to begin with the alphabet.

The books used in teaching them to read are in Alston's raised letter in the Roman capitals. In this way the seeing children are able to assist the blind with their lessons. These children have now been for a year at school, and are making most satisfactory progress. Those who commenced with the A B C are now able to read the Bible intelligibly. In the case of one boy who began with us, the progress has been very remarkable. They read their own books for half-an-hour twice a day, and learn spelling by the raised type. My time has not been taken up with them individually to any extent. The seeing children are all alike willing to assist them, and to conduct them or bring them to school. While they receive their lessons in the art of reading by themselves, they take their place in the class along with the sighted pupils. It is here that the great advantage is gained by being admitted into the common school. They have the black letter book used in the

class, the parents instruct them in the lesson at home, and though they do not read with the others, they spell and answer questions with the class, and are quite as well up to the lessons as their fellows; they even excel them in their answers, and take a good position in the class. It is all the more remarkable, as they are in classes with children who have been three or four years in school.

Four of these children are also learning arithmetic by the system in use in the Glasgow Asylum for the Blind. Two of the boys have made very good and rapid progress. They have gone through the fundamental rules; at present they are working questions in long division. The blind boys are able to compete with the sighted, and are quite equal to the best of them both in speed and accuracy.

Whatever doubts I entertained previous to the experiment have been completely overcome. Surely what has here been accomplished by us with so much ease is quite practicable in any school. If teachers would only make the experiment, every blind child in the country might be educated in the common schools, with very little additional expense.

THOMAS KAY,

Head Master of the Greenock Charity School.

For Extract from Annual Report of the Directors of the Greenock Charity School, see Testimonies of Societies.

Testimony of Teacher of Twynholm School.

TWYNHOLM SCHOOL-HOUSE,
March 4, 1870.

MR. MARTIN,
Blind Asylum, Edinburgh.

DEAR SIR,—I am sorry that I have never been able to get your letter answered till now, more particularly as I feel very strongly on the subject of the education of blind children, and have often been surprised at the mistaken views entertained by many benevolent people about this: not to speak of the great waste of money in trying to educate the blind by a district teacher going through a division of the country and calling upon his pupils once a month, or so, for what progress in learning can any reasonable person expect from these visits, even though repeated a great deal oftener? Neither do I approve of educating children in asylums set apart for them; thus isolating them from the world, and making them feel as if they belonged to another class of beings altogether, and were unfit to mix with their fellow-creatures.

I have had a little experience in teaching blind children, and my opinion is that every blind boy or girl should be sent to the nearest public school at the same age as other children, and as there never can be more than one or two blind children at the same school, the additional trouble to the teacher will not be very great.

* This mode, while unsatisfactory for the education of blind children, is quite suitable for the instruction of persons in raised type, who could read before.

In addition to learning his own embossed books, let the boy stand up as often as convenient with a class of children about his own age, and listen to them, or answer along with them so far as he is able. He will thus learn spelling and the meaning of words, and also store up any information he may hear at the time.

In this way he may go on with classes in English till he is able to take a good position in the very highest class if he is a clever boy, and becomes well acquainted with grammar and history. In the same way when learning arithmetic, in addition to his separate work, he may go on with different classes, but still using his peculiar slate with pentagonal holes, till he can count almost as quickly as the others. He is likely to excel in mental arithmetic, as there is less to distract his attention. The opportunity of competing in a class has a wonderful effect on the progress of the blind boy, and in keeping up the spirit of independence, while the social life he leads with other children, both at lessons and play, is calculated to make him a better member of society when he grows up. If the parents of the blind are poor, there will be an opportunity for the generous to assist in buying books and other needful things while they are at school, and after they have grown up there will be ample scope for charity in assisting them to gain a livelihood.

I have jotted down a few hurried observations, and will be happy to give you any further information in my power, as it is high time that there should be a more rational mode of teaching the blind than that of teaching them separately or in asylums.—I am, dear sir, yours sincerely,

JOHN WATSON.

Testimony of Teacher of Strathbungo School, Glasgow.

THE SCHOOL-HOUSE, STRATHBUNGO,
GLASGOW, 8th January, 1874.

MR. ALEX. BARNHILL,

MY DEAR SIR,—With reference to yours of the 5th, I have much pleasure in saying a word or two about my experience in teaching the blind. The blind boy I have at present is taught much the same way as one I had eight years ago at Hogganfield. When my present pupil was brought to me I hesitated to admit him, because I experienced some little difficulty with my former pupil. When he was brought to school by me, for I found him wandering about the village, I found out that no scholar in the school could give him a lesson, nor could I myself, until I brought home his book, which was kindly given him by one of your missionaries, and after a night's patient labour in comparing the two alphabets, I was able to teach him. But still the difficulty presented itself, for either he must wait till I had time, or sit idle, as far as learning to read was concerned, I had no other resource than to teach one or two of the more advanced scholars the system, and then I was considerably relieved. You will understand

I am speaking of Moon's system, and I merely mention this because I do not think that that system is a good one to adopt in teaching the blind along with seeing children, because they cannot make that progress they would otherwise do if the other children were able to assist them.

But that difficulty disappeared altogether with my present pupil, because the books he has we all can read, the type being the raised Roman characters. He is now reading the Shorter Catechism, he reads two or three questions daily, and has one to repeat every morning with his class. He also reads his grammar, and is required to commit portions of it to memory, and is exercised along with the grammar class, and goes up or down as he is able or not to answer the questions put to the class. In history the lesson is marked out for him, some one reads it to him at home, and he takes his place in class as in the grammar. In arithmetic he is taught partly in the class when I am exercising it, but when books are used, he sits with some boy or girl, who kindly reads the question, and they both work it out together. He works his sums as correctly on his frame as the other children do on their slates, without the least trouble to me. If we had the same class books for the blind as are used in day-schools, I do not see that there would be any difficulty at all in teaching them along with seeing children; but as these books are legion, and as teachers have different opinions, and School Boards as well, I think it will be some time before that can be obtained.—I am, yours faithfully,

JAMES M'LARDY.

Testimony of Teacher of Kinning Park Free Church School, Glasgow.

KINNING PARK FREE CHURCH SCHOOL,
GLASGOW, 13th January, 1874.

MR. BARNHILL,

MY DEAR SIR,—Yours duly to hand, kindly excuse the delay, as I have been very busy. The two blind boys (at my school) in whom you have a special interest, study all the branches taught their respective classes, *i.e.*, Bible History, Catechism, Repetition of poetry, Spelling, Meanings, Grammar, Geography, and Arithmetic. While the class is reading they attend to the lesson, and generally can give a very full account of the subject of the lesson. The various lessons are gone over very carefully by their friends at home, which has a very important bearing on their success at school. They do their arithmetic on the perforated boards. One of them brings his dictation and home sums on a slip of paper, by means of the writing slip. At my Government Examination in January last year, I drew the attention of the Inspector to the blind boy I then had, who expressed his delight at the progress the boy had made. Meanwhile, with kind wishes, I am, yours very truly,

GEORGE SMALL.

Testimony of Teacher of Alloway School, Ayr.

ALLOWAY, AYR, 12th Jan., 1874.

ALEXANDER BARNHILL, Esq.,
75 St. George's Place, Glasgow.

DEAR SIR,—The blind boy, R. D., at present attending Alloway School, Ayr, came to this School in November, 1872. He was then in his twelfth year, and had had no previous education. When I was asked to undertake the work of instructing him, I had my doubts about it, partly because I had previously been of opinion that the blind could only be taught privately, or in an institution exclusively devoted to that purpose; and, also, because I thought that, were it practicable in a public school, much of the principal master's private time would be taken up in the work, not only of imparting knowledge to the pupil but in educating himself so as to be able to do this. No sooner had I engaged in the work than I was delighted to find that all my preconceived notions on this subject had been the result of ignorance as to the method of imparting instruction to the blind. These I found to be of the simplest kind.

Till R. D. became acquainted with the raised letters and the pins used in working questions in arithmetic, I gave him lessons by himself; and I have much pleasure in stating that the eagerness and activity displayed by him were sufficient payment for the labour bestowed. When he could read a little he was placed with the sighted children, and got instructions in reading, spelling, meaning and arithmetic, and in a few months fairly outstripped the junior class in these subjects. He is now in the upper division, and receives instruction in the subjects already mentioned, together with geography, grammar, Bible, and catechism, in most of which he holds the first place.

