

*Perkins institution and Massachusetts
school for the blind*

3d ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

TRUSTEES OF THE

NEW-ENGLAND INSTITUTION

FOR THE

EDUCATION OF THE BLIND,

TO THE

CORPORATION.

BOSTON:

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1835.

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OF
THE CORPORATION,
FOR 1835.

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At an adjourned meeting of the Corporation of the New-England Institution for the Education of the Blind, held Jan. 15, 1835, it was voted that the Report of the Trustees be accepted, and such number of copies printed as the succeeding Board shall direct.

S. G. HOWE,

Secretary of the Corporation.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE NEW-ENGLAND INSTITUTION FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND TO THE CORPORATORS.

Gentlemen,

We have the honor to submit to you the following Report of our proceedings for the last year :

You will recollect that the Annual Report, made in January, 1834, presented a most favorable and gratifying picture of the condition of the Institution.

It gave an account of the munificence of individuals, and the generosity of the public; it related the extraordinary manner in which funds had been raised, buildings provided, and legislative protection granted; and, at the same time, gave a satisfactory detail of the internal affairs of the Institution.

If we should be able only to state to you that things remained in as good condition as when we received our charge, in January, 1834, it would probably be a satisfactory Report; but we trust we shall be able to show, that though much was given us in charge, it has become still more.

With regard to what may be called the external affairs of the Institution, they are flourishing. The appropriations from the States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont, for the support of their beneficiaries, remain the same as at the period of the last Annual Report; and an additional one of one thousand dollars has been made by the Legislature of the State of Maine.

The financial affairs are in a favorable condition, and the income will probably be sufficient to meet the ordinary expenses, so long as the appropriations from the States shall be continued. An extension, indeed, of the premises is desirable, and will soon become absolutely necessary. The building now used, is not large enough to accommodate any more pupils than it actually contains; indeed the necessary separation between the apartments of the two sexes is made with great difficulty and inconvenience, and with a greater number will be impossible. The house might accommodate perhaps fifty of either sex, but not twenty-five of each.

Every consideration of prudence and propriety dictates the necessity of a separation of the sexes; and without the power of effecting it, no person can safely venture to become responsible for the manners and morals of the Institution. We would not be understood by these remarks to have reference to the conduct of the present pupils; we make them prospectively, and in relation to the future welfare of the Institution. But apart from the necessity of a separate suite of apartments for the two sexes, larger and better ventilated school-rooms are desirable—both for the health of the pupils, and for purposes of exhibition.

A new building being necessary, it will probably be requisite to purchase land, as the play-grounds are now barely large enough for the exercises and amusements of the pupils.

The purchase of land and the erection of a building, of course will encroach extensively on the disposable funds of the Institution, and leave it entirely dependent upon the liberality of the Legislatures. We feel assured, however, that this liberality may be safely counted on, and that the indigent blind may confidently rely upon it as the means of their education and preparation for usefulness. We would refer you to the succinct Report of the Treasurer, hereto appended, for a more detailed account of the state of the finances. And we would add, that we feel under obligations to the Treasurer for the zeal and prudence with which he has managed the financial affairs of the Institution.

With regard to the internal affairs of the Institution, they present a most favorable aspect. The number of pupils at the commencement of the last year was twenty-four; it is now forty-two. Of these, nineteen are admitted upon warrants from the Governor of Massachusetts, six upon warrants from Maine, five from New-Hampshire, two from Connecticut, and one from Vermont, making thirty-three beneficiaries. Four pay their own expenses, and five have been received by special votes, and are supported from the funds of the Institution, although no such obligation is incurred by the conditions of the legislative or other appropriations.

We have deemed it a duty to extend the benefits of the school as

widely as possible, and have admitted all applicants, whom we thought could be benefited, without regarding the circumstances which excluded them from any claim upon us; by the condition of the legislative grant.

The pupils, with one exception, inhabit the Institution, and pass their time between the school the work-shop, and the music-room. They are occupied from six in the morning until nine at night (with the exception of four and a half hours intermission at different times) with study, music, or work.

A larger proportion of time has been devoted to intellectual pursuits than was originally contemplated; but the pupils have been found so extremely fond of them, so capable of undertaking any branch of learning, and so rapid in their progress, that ample time and opportunity has been granted to them, and they have been fully improved.

