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PERKINS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES.
1907-09.

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SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF

THE TRUSTEES

OF THE

PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

UPON THE

WORK OF THE INSTRUCTION OF THE ADULT BLIND
AT THEIR HOMES.

PRESENTED TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

1907.



BOSTON :
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1907

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SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF

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PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND,
SOUTH BOSTON, January 11, 1907.

To the State Board of Education:—

GENTLEMEN:—In accordance with the provisions of the law governing the instruction of the adult blind in their homes, the trustees of this institution have prepared a brief report of the work which has been accomplished during the past year and of its outlook for the future. Acting under their directions, I beg to submit this document to your honorable Board for its consideration, and I have the honor to remain,

Respectfully yours,

ALMORIN O. CASWELL,
Secretary pro tem.

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Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind

SOUTH BOSTON, January 1, 1907

To the State Board of Education:—

The work of instructing the adult blind in their homes is being pursued quietly, unostentatiously, but effectively, along the pathway which was marked out for it at its inception six years ago, through the wise foresight and clear judgment of the members of your board and the late Michael Anagnos, the revered and beloved director of the Perkins Institution for the past thirty years.

Since its beginning, in 1900, it has expanded in every way. Its aid has been freely sought and as freely given throughout the state, and it has carried solace and encouragement to hundreds of sightless persons who could be helped in no other way.

Primarily the instruction is intended to bring into the joy of the companionship of books those who have been cut off from this great source of happiness by their infirmity, to reunite them with friends through correspondence and to provide some means of pleasant occupation for the hours which must often be spent in loneliness. Only secondarily does financial gain enter into consideration, although the amount of \$441.58, which has been received by these pupils during the past year for articles made under instruction, shows a fair return for the expenditure. The sum of \$322.52, which was earned by three pupils acting as selling agents, may also be mentioned as indicative of the incentive and self-reliance inculcated by this work.

Self-support is indeed eagerly sought by many of these hapless victims of disease or disaster, but many circumstances combine to make it difficult, if not practically impossible, to satisfy this craving to any great extent. It is a fact that a majority of the pupils are prevented by some mental or physical trouble from accomplishing remunerative work or producing saleable articles. For such, the solace of mental or manual employment, as an end rather than as a means to an end, and the cheer of human companionship must be accounted the purpose of this beneficent service to the adult blind. To others, more highly endowed, or less affected by the ravages of age or disease, the instruction brings a message of hope and an incentive to put forth sturdier efforts, so that four senses may as far as possible do the work of five, and the earnest man or woman may regain a place among self-respecting, independent members of the community, contributing in some degree to its welfare.

As time goes on and experience takes the place of experiment, a prime excellence is more and more discoverable in that fundamental decree of the plan, that the adult blind shall remain and be ministered unto in their own homes and among their own people. There, if anywhere, can an intelligent interest unite them to their fellow-men, and there will the duties and pleasures of life find their fullest meaning. Segregated in any home for the blind and separated from the interests of the world at large, they would be robbed of participation in its every-day affairs and in the blessings of human brotherhood, while their deprivations through infirmity would be kept constantly in mind.

The four teachers visit their pupils regularly, as often as the demands upon their time will permit. They plan their programme two weeks in advance, with due reference to the exigencies of train service, notifying their pupils

beforehand so that these shall be at home and fully prepared for the lesson. The instructors exercise the strictest economy of time and money, and utilize both in a conscientious desire to carry out the wishes of the state and to further the interests of the adult blind in the highest possible degree. In this earnest endeavor they are seconded, first, by the liberality of the officials of the Boston and Maine and the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroads, who are so good as to grant half rates to the teachers and their guides, thus materially reducing their travelling expenses and performing a distinct service to the cause of the adult blind; and, second, by the generosity of the authorities of the Perkins Institution, who practically double the resources of the work by a free gift of appliances and materials, the use of offices, salesroom and library, and the services of officers and librarians. With multitudinous incidental expenses saved by these means, the institution forms a strong coadjutor to the actual teaching force, and renders the state appropriation, inadequate at best, far more effective in its operations than it could otherwise possibly be.

The work is now firmly established, and its future prosperity at its present rate of progress is assured. Its further growth and expansion depends wholly upon the amount of the appropriation which is placed by the state legislature at the disposal of those responsible for the success of the undertaking, and which alone limits the enterprise at this point of its development.

The names and addresses of the teachers are as follows: Miss Lillian R. Garside, No. 57 Pearl Street, South Framingham; Miss Lydia Y. Hayes, No. 52 Dartmouth Street, Winter Hill; Mr. Edward Schuerer, No. 15 Warriner Avenue, Springfield; Mr. John Vars, No. 72 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts.