I may add that the boy under notice is quite at home in the school, knows every corner of it, and conducts himself like one of the sighted children. I may mention that at one of the board meetings the boy's name was mentioned, and from the report that I gave of him, Mr. Baird, who is chairman, and the others, seemed highly delighted. I lose no opportunity of recommending the system you are at present adopting in the education of the young blind. I may add that until lately I gave him free education, and that now, being no more trouble than the other children, I charge the regular fee.—I am, dear sir, yours truly,

W. GLASGOW.

Testimony of Teacher of Newton School, Ayr.

NEWTON, AYR, 19th January, 1874.

MR. BARNHILL,
Religious Institution Rooms, Glasgow.

MY DEAR SIR,—In giving my testimony in regard to instructing the blind with the sighted, I must confess that at the outset I looked

upon it as a very troublesome undertaking, having to give instruction separately to this pupil, until reading as far as words of one syllable was acquired; but when this was reached, M. was placed in a class suited to her, and from that time I have found it a great pleasure to instruct the blind with seeing children. The rapid progress she has made is wonderful, in two years, viz., ability to read any ordinary book, in either Alston's or Moon's type; spelling words for the second class of School or Standard V. of Revised Code; geography, a thorough knowledge of Scotland, and ability to point or trace any locality asked for; grammar, can parse, with ease, any simple sentence; history, not so well acquired; arithmetic, working sums in compound rules as far as division, and in mental arithmetic, very quick and accurate; her scripture knowledge is very good; not only for these, but for the excellent spirit of emulation she has been the means of stirring up in her various classes. She is never content till she gets to the top of her class. Her perseverance to master the lessons has a very great effect upon her fellow-scholars. Another great good I have noticed, as got by instructing the blind with the sighted, it brings them, when young, in frequent contact with each other, thus causing feelings of respect and kindness to rise, that shall never be forgotten. When M. came to school, I remember the thoughtless, indifferent manner in which she was looked upon by the others; whereas, now she is treated with the greatest kindness by all. The only lesson she gets separately is in reading; all her other lessons she gets with her class mates. —I remain, yours faithfully,

JOHN MARTIN.

Testimony from Teacher of Abbey School, Arbroath.

ABBEY SCHOOL,
ARBROATH, 23rd January, 1874.

A. BARNHILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,—I received yours in the beginning of the week, but having a heavy day school, also evening classes, to superintend, I could not get your letter answered until this moment. Many thanks for your kind note, also your printed letter. I rejoice to see that the poor blind have got so indefatigable a gentleman as you are to look after and forward their claims. I might mention that I gave your printed letter to the Chairman of the School Board of Arbroath, A. Gordon, Esq., of Ashludie.

It is now twelve years since I commenced to teach the blind in my school, and it is acknowledged by every one that it has been done with marked success.

When I wrote you last I had five blind children in school. One of them has gone to learn brush-making with a person in this town, and is doing very well. There is another little blind boy, almost the age to come to school, so I might say that my number stands as before. I gave his parents an alphabet to commence him at home first. Nothing

new has occurred to me, or I would forward it to you. Every one who visits the school is astonished at the progress made by the blind. May the blessing of Almighty God accompany all your labours.

By the bye, I mentioned in my last note to you that I would like one of the Pentagonal Boards and pins for the arithmetic. If you would send me one, I will forward the price of it. Hoping to hear from you soon, sincerely yours,

WM. A. SMALL.

Letter from JOHN ADAMS, Esq., Rector of St. John's Grammar School, Hamilton.

ST. JOHN'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL,
HAMILTON, 5th October, 1874.

ALEXANDER BARNHILL, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am favoured with your kind note inquiring about J. I am glad to say he continues to make very good progress in his studies. His preparation is done with the assistance of some one at home, frequently, I believe, with one of his class-fellows, who reads the lessons with him, or rather to him. He acquires his knowledge chiefly in this way, and by listening to the pupils going over their work. His judgment and memory are so exercised, and he shows such a clear comprehension and intimate acquaintance with the lessons in Scripture knowledge, Grammar, Spelling, History, and Geography, that he is often dux in his class, and always keeps a high place. In Arithmetic he has a sort of frame on which he works sums, and he does them with great accuracy and considerable rapidity. In Music he has made excellent progress, and plays well upon the piano and harmonium—I do not see anything to prevent him acquiring Classical and Mathematical knowledge. In Geography and Mathematics, raised or depressed configurations might be of assistance. Still his mind seems able to form a clear idea of everything, when intelligently presented in words. From what I see in this case of J., I think that, with ordinary care on the part of teachers, there is no difficulty in enabling those that have lost their sight to carry on their studies in the midst of, and along with, the pupils in our ordinary schools. I think that such a training has considerable advantages, both morally and physically, to the blind, compared with congregating them together in Institutions specially set apart for them. Kindly excuse this hurried note, and with sincere regards believe me, yours faithfully,

JOHN ADAMS.

Letter from F. J. CAMPBELL, Esq., Royal Normal College for the Blind.

UPPER NORWOOD,
LONDON, S.E., 21st November, 1874.

MY DEAR MR. BARNHILL,

Your favour in regard to the Greenock School has been received and contents noted, and, in reply, I can only say, since my

return from America, I have written you once or twice, and thought I had referred to the subject under consideration. As it seems I did not, I will be glad to repeat here what I have stated on former occasions; but I wish clearly to say, that I must in no way be supposed to under-rate the importance of Institutions for the Blind. On the contrary, I think they should be improved and fostered to the very utmost. They accomplish a work for the blind which can never be done without special agencies. But in regard to these special particulars it is unnecessary to add a single word here. It is claimed (and justly, too) that a majority even of the young blind are unprovided for by the special schools for the blind; hence the absolute necessity and great importance of the national movement in which you are engaged; but I must say farther, even if all blind children were taught in Institutions for the Blind, I think it would be better for them if a portion of their time was spent in ordinary schools for sighted children, as this will oblige them to associate and play with the sighted, and thus, to some extent at least, overcome some of the habits peculiar to blind children.

I was much pleased two years ago with what you had accomplished against great difficulties, especially in Greenock. I say great difficulties, because any movement for the blind in the outset is always met with decided prejudice. Teachers and others feel that it is a special subject with which they do not know how to deal. They are not aware how very easy it is not only to teach, but to make happy and glad the hearts of blind children. But now, as the subject is to be treated nationally, the special books and apparatus to be furnished, teachers will very soon become conversant with the subject, and will feel as ready and willing to deal with their blind as with their sighted pupils. As your movement progresses, books and apparatus will be multiplied and cheapened, so that the obstacles to the work will diminish, and the facilities rapidly increase.

Allow me to recommend for your consideration, a very superior course of readers in eight volumes, recently published by the National American Association for the Blind. I regard them as the very best thing which has yet been done for the blind. I am aware that it is argued in this country, that the letters are too small for the adult blind. This is unquestionably true, but it does not apply to such children as will attend the National Schools, and if they once learn to read this type, a valuable literature will be open to them. I will be glad if you will give the subject your earnest consideration. The maps now being published by the British and Foreign Blind Association will also be invaluable.

In regard to the boy L., of whom I omitted to speak above, before coming to us, he was only taught at the National* School at Greenock, and we found him well prepared to enter the classes with other boys who had enjoyed a course of instruction in Institutions for the Blind, both in England and Scotland. I am, Yours faithfully,

F. J. CAMPBELL.

* Then the Charity School.

*Testimony of S. S. FORSTER, ESQ., M.A., Head Master, College for
Blind Sons of Gentlemen, Worcester.*

From the Venture, or Blind Man's Quarterly, July, 1871.

The question whether blind children can be successfully educated in the same schools with their sighted fellows is one which, of late, has received some attention in Scotland, and having been put to the test of practice, has produced results which are worth attention. At the present moment, particularly when School Boards are commencing their work, and while they are still open to suggestions from without, it may not be amiss to exhibit the evidence of its necessity, and the success of its working in the limited area in which it has been tried. The prospect of revolutionizing our whole system of blind teaching is one which may excite alarm in the minds of those who maintain the present system; but that system does not pretend to be perfect or all comprehensive, and the claims of thirty thousand persons, a large number of whom are of tender years, would seem to supersede all considerations either of vested interest or of persistent adherence to established methods.