Several of the pupils are advancing in the science of geometry, algebra is familiar to many, and arithmetic to almost all.

One class has been instructed in natural philosophy, and are following up a course of history. Geography is taught to most of them, as is the grammar of the English language. Another class has been steadily pursuing a study of the French language, in which some are so well versed as to be able to express their ideas verbally; and three boys have been applying themselves to the study of the Latin.

In the study of music, as a science, they have all made tolerable progress, and many of them have improved very considerably. The department of vocal music has been scientifically and successfully cultivated, and the class can sing many difficult pieces with taste and skill.

Experience has fully confirmed what was foretold in the commencement of the Institution, that music must be the branch most sedulously cultivated, as being the one which would most certainly enable the pupils to earn a livelihood. Hitherto it has been found difficult, from various circumstances, to adopt any permanent and fixed system of teaching instrumental music. The one adopted temporarily, and for the sake of experiment, is the one used in some of the most celebrated European Institutions; but it has not succeeded well, nor would it be applicable to this country if it had.

As the pupils, however, have been coming in at irregular periods, and classes have been but recently formed, it is not of much consequence. Still, we are sensible that the pupils have not enjoyed all the musical advantages which they are capable of improving, or been following the best system which could have been devised; and after mature consultation with the most scientific musicians, we have laid down a new plan of musical instruction, which we would earnestly recommend to our successors for adoption.

Under this plan (which will be found detailed in Appendix A) we doubt

not the majority of the pupils will soon acquire a thorough and scientific knowledge of the principles of music, be enabled to reduce them to practice, and by means of them to obtain a livelihood. The post of church organist, particularly, is one which presents an excellent opportunity to a blind person, for making himself useful to others, and to himself; and if he can add to it a skill in teaching instrumental music, he has secured to himself a respectable and profitable profession.

Far be it from us, however, to lose sight of the original plan of the Institution, and to recommend an exclusive attention to music; a mere musician cannot fill that extended sphere of usefulness which a cultivation of his intellectual and moral nature would enable him to do. The School for the Blind would but half fulfill its object, if it sent out upon the country merely excellent organists and skillful teachers of instrumental music. But when these organists and teachers are, at the same time, persons whose moral natures are elevated, whose intellects are cultivated, whose minds are stored with valuable knowledge, and who have the confidence and ability to put their powers into operation, then it will indeed have done a good work—then it will have enabled its pupils to take what stand they choose in society, and associate on equal terms with people of intelligence and taste.

We should therefore recommend a perseverance in the plan we have steadily followed, of giving to the blind just such an education as we should give to youth who are endowed with all the senses. It will be found that they have an extraordinary capacity for imbibing, and, what is better, for retaining and digesting knowledge; and there is hardly a branch of science (which does not require demonstration by light and shade, or colors) that they are not capable of studying with pleasure and advantage.

With regard to the department of mechanical labor, or handicraft work, considerable progress has been made. None of the articles have yet been brought into the public market; nor was it perhaps desirable, for the pupils have by no means attained that degree of skill of which they are capable. With time, and more skillful instructors, they will undoubtedly improve very much. They can, however, already manufacture mattresses, cushions, door-mats, and coarse baskets; they can sew, knit, braid, weave, &c., and are rapidly improving in each branch; and we feel confident that in a very short time, the Institution will be able to offer for sale as handsome and well made mattresses and cushions, as can be found in the city. And as none but the best materials will be used, the public can place confidence in their quality and durability.

The advantages to be derived from these occupations are not, however, merely in the product of the labor, but in the tact and confidence which are acquired by the exercise of the physical powers. Indeed,

the same may be said of intellectual pursuits; the learner comes to feel and know his powers, and whether he use them or not, has always the confident feeling of a "well appointed man."

Besides, the moral effects of the association of a great number of blind persons together, are not inconsiderable. They learn to consider themselves as members of a large class, and they cease to think that they are isolated and solitary examples of misfortune, standing in darkness and desolation, amid a crowd of bright and happy beings; like scathed and blackened trunks in a green and leafy grove.