STATISTICS

Number of blind persons visited, 80; number taught, 58; number refusing instruction, 22. Number receiving instruction: in the several systems of reading, 106; writing, 35; sewing, 19; knitting, 27; crocheting, 8; use of the sewing machine, 6; musical Braille, 5; tuning pianofortes, 1; playing upon the violin, 1; reseating chairs with cane, pith, splint or rush, 53; basketry, 6; hammock-making and netting, 3; reed-work, 1. Amount of money earned by the pupils, \$441.58. Summary of work done by the teachers: calls made, 703; lessons given, 1,774; miles travelled, 45,617.

All which is respectfully submitted by

FRANCIS HENRY APPLETON,
 WALTER CABOT BAYLIES,
 WILLIAM L. BENEDICT,
 WILLIAM ENDICOTT,
 PAUL REVERE FROTHINGHAM,
 CHARLES P. GARDINER,
 N. P. HALLOWELL,
 GEORGE H. RICHARDS,
 WILLIAM L. RICHARDSON,
 ANNETTE P. ROGERS,
 RICHARD M. SALTONSTALL,
 S. LOTHROP THORNDIKE,

Trustees.

TEACHING THE ADULT BLIND IN THEIR HOMES.

[REPRINTED FROM THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.]

TEACHING THE ADULT BLIND IN THEIR HOMES.

The problem of the adult blind has largely occupied the attention of the public of late, and it is striking testimony to the vast ability of our late director and to the wideness of his sympathy that he not only put forth heroic efforts for years to establish the kindergarten for the blind, that the whole scheme of their education might rest on sure foundations, but, ever mindful of the problem of sightless adults and of the ruinousness of any policy of segregation for them, he thought out the plan of home teaching for adults; and, as a result of the interest aroused, an appropriation for this work was made.

Under this plan a band of thoroughly devoted and enthusiastic teachers has been organized, and the results, both in material profit and in happiness to the beneficiaries, have more than justified the expense involved.

Practically the entire appropriation is expended for the salaries and travelling expenses of the teachers and their guides, and for the purchase of a few materials. The work is directed from the institution, and the advantages of the institution office, salesroom and library are at the disposal of those who are carrying on this work, without extra expense.

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SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT
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SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND
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WORK OF THE INSTRUCTION OF THE ADULT BLIND
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PRESENTED TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

1908.



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WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,
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1908.

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SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

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PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND,
SOUTH BOSTON, JAN. 3, 1908.

PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND,
SOUTH BOSTON, JAN. 3, 1908.

To the State Board of Education.

GENTLEMEN:— In accordance with the provisions of the law governing the instruction of the adult blind in their homes, the trustees of this institution have prepared a brief report of the work which has been accomplished during the past year.

Acting under their instructions, I beg to submit this document to your honorable Board for its consideration.

Believe me,
Respectfully yours,

EDWARD E. ALLEN,
Secretary.

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1908

Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind

SOUTH BOSTON, Jan. 1, 1908.

To the State Board of Education:—

The work of instructing the adult blind in their homes has been carried on by the same trained teachers, graduates of the Perkins Institution, whose experience in this field of labor, gained through several years of service, enables them to do it well.

The fundamental aim of the work has been to give instruction in reading which should furnish occupation and solace to these blind men and women during many hours of enforced solitude and idleness, and at the same time relieve other members of the family, often hard-working bread-winners, from constant attendance upon them; but the instruction has not stopped there. With awakened courage and ambition the pupil is usually not content to limit his efforts to learning to read, but goes eagerly on to acquire some form of handiercraft which may be the means of bringing in a little money. In the case of the men this secondary effort most often takes the form of cane-seating; with the women, knitting or sewing. Other kinds of manual occupation may follow. Although it is seldom possible for any of these people to become self-supporting by such means, the fact of actually earning something for themselves by the work of their own hands gives them a tremendous uplift.

In learning to read, the Moon alphabet has been found invaluable as a starting point. In the case of those who develop the desire to go farther, and whose fingers have not been hardened by heavy labor, this form of embossed type may later give place to the more arbitrary Braille, in which a richer field of literature exists. The length of time and number of lessons needed by the pupils differ greatly, as does their motive in seek-

ing aid. Some require only a little showing at the outset and are then prepared to go on by themselves. For these one or two lessons suffice. Others, plunged into the depths of despair by their heavy loss, must first be roused from apathy and fired with courage to take their first feeble steps. For such, a long course of instruction has been found necessary. There are various causes for such slow progress. One may be the infrequency of the lessons; another, the hardened finger-tips of the pupil; and still another, his inability to follow the printed line across the page, for his untrained finger, unaccustomed to moving forward in the dark, is quite likely to lose the place, and drop gradually from line to line until meaning is lost and courage is exhausted. But all are anxious to learn to read in as short a time as possible, and in the end nearly all succeed in doing so.