The reasons alleged against the present proposal are probably more sentimental than real. It is urged that the blind are so peculiar that it would not be pleasant to have the sighted brought up with them. But blind children are not peculiar at an early age, for this forbids the possibility of peculiar habits being contracted, and the admission to cheerful schools is a guarantee that they will never be contracted since they mostly spring from enforced idleness or neglect. For the first few years also of their life, blind children are, for the most part, the objects at home of especial tenderness, and hence would enter the schools with warm and unwarped natures, and a disposition pliable and gentle, prepared to reap the full benefit of hearty competition at a most impressible age. They would thus infallibly escape the apathetic manners or vicious habits of the isolated blind, and acquire *early* such a dexterous use of their present instruments of education as would make them clamorous for better, and possibly enlist science in the cause of typhology.

The first objection raised against this plan will be that it unduly interferes with the teacher's time, not only in the act of teaching, but involving him also in the extra labour of working up the use of alphabet and slate. But the Roman alphabet, which, for very obvious reasons, is that which commends itself as the best, offers no difficulty whatever to the master, while the ten signs of the pentagonal-holed slate, with its corresponding pillars, are acquired at a glance, and made familiar by practice. In dealing with his blind pupil, the teacher will be careful to put him exactly in the class for which he is fit; and this, together with the custom of occasionally telling off an elder child to his assistance, reduces to the merest fraction the interference with the teacher's time. There is an instinctive sympathy in children for the

weak and helpless, and on the help from this source it is perfectly safe to count. Besides which, the blind child, taking his alphabet home at night, will probably produce his lesson in the morning in a manner which will surprise his teacher. All, therefore, that is expected of *him* is that amount of care and tenderness necessary to put helpless beginners in the right way of learning. But this no more supposes a stoppage of school business than the same interest exhibited towards a tender beginner with sight. Another objection to this proposal that it will, in great measure, empty existing institutions, and render the asylums useless, is not of more force than already advanced. Asylums are only the expression of a want; they are by no means adequate for the fulfilment of that want. The number of young children which they could shelter is very small, even so they are not all full. Many objections have been urged against them. They are very few in number, and hence must draw from a large area; they involve, therefore, a sundering of the domestic ties for long periods together, to which many parents are unwilling to submit, especially those of somewhat better position in the lower middle-classes. They are fenced round with many restrictions, so that to get a child admitted requires a greater effort than the poor can always compass. Again, there is a growing opinion among some teachers that the massing of blind children in large numbers, for purposes of education, is not the best means to that end; that the effect is one of gloom and isolation, and a depressing conviction of common helplessness, which is prejudicial to effort and success. Although this latter feeling may be pressed too far, it is a fact that the standard of education in our asylums is mostly a low one, much lower, for example, than that in America. Whatever be the value of these reasons, the effect of this proposal upon our existing asylums would be only to modify, not to destroy. The number of youthful inmates would, doubtless, be diminished, by the new facilities offered in village and town schools, but as centres of trade instruction they would remain, and their resources would be set free to deal with the hard hands and neglected capacities of those adult cases who are now refused admission as being past age.

II.—SOCIETIES, &c.

Testimony of the DIRECTORS of the Greenock Charity School.

Extract from Annual Report of the Greenock Charity School, submitted to, and unanimously approved, by the Annual Meeting of Subscribers, held on 10th March, 1871:—

The committee have especial pleasure in calling the attention of their subscribers to that paragraph in Mr. Kay's report which refers to the introduction, for the first time, of blind children as scholars in this school. They cordially concur in all Mr. Kay's remarks on this subject, and desire to offer their thanks to the directors of the Glasgow

Mission to the Out-Door Blind for supplying the books and other necessary apparatus, without which this most important experiment could not have been made. Your committee sincerely hope that the success which has here attended the attempt to educate blind and sighted children together, may encourage its introduction elsewhere. If orphans and fatherless (for whom this institution is specially intended) have a claim on the charity of the public, that claim is greatly increased when to poverty is added the calamity of blindness.

JNO. M. HUTCHESON,

Secretary to the Greenock Charity School.

Extracts from Annual Reports of the Glasgow Mission to the Out-Door Blind.

1871. *Jan'y. 26th.*—In education we have now tested the practicability of teaching blind children in classes along with seeing children, and the success so far has been beyond our most sanguine expectations. Experiments in this direction have been going on in Greenock and Ayrshire. In Greenock blind children have been at school thus for about fifteen months, one boy, indeed, for upwards of two years; in Ayrshire, scarcely so long. In both, our Missionaries had difficulty in getting teachers to admit blind children, but, when fairly tried, difficulties disappeared or lessened, the interest of teachers was enlisted, and in Greenock we may safely pronounce the experiment a success. Your President and Secretary visited, in December last, the school referred to in that town, and they found the blind boys not only equal to their class-mates, but above the average in the quickness and correctness of their answers to questions, in not only English, Orthography, and grammar, but also in arithmetic. Should the Ayrshire experiment prove equally successful, your Directors think that barriers to the education of blind children, considered hitherto unsurmountable, will be removed, and the healthy stimulus, thus given to the children, be felt by them through life.

1872. *Jan'y. 31st.*—Your Missionaries are still striving to get blind children admitted to the Ordinary Schools among seeing children, and following up what was said in last Report on this subject, we have just to add that the experiment has, wherever tried, been quite successful. Through our agency there are now 18 children at the Ordinary Day Schools, in different parts of our field of operations, and they are making fair progress, while not interfering with the progress of their sighted class-mates. The greater gain will undoubtedly be to the blind in such classes, as they are withdrawn from a chilling and depressing isolation, and thrown into a current of healthy activity, physical and mental, by being thus admitted to the fellowship and stimulating competition of sighted companions. But may there not also be some gain to the seeing by the appeal to their

sympathy and kindly feeling, tending to cultivate benevolent action and thought, which else might be dormant or less in degree? The experiment in Greenock and Ayrshire has been an undoubted success; indeed, wherever made, as admitted by the teachers themselves, who, at first, were opposed on account of the supposed extra time and trouble which would be needed, and interference with the general work of the classes, neither result has, to any appreciable extent, ensued, while the gain of the blind pupils has been very great.

1873. *Jan. 29th*—We are glad to be able to say that our efforts to get blind children admitted to schools with seeing children have met with a large measure of success. There are now 24 children at such schools in our various districts, and while in many instances teachers felt a natural reluctance to admit them; in every case where the trial has been fairly and fully made, teachers have admitted that fancied difficulties in treating blind children were much less than supposed, or did not exist at all. By the exertion of our President; Sir Charles Wedderburn, Bart.,* and our junior Member of Parliament, it is expressly stipulated in the new Education Act for Scotland, which became law last session, that blind children shall be received and educated in the public schools, and when parents are so poor as not to be able to pay the fees, the parish shall be obliged to do so. It must be gratifying to our friends to know that the claims of blind children to receive education have thus obtained legislative recognition; and thanks are due to those gentlemen who were instrumental in obtaining this boon.

*From the FORTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GLASGOW ASYLUM
FOR THE BLIND, submitted 15th January, 1872.*

Public attention has been for some time anxiously called to the question of Education generally, and that of the Blind has also occupied a prominent place. It has been suggested that in places where there are not schools specially set apart for the purpose, blind children might be taught to read in the ordinary schools, along with those who have their sight. The Directors cordially approve of the suggestion, and see no difficulty in carrying it out, provided that the same alphabet is used for the blind as for those who have sight, so that the latter may be able to read the same books, in the same type, as the blind; and that, if at any time the latter are puzzled or at a loss, they may get help from any one who can read an ordinary book. The Directors may be partial to the system which has been from the first adopted with success in this Institution, but, while they have no wish to undervalue or enter into comparisons with other systems, they consider the advantage of those who have sight being able to read the same books as the blind, and thereby assist them in reading or learning to read, so plain, as to be paramount to all other considerations.

* Annual Report, 1874.

Extract from Annual Report of the LONDON SOCIETY for supplying Home Teachers and Books in Moon's Type, read at Annual Meeting, 28th May, 1872.