They find many others in the same situation with themselves; they hear of many more; they see that each one possesses some peculiar power or excellence, and learn that all can be combined in one person; they become more happy and more confident; more acquainted with themselves, and with their own resources. The lesson, to be sure, may sometimes seem a hard one for those, who, when at home, are considered as objects of peculiar misfortune—as isolated and helpless beings, who are always caressed—who are always addressed in a tone of kindly commiseration; and though continually reminded by this of their misfortune, they are comforted by the thought of the kindness and goodness of their fellow-men. When left to themselves, however, when thrown upon their own resources, and treated just as other persons, they learn much that is useful; but the lesson, like many valuable ones of experience, may be sometimes considered as hard and disagreeable.

And this leads us naturally to a reflection upon the length of time that the improper treatment, to which we have alluded, has continued before the education of the blind begins; and we repeat what the experience of our own, and every other Institution of the kind has proved, that, in order to do good, we must begin with them early in life. All the difficulties which we have met, have been in the case of persons who are advanced beyond the age of childhood; all the cases (with one exception) where the pupils have failed to be benefited by the Institution, have been those who were over sixteen years of age; almost all the difficulties in teaching occur in the case of the older pupils; and all the obstacles to the preservation of order and discipline, arise from the same source.

Discontents and difficulties ever have, and ever will occur in large establishments for the education and discipline of youth, and we must anticipate them in the case of our own. As yet, however, none of any consequence have occurred; and when we reflect that many of the pupils are advanced to the age of adults, that many of them have been unused to study or any occupation, and that ten hours' application every day, with strict discipline, are required of all, it must be a subject of congratulation that no trouble has occurred; and it is a fact,

which is alike creditable to the pupils, and to those in charge of them.

There are more than forty blind persons resident in the Institution, about equally divided between the two sexes; and it would be hard to find a community of young persons, separated from their relatives, who are so diligent, so constantly occupied, and yet so happy.

With regard to the hours of work and study, they are arranged as follows:

WINTER TERM.

First bell rings at 6 o'clock A. M.

At half-past 6 all assemble for prayers; after which school continues, also the work in the shops, until 8.

At 9 A. M. bell rings for school and work.

At half-past 10, recess until 11.

From 11 until 1 P. M. school and work.

From 1 until half-past 2, recess.

From half-past 2 until 4, the principal part of the pupils are occupied with work.

From 4 until half-past 4, recess.

From half-past 4 until 6, school and work.

From 6 to 7, recess.

From 7 to 8, exercises in vocal music.

From 8 to 9, reading aloud—attendance voluntary.

At 9 o'clock, prayers and reading of the scriptures.

The children go to bed at 8 o'clock, and all are required to retire at 10.

The exercises go on regularly, and the pupils are accustomed to move at the stroke of the bell.

It may seem a severe course of application for young children, but although much time is employed it is not all in severe mental application. Each one passes a part of the time at instrumental music; and only once in the day is mental or physical application required for more than one hour and a half in continuation; the rule is to give the pupils a recess of thirty minutes after each hour and a half of study.

Strict attention is paid to the morals of the pupils, and their physical health is ever a subject of observation and anxiety. It is almost impossible, without resorting to severe measures, to cause the blind to take sufficient bodily exercise; and they will, if left to themselves, relapse into those inactive habits which prevent proper development of the physical powers, and lay the seeds for future disease, or premature decay. Few measures have caused so much dissatisfaction among the male pupils, as shutting them out of doors once in the day, in order to force them to exercise; and yet no one would be more conducive to their permanent health and comfort, provided they would bene-

fit by it, and not crawl into a sunny corner instead of running about and generating their own heat.

We have, however, neglected no means to promote the physical health of the pupils. Strict cleanliness is required, and every pupil has an opportunity of having a warm bath as often as is desirable.

The general course of instruction which is pursued, is very much like that adopted in high schools for seeing children; the same information being imparted by a different system of instruction.

With regard to the religious exercises of the Institution, they are such as cannot interfere with any sectarian feelings. Prayers are read morning and evening, and also portions of scripture without note or comment. On the Sabbath the pupils repair to such place of worship as they or their parents desire.

We are most happy also to state, that the experience gained during the last year is likely to be turned to the benefit of the blind in general, by improvements devised in the maps and books. The Director has been engaged in a series of experiments upon making maps for the blind, which has resulted in the contrivance of means of embossing, which will be much better than those used in any of the European Institutions, and which can be multiplied at a very cheap rate. A set of maps will soon be finished, forming an atlas for the blind superior to anything of the kind yet made public.

