

REPORT.

1. We, Your Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of the blind, the deaf and dumb, &c., do humbly certify to Your Majesty the proceedings under the said Commission in furtherance and execution of Your Majesty's commands.

2. In obedience to Your Majesty's commands, we have inquired into all the subjects submitted to us for consideration. We have held 116 sittings in London. We have called before us such persons as we judged likely to be able to give us information as to the blind and deaf and dumb, and have received from them, and from other persons in the United Kingdom, the Continent, the United States, and the Colonies, books, documents, and reports bearing on the subjects of our inquiry. Such of them as we think material are printed in the Appendix to our Report. Our thanks are due to those gentlemen connected with the education of the blind, and the deaf on the continent and in the United States who have freely furnished us with information, and particularly to Mr. Graham Bell, of Washington, D.C., who paid a special visit to England for the purpose of laying before us a mass of valuable returns, most of which, in answer to a circular letter of inquiry to the Superintendents and Principals of American and Canadian Schools for the Deaf, he had collected and printed in a volume for our use (Facts and Opinions relating to the Deaf).

3. We have issued letters of inquiry to a large number of blind persons in the United Kingdom, and have drawn up in a tabular form the results obtained from the answers to the questions.

4. We have visited the principal schools and establishments for the blind and deaf and dumb in the United Kingdom, and have, by personal inspection, made ourselves acquainted with the systems of education, elementary, technical, and professional, pursued in the leading establishments for the blind and deaf and dumb, not only in the United Kingdom, but also in Paris, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. The notes taken on the occasion of these visits are printed in the Appendix to our Report.

5. We have inspected the six principal institutions in the United Kingdom,* where the imbeciles and idiots who are capable of receiving some elementary education are trained, and so far as relates to the subject matter of our inquiry we have examined witnesses thereon.

Preliminary Remarks.

6. Before discussing in detail the condition of the several classes with which we are about to deal, we would make a few preliminary remarks.

7. The blind, deaf and dumb, and the educable class of imbeciles form a distinct group, which, if left uneducated, become not only a burden to themselves, but a weighty burden to the State. It is the interest of the State to educate them, so as to dry up as far as possible the minor streams which ultimately swell the great torrent of pauperism.

8. Indigence is found to exist in the great majority of the cases of persons so afflicted, the greater part of the population from which such cases proceed being so little removed from want that such a calamity is sufficient in itself to produce indigence.

9. It cannot be said that the group spoken of are as a rule impoverished by any fault of their own; to deal with them, therefore, liberally in such matters as education or out-door relief cannot be viewed as offering any reward to vice, folly,

* Royal Albert Asylum, Earlswood Asylum, Starcross, Darent, near Dartford, Larbert (Scotland), Stewart Institution at Palmerston (Dublin).

or improvidence. They are as distinct from the "pauper," in the ordinary sense, as the "pauper" is distinct from the "criminal," and, if possible, they should not be subject to any legal disqualification in consequence of their infirmity.

10. The education of the classes referred to is more expensive than that of ordinary children and in many instances (especially in rural districts) necessitates the expense of both education and maintenance.

11. Fear has been expressed that if the education of these afflicted classes be undertaken by the State, the effect might be to diminish that generous benevolence which has already done so much for them in this country. When it is remembered how much remains to be done for them it is obvious that, even were such aid given, there will still be room for the action of private benevolence, which experience shows to be often stimulated rather than discouraged by State aid, when judiciously given.

12. We shall now consider, in succession, their education, training, and general condition, dealing in three separate sections with the cases of these different classes in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The recommendations, however, which we make are equally applicable to the whole of the United Kingdom, except on those points which demand different treatment and to which we have specially referred in our reports on Scotland and Ireland.

THE BLIND.

13. The number of the blind, according to the last census in (A.) England, is 22,832; (B.) Scotland, 3,158; (C.) Ireland, 6,111; (D.) Isle of Man and Channel Islands, 195. Total, 32,296.

Accuracy of the Census.

14. We have found it difficult to verify the number of the blind so as to test the accuracy of the census. The missions to the out-door blind for Glasgow and the West of Scotland, in the three Scottish counties of Lanark, Renfrew, and Ayr, from inquiries they have made, have found that the number of the blind is 173 in excess of the Government Return, owing probably to the fact that those who are of defective sight, but practically blind, have a disinclination to return themselves as such. There is, therefore, ground for supposing that the number must be sensibly larger than the census returns would lead us to infer.

15. The popular conception of the term "blindness" is "total blindness," but many are not included among the blind in the Census return, since they can see enough to walk about and distinguish light and darkness. As regards education, however, these are practically blind, and must be considered in the same category with those who are totally blind.