There is one point in connection with the education of the blind, to which the attention of the Committee has been specially directed. It has been the plan of the Scotch Branches of the Society* to send the young to the ordinary day schools. It does the blind good to come into contact with the sighted children, and it is not found that they retard the progress of the classes in any respect.

This question was referred to and specially approved of by John Macgregor, Esq., who spoke at our last Annual Meeting; and the Committee are pleased, while commending the plan to all who are interested in the welfare of the blind, to state that cases have been brought to their notice, where it has been successfully tried in London, and where the blind children have, in their Sunday Schools especially, carried off the prizes, both for efficiency and attention.

Extract from Annual Report of the same Society, read at Annual Meeting, 13th May, 1874.

Passing now to another subject equally important, viz., the Education of the Young, the Committee have to report that their attention has again been specially directed to this question, and that now, through the cordial co-operation of the London School Board, they are in a position to state that definite plans have been prepared and are in course of adoption, whereby blind children of thirteen years and under will be placed under more systematic instruction than hitherto.

About a year ago, Mr. John Macgregor invited the Committee to deal with special cases brought to his notice; and at a later date the London School Board requested information as to the number of blind children visited by the Society's teachers. A report was transmitted to the Board, giving the fullest information on the subject. The Committee also urged the great advantages likely to accrue to the blind children by being sent to the ordinary day school, where they would have the benefits of the usual oral instruction given in these schools, and be trained to habits of self-dependance.

Extract from Report of the Bye-Laws Committee of the LONDON SCHOOL BOARD.

The Committee have gone very fully into the whole subject, and in reference to the blind children have had the benefit of an interview

* This refers to the Glasgow Mission to the Out-Door Blind, which originated the system, and established its practicability by experiment at Greenock.

with Mr. G. Martin Tait, the Secretary of the Society for providing Home Teaching for the Blind. In the opinion of Mr. Tait and other gentlemen of experience, consulted by the Committee, blind children may, with advantage, attend the ordinary day schools with seeing children, as the presence of the latter enables the blind children to be more effectually instructed than if they were taught exclusively with children like themselves; and the Society above-mentioned very kindly offer to send their experienced Teachers* twice a week to instruct the blind children in the Board Schools in Moon's type, &c., even if only one blind child can be induced to attend, because in this case the Teacher will have the advantage of being certain to find the child, which he would not probably be able to do with equal certainty at home. The Committee accordingly beg leave to recommend that the Divisional Committee be instructed to take steps to induce blind children to attend the Board Schools, and when this has been done the Society for providing Home Teaching for the Blind can be communicated with, in order that the special education of the children may be provided for.

This was adopted by the London School Board on the 15th April, 1874.

From DR. MOON'S Work, Sight for the Blind.—Page 107.

"The Home Teaching Society in Glasgow, established in 1859, like that of Edinburgh, is doing great good. The benefits of this Society are not confined to Glasgow, but are extended to Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, Greenock, &c. The Society employs seven teachers, who have taught a great number of the blind to read, and have at the present time (1872) the names of 807 on the register. In addition to teaching the blind at their own homes, the Society uses its influence in having the blind children taught in the schools provided for the sighted, which effort has been attended with much success."

Page 114.

"The Stirling Society is endeavouring to get the blind children of the neighbourhood taught in the common schools as in Glasgow, a practice which we hope will become general throughout the country."

Testimony of SIR JAMES WATSON, President of the Mission to the Out-Door Blind.†

1871. *January 26th.*—At the Annual Meeting of the Mission he (then Bailie Watson), said, there was a feature of the Society's operations, which was well-deserving of attention, the teaching of blind children

* By the system pursued at Greenock the blind children receive reading lessons twice a day in school by their sighted companions, and again at home by their friends in the Roman type, readable at a glance. By the above mode the Home Teaching Society's Teachers give lessons twice a week in school in Dr. Moon's type, which, as blind persons, they read themselves.

† For Directors' Testimony, see page 62.

in public schools along with seeing ones. The experiment had met with a decided success. He visited Greenock some weeks ago, and was astonished to find that the blind children were, in all respects, as intelligent as the other members of the class, and in many cases outstripped them. He hoped that such efforts would be extended over the country, for were they so extended there would soon not be a blind child unable to read the Bible. He said it brought these children into contact with seeing playmates and enabled them to enjoy the pleasant excitement of the school.

On the 15th January, 1872, in moving the adoption of the Forty-fifth Annual Report of the Asylum* for the Blind, he (then the Hon. the Lord Provost), said he could not help alluding to that portion of the Report which spoke of the teaching of blind children along with seeing children. He had had occasion to visit a school in Greenock where the blind children were taught alongside of seeing children, and he was perfectly astonished at the progress made, and the satisfactory nature of that school. He found that the blind boys stood up in the class with their seeing fellows, and were quite as ready, if not readier than them, in giving answers. He found also that the seeing boys were always ready to help the blind children, and that in this they did very much to teach them to read. It would be very desirable if that system were carried out to a greater extent than at present, all over the country, as he was satisfied the result would be most satisfactory. He happened to be in London last year when the Education Bill was proposed, and he took the opportunity of getting a clause prepared for insertion, making it permissive for School Boards throughout the country to allow blind children to be taught in schools along with seeing children. He gave the clause to Mr. Anderson, their member, to take charge of, and that gentleman went most cordially into the subject. He also applied to eight or nine different Members of Parliament, and they all agreed to support the clause.

Testimony of MR. MARTIN, Blind Asylum, Edinburgh.

To the Editor of the London Mirror.

EDINBURGH BLIND ASYLUM,
January 24, 1871.

SIR,—I read with much pleasure the letter from my friend, Mr. Barnhill, of Glasgow, in your impression of the 21st, affording, as it does, additional and practical proof that the education of blind children in sighted schools ought to receive the attention of the Government in their new Education Bill.

While present in London at the Conference on the Education of the Blind in February last year, I pressed this matter on our respected City member, Mr. M'Laren, and he, in turn, pressed the matter with much force on Lord De Grey. I take the liberty of sending you a portion of my letter to the *Scotsman* of date 15th February :

* For Directors' Testimony, see page 63.

The following is what we wish :—1st, That parochial schoolmasters receive an annual premium of, say £5, for each blind child under his charge. 2nd, That an annual allowance of, say £5, be granted for higher education to each blind boy and girl from sixteen to twenty years of age. 3rd, That any blind young man (on passing certain examinations), desirous of attending the University, shall be assisted to do so. 4th, That classes in Arts Institutions, Industrial Museums, &c., under the Crown, be thrown open gratis to blind persons on the recommendation of one or two respectable householders.

I am quite sure that these requests will appear reasonable and right; and I do trust her Majesty's Council will grant us our petition. Anent the first head I may be permitted a few remarks, as I have been mainly instrumental in bringing it forward. It may seem strange that blind children should be educated along with sighted; but there is really no difficulty. If the master would allow blind boys or girls to sit in the class during lessons, I am certain ere the others have said theirs he or she will have learnt the lesson, and be able to say it too. I shall never forget hearing an aged and very much respected member of the Society of Arts say that one of the brightest spots in his existence was having assisted two blind boys to learn their lessons. What a fine influence it would exert on other children! they would grow up with a warm feeling towards the blind. But its beneficial effects on the moral and intellectual vigour of the blind themselves are quite sufficient without looking at these collateral benefits; they would acquire a more robust constitution and a healthier mental tone; and I do not think it would be a very difficult matter for teachers to acquire a knowledge of raised type—the system for embossing for inter-correspondence, arithmetic, geography, &c., specially adapted for the blind—so that they could devote an evening hour for the special education of their blind pupils. I know of many educated thus, and any of your readers who have heard the speeches at our annual Christmas festival may judge of the ability of some who have been educated at schools for the sighted.*

And now, sir, I trust we shall soon have more societies following the excellent practical example of Mr. Barnhill, and I am certain good fruit will be the result, both as regards education and industrial training; for the former being thus provided for, those gigantic and expensive schemes and institutions for the education of blind children will be able to devote more attention to the latter, and many of the blind who, being taught, are turned adrift to pine in wretchedness and want, employed in those spacious halls, hitherto used for school purposes.

Probably this may require an Act of Parliament; but the sooner such is introduced the better for the blind.—I am, &c.,

WILLIAM MARTIN, Manager.