Considerable attention has been paid also to the subject of printing in raised characters, and it is found that books may be printed for the blind which are superior in every respect to any that can be had from Europe, and which will be much cheaper.

The Institution is now provided with a printing-press, and the whole of the books of the Acts of the Apostles has been printed.

This desirable acquisition has been obtained without encroaching upon the funds, by means of contributions raised by the Director among the charitable communities of Nantucket and New Bedford. As the Institution is now in possession of a press, and a complete set of types, it will be able to go on printing books at a comparatively small expense, and may, in a short time, have a better library for the blind than any one now in existence.

The grand object in printing for the blind is to diminish the bulk of the books. How far this has been effected, by the improvements adopted in our method, may be judged from the following comparison of the books printed at our Institution, with those of Europe:—

In the books printed at Paris, there are, on a page of 8 inches by 7, or 56 square inches, 408 letters; at Edinburgh, by the improved method, 590 letters; at Boston, 787 letters.

One of the Gospels has been printed, or rather embossed, at Philadelphia; but, besides that the plan would be enormously expensive, the specimen shown us gives but 332 letters to the 56 square inches.

Consequently our books will give to the blind, on the same square surface, nearly twice the quantity of matter which is contained in those of France; and by using a thinner paper, will give about three times the quantity of reading matter in a book of the same bulk.

Much of the work in the printing-office is done by the pupils; as working off the impressions, laying on the sheets, &c.

We must not dismiss our report without a just tribute to the services of our Director, Dr. Howe, whose competent information, and assiduous exertions, have raised our school to its present prosperous condition, and whose ingenious improvements are likely to confer a lasting benefit, not only on our own Institution, but on all those devoted to similar philanthropic purposes.

On the whole, then, we think we can congratulate the Corporators and the public, on the flourishing state of the Institution. It has been in operation nearly three years; it has passed through the most difficult period of its existence—the period of experiment—and it has come out successful. It now numbers forty-two pupils, and the number is increasing; it has the apparatus necessary for their instruction; it has the means for multiplying books; and those engaged in it have acquired experience and knowledge, which must ensure its future success.

It is not yet time, however, to look for its full fruits, nor will they be perceptible in those who first leave it; for they are those whose age and previous habits incapacitate them from receiving or appreciating the benefits of a regular education. But when those who are now young shall come forward—when their education is finished, and they go out upon the world in the full confidence inspired by cultivated intellect and well-developed physical powers—when they take their stations in society, they will soon show the wide difference between an educated blind person and one who has grown up without any system, or other instruction than chance or his own efforts have thrown in his way.

Respectfully,

EDWARD BROOKS.
 THOMAS G. CARY.
 PLINY CUTLER.
 J. D. FISHER.
 JOHN HOMANS.
 SAMUEL MAY.
 HORACE MANN.
 WILLIAM P. MASON.
 WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT.
 STEPHEN C. PHILLIPS.
 ROBERT RANTOUL.
 SAMUEL P. LOUD.

Dr.

{ NEW-ENGLAND INSTITUTION FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND, }
 in account with RICHARD D. TUCKER, Treasurer.

Cr.