A most important feature of this work is the fact that the teachers themselves are blind. Mrs. Sophia Shaler, in the introduction of her book, "Masters of Fate," has truly said of those who are burdened with grave disabilities that "the sense of their handicap was a load that needed to be lightened." This can best be done for the adult blind by offering to them the object lesson of a brave, self-reliant, blind teacher, capable of achievement for herself and of offering service to others. The realization that such is the case often comes to them as a complete surprise after an appreciable time of conversation and perhaps actual work. "Why, honey, is you blind?" exclaimed an old colored woman, a prospective pupil. "Why, you talk just as peart-like as anybody else!" The effect of this realization is immediate. The blind pupil becomes ashamed of his complaints and slothfulness, and the first step is taken toward a more hopeful outlook.

This mission of the sightless teacher cannot be overestimated, for it plays an invaluable part in helping these blind men and women to assert themselves to gain some degree of independence, — perhaps to undertake afresh their accustomed occupations, even though it be under changed and difficult conditions.

The librarian of the Perkins Institution has continued to supply readers with all their desire of embossed books, either carried to them by the traveling teachers or sent through the mails.

It so happens that the results achieved this year have exceeded those of any other similar period. This fall the plan of working has been only slightly improved in the direction of economy and efficiency; however, the whole scheme is being studied from the Perkins Institution, both with reference to further improving it and to learning whether or not the State mission to the adult blind at their homes really belongs to this school to administer or to the State Commission for the Blind, which has come into existence since the work was inaugurated.

The names and addresses of the teachers are as follows: Miss Lillian R. Garside, No. 57 Pearl Street, South Framingham; Miss Lydia Y. Hayes, No. 85 Central Street, Somerville; Mr. Edward Schuerer, No. 15 Warriner Avenue, Springfield; Mr. John Vars, No. 72 Huntington Avenue, Boston.

Statistics. — Number of blind persons visited, 98; number taught, 74; number refusing instruction, 24; number enrolled Nov. 1, 1907, 112. Number receiving instruction: in the several systems of reading, 149; writing, 41; sewing, 32; knitting, 45; crocheting, 2; use of the sewing machine, 5; musical Braille, 2; tuning pianofortes, 1; playing upon the violin, 1; reseating chairs with cane, pith or splint, 40; basketry, 12; netting, 6; tatting, 1; braiding rugs, 1. Amount of money earned by the pupils, \$200. Summary of work done by the teachers: calls made, 858; lessons given, 1,879; miles travelled, 49,199.

All which is respectfully submitted by

FRANCIS HENRY APPLETON,
 WALTER CABOT BAYLIES,
 WILLIAM L. BENEDICT,
 WILLIAM ENDICOTT,
 PAUL REVERE FROTHINGHAM,
 CHARLES P. GARDINER,
 N. P. HALLOWELL,
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 RICHARD M. SALTONSTALL,
 S. LOTHROP THORNDIKE,

Trustees.

TEACHING THE ADULT BLIND IN THEIR HOMES.

[REPRINTED FROM THE SEVENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.]

The annual state appropriation of \$5,000 for the home instruction of the adult blind people of Massachusetts, a work which this institution continues to conduct, has been expended to date by four trained teachers, all former pupils of our school. It would seem that this home teaching work is particularly adapted to sightless teachers, whose condition, especially if fortified by a period of residence at a school for the blind, enables them to put themselves into closer touch with their often discouraged pupils than is generally possible with home teachers who cannot say, "I have done this; it is possible for you to do it; only try." The work of the home teachers does not confine itself to instruction in touch reading, though this is one of their main opportunities, but it is directed into whatever channels promise the greatest good to the individual — sewing, knitting, crocheting, chair-caning, writing, selling, etc. A never-to-be-forgotten result of the visits is the timely suggestion, encouragement, inspiration, which it is the happy privilege of blindness to share with blindness. Within the year 195 pupils have been taught and 1,879 lessons given to them.

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EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT
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1909.

PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND,
SOUTH BOSTON, Jan. 7, 1909.

To the State Board of Education.

GENTLEMEN: — In accordance with the provisions of the law governing the instruction of the adult blind in their homes, the trustees of this institution have prepared a brief report of the work which has been accomplished during the past year.

Acting under their instructions, I beg to submit this document to your honorable Board for its consideration.

Believe me,
Respectfully yours,

EDWARD E. ALLEN,
Secretary.

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Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind

SOUTH BOSTON, Jan. 1, 1909.

To the State Board of Education.