* Here was inserted Mr. Watson of Twynholm's Letter, for which see Testimonies of Teachers, page 53.

*Extract of Address of WM. HARRIS, ESQ., at a Meeting of the
Institution for the Blind, Leicester.*

From the Leicester Guardian, May 1st, 1872.

"With regard to the education of the blind, he would tell them what had been done in Scotland. There a society like their Home Teaching Society had been teaching blind children in the ordinary schools. They commenced about two years ago and had now about thirty children taught in the schools. The advantage to them was great, they learnt more quickly and pleasantly, they ran about with the other children, and their wits and their bodies were improved by the exercise. That, by the way, was another advantage to the blind, coming to their institutions instead of sitting in the chimney corner all day. It was to be hoped that the teaching in ordinary schools would be extended, and that the blind would be no longer shut up, but be like other members of society, with the disadvantages and infirmities that it had pleased God to put upon them, and they might be still happy, seeing God's hand in it, and knowing He would help them if they trusted Him, and would bear their burdens lightly, and go cheerfully on their way."

III—LETTERS OF THE AUTHOR UNFOLDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW SYSTEM.

First Letter explains the system adopted at Greenock, which appeared in the Glasgow Newspapers, and afterwards more fully in the London Mirror.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION ROOMS,
GLASGOW, January 18, 1871.

SIR,—For several years it has been my privilege to labour in the cause of the blind, and to seek the amelioration of their condition, in connection with the Glasgow Mission to the Out-Door Blind, having under its care, in Glasgow, Ayrshire, and Greenock, 635 blind persons. It has always been my delight to co-operate with every available agency, in carrying on this blessed work, and year by year to devise new aims and seek to render our work more efficient among the many hundreds of blind people known to us outside the pale of institutions.

But the idea of educating blind children in sighted schools was never contemplated till the necessity of the case brought the matter to an issue. And, now that it has had some successful development, perhaps it may be right to state the circumstances, so that those interested in blind children, who cannot be sent to any institution, may have the matter brought before them for their consideration.

It may be proper to premise that it is in no spirit of opposition to our excellent asylum, that teaching such children in ordinary schools has been thought of. In the prosecution of the work of the mission many children came under our notice who were receiving no education. Our teachers did the best in their power, but little progress was made from inability to give daily lessons. We were, therefore, only too glad to co-operate with the asylum directors, in the opening of their day-school, and in using every effort to secure the attendance of as many children as possible. Their admission has been such a great help in our work, and they have received so much benefit from the education there, that we have always made it our first effort to send the children we meet with to the same place. To those who know the kindly feeling existing between the asylum and our mission, and the mutual aid we have been to each other, it is unnecessary to say even this ; but it is right to state explicitly that it has been proposed for those outside growing up in ignorance and idleness. Surely no one can object to the simplest and most efficient means of educating those who are unfortunately deprived of the benefit of any of these institutions.

The want of special schools for the blind in Ayrshire and Greenock, and the number of children in these places made the case very clamant. But the necessity of securing the education of such children on the spot was forced on my personal notice in Greenock, as a matter that could not be delayed, and their admission into the common schools seemed to me to be the only efficient scheme. I had heard some years ago of teaching blind children among the seeing ones as a theory, and very desirable to accomplish, but I did not hear of any practical steps having been taken, nor of any means having been suggested by which it could be wrought out. No doubt persons having special advantages had passed through classes with those who had their sight, but these were exceptional cases, and, as far as ever I heard, nothing had been done to develop the idea as a system for the education of the blind children of the working classes. The effort, nevertheless, seemed a duty ; and I sought to anticipate and to remove all possible objections to the scheme from the minds of those who might be asked to work it out, the more especially as it was but a trial, and must not be permitted to fail from requiring too much from the teachers.

These two things seemed to be indispensable :—

1. There must be little or no interference with the teacher's time. Unfortunately, at present, the child's reading lessons must be given to him alone, because he has not the books in the raised type that the other children use. It was suggested that an older scholar should give the boy a reading lesson twice a day. This he would easily be able to do by means of the Roman capital raised type used in the Asylum for the Blind, which could be read at sight. This has been accomplished ; the teacher's testimony is that he had always found boys and girls in the advanced classes anxious to devote half an hour in giving lessons to their blind schoolmates, while he himself required to give a very short time indeed to superintend. So much for the reading lessons.

2. The child must be placed in a suitable class, corresponding to his years and capacity. This is the most essential part of the whole scheme; without it the boy might be as well at home, for, excepting the time taken up in the reading lessons, he is left moping by himself in wearisome dulness, feeling his isolation, while all is interest and excitement around him, in which he is not permitted to share; but by joining a class he feels no longer his isolation, he finds himself able to take his part with his fellows, he joins in the competition in the common lessons, not unfrequently he outruns the others in the race, he is stimulated while he competes, and forgets his blindness while he feels the healthy glow. The readiest way to his joining a class seemed to be to give him the same black letter books as his sighted class-fellows, to mark the lesson for the following day, that the parent might give his boy the special assistance needed to acquire the meaning of words, spelling, &c. The smartness which is often found as a compensation for the loss of sight would greatly aid the boys taking up and making good use of the general information received in the class. In the matter of figures, the best course would be to adopt entirely the system in use in the asylum school, which is a most efficient one. The arithmetic frame is full of five-sided holes, and there are five-sided pins fitted into these holes. One end of these pins represents the odd figures, the other end the even ones, so that any figure can be made by each pin. It is not a matter of theory whether this will do, because it is done every day in the asylum school, and it is done quite easily by the blind children in the sighted school in Greenock. The teacher gives out, verbally, the question, the boys who see mark down the figures on their slate in the usual way, and the blind boys take the figures down by means of their pins, and the answer is arrived at by the blind children as quickly and correctly as by those with their sight, and frequently even more so.

This work in Greenock was commenced at the beginning of October, 1868, and has been in operation ever since, exactly as described above, and there are now six blind children on the roll of the school, and other cases of the same kind in the county of Ayr under our care. As it has had, therefore, upwards of two years' trial, it has been judged proper to have an examination of the children side by side with their more favoured companions, that its efficiency might be tested, and the results made known. This was done at a public meeting held in Greenock in December last, with very satisfactory results, thus holding out the prospect that no blind child in any part of the country need be without education.

There is one great advantage we may hope for as the result of a national system of education. If the books were the same in different places, and all the books in the progressive series printed in raised type, the blind child would have the same books in his raised character as the other children, and would thus be placed in quite an equal position with them for learning his lessons at home, reading with his fellows in the class, &c. For example, one of the books in addition to the Scriptures, printed in the raised Roman type, is the Scottish

Shorter Catechism, which is generally used here in schools. This book the blind child can read for himself; thus he can, unaided, learn his lessons at home, and read with the others in the school if necessary.—
I remain, yours truly,

ALEX. BARNHILL.

Education of Blind Children on the Prospect of an Education Bill.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION ROOMS,
GLASGOW, 20th April, 1871.

SIR,—The opening of your columns to the correspondence on the subject of teaching blind children in sighted schools, and your favourable review, have done much to arrest attention to the necessity of providing the means of educating neglected blind children over the length and breadth of the land. As a result, we have entered on a growing development of the means suggested, which will issue, we hope, ere long, in overtaking the want. We now know of twenty blind children being taught in the common schools in different parts of Scotland. Many parents who have such children are looking to get admission for them into schools within easy reach; and much more interest being taken in them now, friends are pressing it on such parents as are not taking action in the matter. They must also have had the effect of removing difficulties from the minds of hesitating teachers, and made them at all events willing to give the scheme a fair trial, should admission be asked for a blind child into their schools. Even thus far a great point has been gained, because all that is now necessary is to follow the example so well led by Mr. Kay in Greenock.

The question naturally arises at the present moment—should there not be provision made in the new Education Bill for Scotland for the admission of such children into the national schools. Various matters will come up for consideration along with such a question. Will you kindly permit me to refer to a few of them:—

1. For whom should provision be made—for all blind children, or only for the pauper class? There has been no difficulty in acknowledging the claims of the latter. There can be no difficulty as to those in easy circumstances, for their parents will esteem it a privilege to provide everything that is necessary. But the great mass belong to the working classes, and as there must necessarily be more expense connected with the education of blind children than with the seeing, it seems to be a fair and reasonable expression of sympathy and aid to relieve the parent of the education of his child, seeing the great calamity has fallen upon him through no fault of his own. Is it an unfair claim that blind children ought to be the children of the State, as far as their education is concerned? It is calamity enough for a father and a mother to see the future of their child beclouded, even although they were entirely relieved of all expense connected with

education. It might very well be left to any parent who might desire to bear the whole charge to let him do so, but surely it would be no stigma if the parent accepted such proffered aid. It would be a graceful act of the community to esteem the calamity of blindness as one which should be cheerfully shared by those who are saved from its blighting effects on their own homes.