1884.		1883.			
Jan.	20	To balance of old account	\$214 01	By received from Treasurer of State	\$1,500 00
	22	paid J. Chickering & Co's bill Piano Forte	255 00	discount on D. Bates & Co's bill	1 50
	24	J. M. Pierce's bill Mason Work	35 04	interest on \$8500 at Atlantic Bank	221 60
	28	Boston Type Foundry bill	25 51	discount on H. Loring's bill	50
	28	Allen & Ticknor's bill Stationery	51 58	Contributions at Springfield	48 00
		order favoring S. G. Howe	500 00	from Estate of P. Dodge	100 00
Feb.	1	J. Kohler's bill Horse Hair	149 30	from Treasurer of State	1,000 00
	1	J. C. Marsh's bill Gammion board	7 00	for Bank Book	1,500 00
	3	X. Hale's bill Advertising	7 00	and interest on do.	75 00
	3	Mrs. Bagshaw's bill	13 38		
	17	LL & F. Stimpson's bill Stoves	22 31		
	19	Boston Soap Stone Co's bill removing stoves &c.	6 81		
	23	A. Twombly's bill Latch	2 63		
	25	M. Smith's bill, Funeral Expenses	6 00		
	25	S. G. Howe's bill of expenses for Journey	72 75		
	25	C. Goff's bill of Willow &c.	53 18		
	28	order favoring S. G. Howe	150 00		
April	1	Dr. Howe's quarterly accounts	788 20		
	4	S. A. & W. G. Pierce's bill Iron Safe	115 15		
	15	W. S. Pendleton's bill Printing	74 83		
	16	W. H. Prescott per order	115 15		
May	3	S. G. Howe on account	600 00		
June	2	S. G. Howe on account	1,000 00		
	12	deposited in Boston Bank on Interest	11,220 00		
July	7	paid S. G. Howe balance account	274 72		
	7	E. Trencher's Salary	125 60		
	7	D. C. Johnston's bill engraving &c.	17 00		
	7	J. Pringle's bill Salary	37 50		
	7	Geo. Barker's bill of Music Stools	22 00		
	12	L. Mason's bill Music Instruction	100 00		
	16	W. F. Cary's draft for Bust	303 00		
	16	Labor &c-to Asylum	38		
	29	J. Chickering's bill Piano Forte	400 00		
			\$16,738 78		
				Interest in advance on \$11,220 for 6 mos. making the book equal to 6 per cent	11,220 00
				from Treasurer of State	56 10
				from S. C. Phillips	3,549 57
				by S. G. Howe, from Richmond of Boston Bank for Book	200 00
				of " " for Interest	246 25
				of Atlantic Bank for Book	13,339 57
				of " " for Interest	548 91
				Contributions in Nantucket	8,500 00
				in New Bedford	304 58
				of G. Howland	535 57
				100 00	1,259 07
				from Treasurer of State	1,500 00
				of Dr. Howe, for board of Alex. Messenger for Bank Book	24 00
				and interest on do.	11,220 00
				285 18	11,505 18
				from the State of New Hampshire by the hands of Dr. Howe	500 00
				of Dr. Howe for proceeds of sales at shop	132 08
					\$57,331 91

Dr.

TREASURER'S ACCOUNT, CONTINUED.

Cr.

1884.		To amount brought forward	\$16,738 78	1885.		By amount brought forward	\$57,331 91
Aug.	8	paid Trucking, Freight &c. of Bust True Ring to Asylum	1 00	Jan.	3	received of Dr. Howe, for board of Mr. Park of Miss Davis, for board and tuition	50 00
	12	" Josiah Loring's bill of Globes	52 25			"	40 00
	12	" Niles & Whiting's Carriage Hire	5 00				
	12	" S. G. Howe's bill boarding &c.	386 75				
	12	" Dr. Howe's bill services	125 00			Balance carried to new account and due the Treasurer this day	\$57,421 91
	12	" Homes & Dillaway's bill	30 03				
	16	" Loring & Parson's bill	525 45				
	26	" J. Bicknell's bill Mason Work deposited in Boston Bank on interest, 5 per cent	161 94				1,674 10
	29	" " in Atlantic Bank	13,888 48				
	29	" " " "	8,804 58				
Sept.	3	paid Boston Soap Stone Co's bill,	29 46				
	4	" G. S. Webb's bill Musical Instruction	100 00				
	6	" J. W. Pierce's bill Sundries	50 00				
	6	" Dr. Howe's bill Board &c.	479 00				
	18	deposited in Atlantic Bank.	1,100 00				
Oct.	20	paid J. Bunstead's bill Paper Hangings	2 75				
	8	" Dr. Howe for sundry bills	848 45				
	8	" J. Kahler's bill Hair	167 60				
	8	" W. S. Peabody's bill	100 00				
	8	" John Williams & Co's bill	11 74				
	14	" J. G. Loring & Co's bill sundries	84 75				
	14	" Thomas Phillips's bill sundry work	30 00				
	17	" R. Wilson's bill Sadding	142 53				
	19	" John Bicknell's bill sundries	175 90				
	19	" R. D. Harris's bill Taxes	3 39				
Dec.	5	" N. Hale's bill Advertising	530 87				
	5	" Dr. Howe for sundry bills	40 22				
Sept.	27	" J. W. Pierce's bill sundries deposited in Boston Bank	562 85				
Oct.	4	" Dr. Howe's account of bills enclosed	1,000 00				
	17	Aqueduct Corporation bills	8 87				
Dec.	5	Dyer's bill Cards	7 00				
			\$46,220 61				\$58,496 01