The work of teaching the adult blind in their own homes has been carried on along the general lines adopted at the outset. In the interests of greater economy the *local* plan has been introduced into the work this year. The State has been divided among the four teachers, so that each has a definite territory which does not in the least overlap that of another, both men and women teachers giving instruction in all subjects to all the adult blind within the given district, whether men or women. Thus, Miss Garside teaches in Boston and all the adjoining towns and cities within a limited radius. Miss Hayes visits the entire southeastern portion of the State, with New Bedford, Fall River, Taunton and the adjoining country. Mr. Schuerer, with headquarters at Springfield, covers the whole of the western part of the Commonwealth, a territory which, though extensive, contains proportionately fewer blind people than does the eastern section. Mr. Vars takes the portion of Massachusetts north and east of Boston, extending as far west as Worcester and following the Blackstone River south to the Rhode Island line.

The women teachers have found no difficulty in mastering and teaching all the forms of handicraft required for their pupils of either sex, but the men are not equally successful in acquiring the feminine arts, and their work has at times been supplemented by aid from their women guides.

First and foremost come lessons in learning to read embossed print, — Moon's type for all those who do not seem to be equal to beginning with Braille, but Braille first or last, wherever practicable, on account of the larger variety of the material in that system.

With reading as a stepping-stone, the teachers encourage their pupils to go on and on from the simpler to the more complicated forms of handicraft, — knitting, crocheting, netting, basket making, whatever may serve to give pleasure to the worker and contribute, even if ever so little, to self-support, that most ardent desire of the blind. The sewing and knitting done by the women pupils should have special commendation. Many have learned to patch and darn, to hem and to make aprons and skirts by hand; and with the sewing machine, using hemmer, gauge and tucker, they have completed many kinds of useful articles. They have knitted face and dish cloths, reins, baby's jackets, hoods and skirts, sweaters, wristers, house and bed slippers of silk or worsted, shawls, fascinators, mittens and gloves. The amount of \$402.75 earned by the pupils the past year includes a goodly sum made by the women through their unaided efforts.

Those who once knew how to write are shown how to do so still by means of a pencil and a grooved board, which keeps the lines straight, or to write Braille on a Braille slate, or, where it can be afforded, the Braille writer. Any ordinary typewriter may be mastered by the blind, using the all-finger or touch method. This point of contact with the seeing world is a valuable one, and does much to help those who can own such an appliance to retain the normal interests of the community in which they live.

The teachers have also at times given encouragement, suggestion or even instruction in the performance of household duties, and, indeed, in every way have sought to inspire in their pupils a desire to enter freely into the life around them.

On several occasions the instructors have turned aside from their beaten paths to take up the very important task of addressing some organization whose members are desirous of knowing about this work.

The management of the Perkins Institution has been glad to add to its educational work this means of service to the adult blind; but, whereas, since its inauguration, there has been established an organization for the direct benefit of the adult blind, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, it seems to us that this branch of work belongs properly to that body; and the

commission, sharing our views, has generously come forward with an offer to accept the responsibility of this undertaking in its present scope and continue the mission of hopefulness to adult pupils which is now being carried to them by this means. Therefore it is probable that we shall take such measures during the present session of the State Legislature as we trust may effect the transference of this work to the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

The names and addresses of the teachers are as follows: Miss Lillian R. Garside, No. 4 Burroughs Place, Boston; Miss Lydia Y. Hayes, Orleans; Mr. Edward Schuerer, No. 15 Wariner Avenue, Springfield; Mr. John Vars, No. 72 Huntington Avenue, Boston.

Statistics. — Number of blind persons visited, 89; number taught, 82; number refusing instruction, 7; number enrolled Nov. 1, 1908, 104. Number receiving instruction: in the several systems of reading, 73; writing, 22; geography, 1; spelling, 1; manual alphabet, 1; simple gymnastics, 2; musical Braille, 1; tuning pianofortes, 1; sewing, 22; knitting, 21; netting, 2; tatting, 1; use of the sewing machine, 4; basketry, 4; reseating chairs with cane or pith, 24; braiding rugs, 1; dusting, 1; ironing, 1. Amount of money earned by the pupils, \$402.75. Summary of work done by the teachers: calls made, 846; lessons given, 2,069; miles travelled, 43,336.

TEACHING THE ADULT BLIND IN THEIR HOMES.

REPRINTED FROM THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.]

The four teachers who travel about to instruct and encourage the adult blind at their homes report a very successful year. The Director has studied this field of work as well as he has had time; in consequence, it has been modified and distinctly improved in the direction of economy of the time and money spent on travel. It is a much-needed work, and we are greatly interested in it; but whether it can be best done under our direction or that of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is a question. The number of blind persons reached in this way this year is 216.

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