2. The question of having one system of raised type to have the books printed in. This would be very desirable if it could be accomplished; but I am afraid we are not yet ripe for its settlement. In Scotland the two types most in use are Moon's and Alston's. The former has greatly the preponderance. It is that adopted by Home Teaching Societies for teaching adults to read, and providing them with books. There are a great many readers in this type over the country among a class of blind people which, till the institution of these societies, was not much known. The variety of books printed in it is very great compared to the other, and also the number of readers. This type is fast growing in importance. There are constantly additions being made to the books, and they can be read by blind persons at forty, fifty, and above sixty years of age. This is the type that the Mission to the Blind has always used, and exclusively so, till Alston's books were added to our library, for the sake of readers who were taught in the Glasgow Asylum. This was productive of great benefit to them, but they have mostly acquired Moon's type now, and become readers in that character for the sake of the greater variety of books in it.

When it was proposed to teach blind children in the common schools, we would have been very glad to have adopted Moon's type, as being cheaper, better raised, and more likely to become the uniform type. But, *to be or not to be* was the question that had to be faced in making the novel proposition of teaching blind children in the ordinary schools. The reading lessons must be given alone; because there were not in the raised type the same books as the other children used. Teachers had their own work, requiring their constant attention; and it was unreasonable to ask their personal services in teaching separately a few blind children. It was necessary to fall back on the older scholars to give the reading lessons; but if they had first to learn a new character, such as Moon's type, before they could teach the children, a barrier would be raised at the threshold which would give little encouragement for the success of the experiment. By adopting Alston's, or the Roman type, this difficulty would disappear; any of the older scholars disengaged could be made available, because the books could be read at sight. Then suitable books for children's lessons in the type were to be had at the Asylum at Glasgow. The great matter was to get the children educated, for it would be very simple afterwards for them to learn any type; and I am convinced that a month will be quite sufficient to learn Moon's type, when they will have access to our entire library.

The differences between the two types are these. Alston's is very suitable for those who are taught when young. It is especially adapted for teaching children in the common schools, because it can

be read at sight, and has suitable school books, but it would not answer for our adult readers. Moon's type is well adapted for adult readers, but it cannot be read at sight as the other, and has a great want of school books. Each, then, has its advantages in the present state of matters.—I am, &c.,

ALEX. BARNHILL.

Progress of Educating the Blind in Sighted Schoole.

To the Editor of the London Mirror.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION ROOMS,
GLASGOW, July 18, 1872.

SIR,—As you have kindly opened your columns on former occasions to the efforts in Scotland to promote the education of blind children, I shall be glad if you will permit me to report progress of this interesting work. The operations of our Home Teaching Society revealed that many blind children were being neglected, and called for the use of efficient means to remedy the evil. The directors of the Glasgow Asylum for the Blind opened their school to day scholars free to poor children, and our teachers gladly sent all blind children resident within accessible distance who could be induced to go. These made very satisfactory advancement, and the improvement upon them within a few years is most manifest in reading, arithmetic, general intelligence, and in their very appearance. But Glasgow was too wide that all blind children resident with their parents could go to one school, and consequently many in the city at a distance from the institution were left who should be educated. And the children in the country had no opportunity of education unless they were brought to the city institution, so that there was a large number for whom there seemed nothing but to grow up as beggars or paupers.

If the Home Teaching Societies were entitled to no credit but that of searching out the neglected blind, and revealing their necessities, what they have done in these respects has been most valuable. But they have done their special work in taking an interest in the neglected blind adults, in teaching them to read, and in providing them with books in Moon's type, as well as taking an interest in their temporal welfare, wherever that could be accomplished. And they also have set about means for the education of these blind children, when discovered, who are mostly in poor circumstances. If any class in the community have claims to education, that one has, in a pre-eminent degree to fit them for their future beclouded life.

The circumstances in which the plan of teaching such blind children in common schools, as the only efficient way, are known to many of your readers. It continues to be carried on at Greenock and other places with marked success, and the few years' experience has confirmed its efficiency. Many of the schools where the children are being so taught have been visited, and the teachers report favourably of its success, and as giving them very little trouble, which is not to be wondered at, considering that the blind children come prepared with the common lessons, and are taught in classes with their sighted

companions in the general exercises of an English education and in arithmetic, the only part where individual instruction is required being the reading lessons on the raised type. The public examination of the school at Greenock was lately held, when the blind children took their part among the other children in the ordinary lessons—spelling, meanings, grammar, general exercises, and arithmetic, in a very creditable manner; and their reading in the raised type, when they were examined separately, was everything that could be desired. Further, two girls have, during this last year, been taught knitting, and each of them had wrought a pair of stockings, showing the result of their instruction in that useful art, giving promise of as great proficiency as in the other parts of education which they have been longer studying. These blind children were individually examined lately by F. J. Campbell, Esq., the managing director of the New Normal College for the Blind, Norwood, and he expressed himself as much pleased with their intelligence and attainments. He was particularly pleased with the boy, who was first sent to the sighted school, and he says that he is so clever that he will not only be a credit to his parents, patrons, Greenock, and to the College, (if sent to the college), but if health and strength are spared him, be a blessing to his class. Means are being used to have him sent to the college for his further advancement. The blind children continue to be taught at other places in Scotland with success, some showing great progress, and there are now 30 being taught in this way who would otherwise, there is too much reason to fear, be left to grow up neglected and uncared for.

Surely it is an urgent duty that all such blind children should be sought out and means taken for their education.

With your kind permission I will send, in another communication, a notice of the recognition of the claims of blind children in the new Education Bill for Scotland; and remain, Sir, yours very truly,

ALEX. BARNHILL.

Education of Blind Children and the Scotch Education Bill.

To the Editor of the London Mirror.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION ROOMS,
GLASGOW, 14th August, 1872.

SIR,—With your kind permission I now propose, as intimated in my letter of the 18th July, to give a short notice of the recognition of the claims of blind children in the new Education Bill for Scotland.

The neglected condition of many blind children in Scotland, and the developing of the plan of teaching them along with the sighted, have of late much arrested attention to the necessity of making suitable provision for them. It was thought at first to be the best course to use practical means to remedy the evil, because if no efficient steps could be pointed out the evil might be looked upon as hopeless, and soon lost sight of. Therefore, it was only after the means had been subjected to the test of upwards of two years' trial that public attention was called to the matter.

When it was being discussed the introduction of Mr. Wheelhouse's Bill suggested the importance of suitable legislative provision being made, and means were used to induce him to recognise the simple machinery proposed. He expressed his cordial approval of the principle, and considered that his Bill could and would be wrought to carry out the object contemplated. The thanks of the friends of the blind are due to him for bringing the subject before Parliament. But the wording of his Bill did not seem to others to permit the carrying out of the plan, and the hopes from that quarter were closed upon its withdrawal.

The introduction of the Bill for Scottish Education last year afforded the opportunity of pressing the matter upon the Lord Advocate and various members of Parliament. This was taken advantage of by a Society for the Blind in Glasgow, which had been calling attention to the neglected condition of the blind, and which gladly welcomed the prospect of a remedy, in breaking up their isolation in the matter of education, and in giving their mental faculties free scope for competition with the seeing. The Directors of the Mission to the Blind also used their influence, and they were well entitled to do so, because it was under their auspices that the plan of teaching the blind and seeing together had been carried on, and they had satisfied themselves of its efficiency by examination of the children in the school. Communications were made with various members of Parliament, by letters, interviews, and circulars, and thus a growing opinion was being formed. In the necessity of immediate action, George Anderson, Esq., M.P., had a clause prepared which would have accomplished the purpose, but the withdrawal of the Bill shortly afterwards brought the negotiations to a close.

Upon the introduction of the Bill this year by the Lord Advocate, a pointed memorial was transmitted to his lordship from the Society for the Blind, setting forth that about one-half of the blind children had been growing up in ignorance, that a great deficiency of them means of education existed, that they had specially urgent claims to receive every advantage which education could confer, and, in conclusion, urged his lordship to make provision for the education of all blind children. At the request of the Lord Provost of Glasgow, the President of the Mission to the Blind, a correspondence was entered upon with Mr. Anderson, requesting him to use means privately to induce the Lord Advocate to make the necessary provision, rather than have recourse to move an amendment; but his lordship so strongly represented that all the power required was in the Bill, and that special provision for one class might limit its application in other cases ultimately, that a difficulty was felt in urging his lordship on the matter. It was arranged that Sir D. Wedderburn should give notice of an amendment, and that the clause providing for the payment of fees for the children of poor parents should be applicable to blind children. The Lord Advocate agreed to this when brought forward, so that when it was fixed that the Poor Law Boards were required to provide for the education of the children of poor parents, blind children were included, with the same responsibility as to their educa-

tion. No special means of education are stated for blind children, but the fact that they have to be educated as well as the others will direct such inquiry as will secure the most economical means consistent with efficiency, and if such children cannot be sent to an institution, then they must be educated with the seeing.

It is not necessary to speculate on the effect of educating the blind with the seeing. It has been satisfactorily subjected to the test of several years' experience. There are now thirty children being so educated in Scotland, with the best results. Some advantages may be supposed to be derived by these children from their realising that they are not an isolated class; that there is nothing to prevent them from being educated with those possessing their sight, from competing with them, and even excelling them. The experience gathered in this matter tends to show how stimulating and inspiring with hope such an education is to the blind, and who can tell how much this may benefit them in after life? Further, there is good reason to believe that their seeing schoolfellows will have their sympathies drawn out towards them, that they will esteem it to be a privilege to be able to aid them in any service, such as conducting them to and from the school, giving them reading lessons, forming personal friendships, and studying how to manifest their kindly feeling towards them. And that the community will realise them more as belonging to themselves than when thrust out to separate instruction as incompetent to mingle with others.

But if no other good be accomplished by the recognition of their claims in the Scotch Education Bill than to secure their education in some form or another, we will have entered on an era in the education of the blind, very suitable at a time when education is to be extended to all, but far more important to them from their stronger claims to education.

Thanking you for your kind indulgence in calling attention to this important matter, I remain, respectfully yours,

ALEXANDER BARNHILL.

Education of Blind Children and the School Boards.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION ROOMS,
GLASGOW, 24th Nov., 1873.

SIR,—Will you kindly permit me to call attention to the education of blind children in connection with our new national system of education now being organised under our School Boards?

A few years ago the visitation of the blind at their homes in various districts, under the care of the above society, made known many neglected children growing up without education, and the necessity was laid upon those having the care of that work to use means to remedy that great defect. It was manifest that to try to bring such to institutions would not meet the necessity, and, therefore, an attempt was made to have them taught on the spot in the common schools.

This plan has now been in operation for five years with great success, evidenced by the progress of the children and by the testimonies of the teachers. These blind ones are now reaping the benefit of a good education, which few of them would have otherwise obtained, and the

stimulus and competition with their sighted companions have given them no little measure of hope and self-reliance for the battle of life in the benighted circumstances under which they go forth. The advanced character of our public schools and school books, in which they now share, are not the least of the advantages which their admission into the common schools gives them.

And now, thanks to Sir David Wedderburn, Bart., whose amendment on the Scotch Education Bill was agreed to, making the national schools available for them, we have reason to expect that blind children will no more be neglected, but will have, as far as possible, equal advantages in respect to education with those having their sight.

Every well-wisher of his country who is acquainted with the deficiency of the education heretofore provided for them must rejoice in this provision. The census return of 1861 reported the number of blind children in Scotland, between five and fifteen years of age, to be 222. The number being educated at the various institutions for the blind in Scotland a few years ago showed only 102—less than one-half of the entire number. The substantial addition of 30 taught at sighted schools, when inquiries were last made, affords the prospect that such a means of education may be effectual in overtaking the remainder. But seeing that there is still a large number neglected, let us hope that the school boards will see to this, for of all classes none can have a higher claim to education than these dear blind children.

As the teaching of the blind with the sighted may therefore be expected to take further development, perhaps it may not be out of place to give a general statement how this has been carried on.

The blind child joins a class or classes suitable to his capacities in spelling, meanings, grammar, history, &c., according to his advancement. He comes prepared in the morning to compete in all the exercises, taking or losing places according as he can answer. If he be at all attended to at home as he should be, the healthy glow of success can hardly fail of great results. (He does not read with the others, but listens to what is read, and is asked questions in turn on the passage read.) The same is true of arithmetic, not only mentally, which a blind child is as competent to learn as one with his sight, but also with the pentagonal board and pins in accounts requiring many figures, by which he can as readily and as quickly work out the account as the sighted with their appliances. The only part in which the blind child requires separate lessons is in reading raised type, which is handed over to any disengaged advanced scholar for half-an-hour forenoon and afternoon. There is no difficulty in this, because the raised type is Alston's Roman type, readable at sight. Thus the teacher requires to give no special attention, but only a general superintendence to see that everything is going on right.

May I, in conclusion, ask the kind interest of anyone by whom this letter may be read, in any blind child not being educated, to the effect of seeing that that child may be either sent to an institution for the blind, or to some suitable sighted school within reach? and it will afford me great pleasure if I can in any way aid in removing supposed difficulties.—I am, &c.,

ALEX. BARNHILL.



APPENDIX.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE BLIND.

THE Higher Education of the Blind is now presented before the country with considerable claims to support, and seems to afford an excellent position to meet the unequal circumstances in which they are placed. With this advantage they will be better enabled to compete with those that have their sight. Let us hope that the time of neglect and ignorance has passed away, and the time of education and intelligence has dawned. Institutions have done valuable service in educating blind children, in instructing and training young persons to such departments of work as they could best follow out in their altered circumstances, and in afterwards providing them with employment. But sight, hands, and physical strength are the tools of the artizan who has his sight, the blind fails in the one that is most important, that which regulates and guides, that which enables him to judge of his work, and to know how to improve it. If the blind could be placed in circumstances where enlarged knowledge and trained mental powers were made the tools, where good education, judgment, and quickened faculties came up as the most important qualities, in such circumstances he would be nearer an equality. There is a decided advance in the present day in holding up higher aims for our blind children than have been hitherto looked for. In the past the aim has been manual operations, handicraft, but if something more in accordance with their necessities could be provided, it would be a happy solution. These thoughts seem to be getting practical development in the existence of two colleges for the Higher Education of the Blind in this country at the present time.

The Worcester College for Blind Sons of Gentlemen was founded in 1866 by the Rev. R. H. Blair, and is now under the care of S. S. Forster, Esq., M.A., Head Master. Its purpose was to give to families of the better class the opportunity of educating their children in a manner, and to an extent, suitable to their position. With superior masters, a good supply of books in the various types, and the best appliances, there has been every provision for their special circumstances. Were it only to make them intelligent companions, and to enable them suitably to occupy their place in society, the existence of the college has been a great boon. But it is found that the blind are capable of the highest education, this will be more and more brought out by the competitive system adopted and a number of sighted pupils have been admitted for sympathy and competition. It is easy to see that this will lead to a desire for a life of usefulness and

active service, for which the educational course is the very best preparative. The course of study, besides the usual branches of an English Education, embraces Mathematics, Chemistry, and Natural Science, Classics, Modern Languages, Music, and Divinity. Any one who has had the advantage of witnessing the system in operation there must rejoice at the prospect of these young gentlemen becoming so well qualified to take an intelligent position among their friends. They have no reason to look forward to a life of dependence, as most of the class require to do. If, however, anything should call upon them to have recourse to their own efforts, the thorough education they receive will give them the best means of doing so. And if such efforts should be unnecessary, nothing can be supposed to be more gratifying to a gentleman whose son has lost his sight, than to have him an intelligent and useful member of society, shining out all the more from his very privation. That many so educated should look forward to a life of public usefulness is what may be expected, and it may be fraught with great good to themselves and to the whole class of the blind. One important sphere is open to all such, to grasp the condition and necessities of the poor blind, to call attention to their circumstances, and to propose plans fitted to relieve and to elevate them. For such a useful labour there is abundant scope, with much promise of reward if judiciously gone about. If there be any sickly feeling on the part of some wealthy blind people to look on the poor blind as beneath their notice, it is time that the minds of such persons should be expanded by the bands of human sympathy, and that they and their friends should take by the hand their poor blind brethren and help to raise them up. In so doing they will infallibly raise themselves to a higher platform. Would it not be a glorious result of such an education as is now being prosecuted if it were made the means of putting a lever into the hands of the wealthy blind, to raise the whole class.

The Royal Normal College and Academy of Music for the Blind has been recently instituted at Upper Norwood, London, for the higher education of talented blind children, under the care of F. J. Campbell, Esq., late of Boston Institution. Education and training have been provided for many of the young blind at the various institutions in the country, but it has often been a matter of difficulty to obtain admission, and many have not had this advantage. Those who were instructed were usually afterwards provided with work, and their wages supplemented by such aids as were required. But experience has shown that those who are deprived of sight are seldom able to earn the entire cost of their support, and nearly all who have been trained to various trades throughout the kingdom still require assistance from their friends or the public during their whole life. Formerly, the blind in other countries were in a similar condition, but there has been a great advance of late years in France and America from much attention having been given to their higher education, and many of them are now supporting themselves in a respectable manner. There are three distinct departments in the college: General Education,

the Science and Practice of Music, and Pianoforte Tuning. A superficial knowledge of tuning may be readily obtained by the blind, but to become efficient and qualified tuners, a prolonged course is needed under competent instructors. This is a peculiarly suitable employment for the blind, because in it the blind are quite equal to the seeing, and even possess some advantages.

1872. *October 20.*—Extract from a letter received from F. J. Campbell, Esq., Upper Norwood, London, in reply to an inquiry as to his system of instruction in the Normal College and Academy of Music for the Blind :—

“The training in our College not only cultivates a taste and love for music, but develops all the powers essential to active, useful, and happy manhood. There is an object in all that they do, even their games in the play-ground are carefully studied with a view to give them health, activity, and independence. A committee of gentlemen visited the College yesterday. After hearing the various recitations in arithmetic, grammar, geography, objects, history, physiology, natural history, &c., Col. S. expressed himself emphatically thus, ‘Sir, without any regard to blindness, you have the best, most thorough, and practical school in England. Every faculty of the minds of your pupils is called into activity. Such discipline, such training, such activity, will certainly make your pupils, though blind, useful men and women.’

“My first effort is with every child to awaken within them true and earnest aspirations, and to make them feel, with God’s help, they have the power to act a useful part among their fellowmen.”

The amount required for each pupil is so considerable that many suitable children cannot be admitted. To visit the college and to know the style of instruction, will enlist such a visitor as a friend of the institution. The education of a large number of the blind in this manner would be a great boon, first to themselves in the elevation of their social position to one of comfort and independence. Then this would set free the existing institutions to take in many who are at present left outside. It would raise up an educated public mind of the blind which could not fail to take a deep interest in the condition of the whole class. Such persons would remember the favourable circumstances by which they were elevated, and, we may suppose, have a kindly remembrance of former days to make them feel and sympathize with those who are as they were. The wealthy would not then be the only educated class of the blind, and the effect of the elevation of a large number from the common ranks of life might be expected to produce an educated public mind of the blind of such a moulded and combined character as would command the ear of the community, and bear upon the condition of the large number of the adult blind.

An effort has been made to interest the Directors of Hutcheson’s Hospital, Glasgow, in this plan, and affording, as it does, the prospect of elevating the blind children of our city to a self-supporting and independent position ; their condition and prospect without this aid must powerfully plead for a liberal assistance, as one of the best applications of their funds for educational and charitable purposes, which, it is gratifying to know, the Directors are favourably disposed to support.

Now Ready, Paper Covers, 2s., Cloth, 3s.

A NEW ERA
IN THE
EDUCATION OF BLIND CHILDREN;
OR TEACHING THE BLIND IN ORDINARY SCHOOLS.

By ALEXANDER BARNHILL,

Of the Mission to the Out-Door Blind, Religious Institution Rooms, Glasgow.

CONTENTS:—Educating Neglected Blind Children—Education in Ordinary Schools—Not interfering with Teacher's Time and School Exercises—Enabling all Blind Children to be Educated—Blind Children sharing in Improved Character of Public Schools—Giving Blind Children Common Associations and Cheerful Influences—Competition with the Sighted Prompting and Stimulating Blind Children—Arithmetical Calculations with the Sighted—Reading in Raised Type in Ordinary Schools—Appliances for Writing, Geography, &c.—Notices of Blind Children attending Ordinary Schools—Testimonies of Teachers, Societies, &c.—Appendix—The Higher Education of Blind Children.

"As to the teaching of the blind in mixed schools, I can see this is A New Era in the teaching of the blind."—*Andrew M'Farlane, D.D., Greenock.*

Social Science Congress, Glasgow, 7th Oct., 1874.

"Mr. BARNHILL was reading an admirable paper to show that the blind can be properly educated along with the seeing in common schools. He is an enthusiast, but he is a practical enthusiast; and he not only carried the section with him, but he has succeeded in demonstrating in fact the truth of his theories."—*Casual Correspondent, Glasgow Herald.*

Annual Report, Perkins Institution and Massachusetts' Asylum for the Blind, Boston, U.S. Issued Jan., 1875.

"The practice of training and teaching a considerable proportion of blind children in the common schools is to be one of the improvements of the future. It will hardly come in my day, but I see it plainly with the eye of faith, and rejoice in the prospect of its fulfilment."—*Dr. Samuel G. Howe.*

From Rev. James Gall, son of the late James Gall, Esq., Edinburgh, and co-operator with him in First Printing Raised Type Books in this Country.

"EDINBURGH, 8th March, 1875.

"I delayed acknowledging and thanking you for your very interesting book until I had time to read it, and to express an opinion. I am now able to say that I think very highly of it, and congratulate

you on the success of your efforts in getting the blind instructed in common schools. I see that you were not aware that this was a most decided opinion of my father as well as my own. He, from the first, refused any arbitrary character on the ground that he did not intend it for asylums but for use in the family and common schools.—I am, &c.,

“JAMES GALL.”

The London Mirror, Saturday, May 22, 1875.

“This book is a most valuable contribution to the solution of the difficult problem of educating neglected blind children, and its author addresses himself to the subject with all the power and authority derivable from a close study of what he writes about so well, and what is of even more value, a practical experience of the plan of educating blind children with sighted scholars in ordinary schools. This experiment, which was inaugurated at Greenock some six years since, has been attended with the most marked success; there are fifty blind children now being taught in this manner in Scotland, while late inquiries revealed that there were only 102 being taught in the Institutions for the blind in that country. So far back as January, 1871, we strongly advocated the new system, and the results have proved the correctness of the views we then took, based on an interesting letter from Mr. BARNHILL, which appeared in our columns about the same date. We now most cordially commend his able work (an abstract of which was read at the late meeting of the Social Science Congress, held in Glasgow) to all who are interested in education and particularly in the education of the blind.”

Testimonies of the progress of blind with sighted children received since the book was issued.

“SHIELDS ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL, GLASGOW, 29th March, 1875.

“I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the character and attainments of two blind boys at this school. G. entered about three years ago the lowest class, since which time he has made very marked progress in all the branches of an elementary education. At the last examination of the school by H. M. Inspector, he passed in Standard III. of the Scotch Code. His general deportment in school is very satisfactory. R. entered two years ago, and has also made very satisfactory progress in his education. At present he is working sums in Decimal Fractions, taking the general work of the highest class. They are both using the writing frame, and can do the dictation of their classes very correctly.—I am, &c.,

“GEO. SMALL.”

“SCHOOL HOUSE, STRATHBUNGO, GLASGOW, 29th March, 1875.

“I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the progress J. has made since he was placed under my charge. He has made his way from the lowest class in the school, leaving his class-fellows two classes behind him, and is now in the first class, and generally keeps at the top. He is preparing to pass H. M. Inspector of Schools in Standard IV., in which, I know, he will pass with credit.—I am, &c.,

“JAMES M'LARDY.”