16. The blind children in England and Wales between the ages of 5 and 15 are 1,710 out of a total of 22,832. The number at school is estimated at 1,544. There is a large proportion of the blind who, from accidents or various causes, become blind as adults, especially between the ages of 45 and 65. From inquiries made by ourselves it would appear that the average age of the blind is 49, and the commencing age of blindness on the average is 31 years. In the opinion of two of the witnesses the age is 33.

General Condition.

17. The general condition of the blind is much improved since the time when it was the popular opinion that little could be done for them. But there is still much wanting to improve their condition and to give them such an education and technical training as will enable them to become useful members of society, and to earn, as far as possible, their own living.

18. The education and care of the blind have been entirely left to private charity, with the exception of those who have been recipients of parochial assistance, and those who have availed themselves of the recently established school board classes.

19. Notwithstanding the large funds which are devoted to the assistance of the blind, and the great amount of attention and care which they receive from voluntary efforts and organisations employing paid agents, your Commissioners feel that the

13,366,
Gallaudet.
e.g., in
Saxony, see
Reports of
Visits
(Dresden)
and *infra*,
para. 123.

14,183.
Macdonald.
15,981.
Meldrum.
16,312.
Walker.

See census
statistics,
Appendix G.

744.
Tait.
17,507,
Moon.

459.
Tait.

present condition of the blind may be considerably ameliorated, and that both by legislative action and by the improvement of existing organisations, they may be rendered more independent of charitable aid than they are at present.

Causes of Blindness and Remedial Suggestions.

20. Many causes of blindness are preventible. Blindness has not increased in England, comparing the numbers of the blind with those of the general population; on the contrary, there has been a proportionate decrease of the blind to the general population with each successive decade, the number of blind per million persons being in 1851, 1,021; in 1861, 964; in 1871, 951; and in 1881, 879. There has been probably an increase of blindness among the workers in certain trades, such as iron-puddlers, glass-blowers, and railway engine-drivers, yet on the other hand there has been a diminution or a shortening of the period of blindness, due to the progress of ophthalmic science, vaccination, and greater care taken in factories and workshops.

"Injuries to the eyes in males are chiefly accidents occurring while at work; in women and children mostly purely accidental, or produced by wilful violence. * * * The particular kinds of injury may be classified as follows:—Burns from fire, acids, corrosives and lime, may be held to cause 12 per cent. of all injuries; accidents from flying pieces of stone or chips of metal amounting to 58 per cent."

21. Great danger to sight after injury of one eye arises from the risk of sympathetic affection of the other; according to Cohn 24·2 per cent. of cases of blindness of one eye are due to direct violence, and a large number of these are followed by total blindness from sympathetic affection of the second eye at a later period. Sympathetic inflammation is almost exclusively caused by an injury of one eye, and in such cases inflammation of the eyeball is an ever present menace to the sight of the remaining eye.

22. Total blindness ensues in from 4 to 4½ per cent. of all injuries to one eye.

"In Lancashire accidents from shuttles flying out of the loom are unfortunately very frequent, and generally are of a very destructive character. Of late years, by the introduction of shuttle guards, something has been done to reduce their frequency. At the Royal Eye Hospital, Manchester, during 1885, they had had only nine cases of shuttle accident, as against 21 the year before." (In 1886 the number of such accidents was 11.)

"The systematic use of strong protective glasses, made either of tale or mica, if glass should be considered too fragile, or the enforced use of fine wire goggles, would in some trades greatly reduce the liability to accidental injury. * * * Many an injured eye is irretrievably lost, bringing the misfortune of blindness upon its fellow simply through the application of domestic remedies, such as the inevitable poultice, be it of linseed, bread, or rotten apples, until secondary inflammation has produced such a disorganisation of the contents of the eye as to render skilled treatment useless. * * * Early surgical treatment, then, is of the highest importance in persons who have lost an eye by injury. An eye lost from any cause whatever, being prone to set up sympathetic inflammation of the sound eye from a variety of slight causes, should, as a matter of precaution, be carefully watched, and, if at all irritable, be at once removed to prevent affection of the sound eye."

23. Granular ophthalmia is a frequent cause of blindness, and is very infectious, it occurs in the case of those who live in badly ventilated dwellings, badly lighted rooms, as, for instance, among the crowded workshops for slop clothing at the East End of London, and at one time it prevailed among the inmates of Irish Workhouses; it is preventible under proper sanitary conditions.

24. This form of ophthalmia has been at times epidemic in large schools and in armies, and has been stated to have been first introduced into Europe on the return of Napoleon and the French army from Egypt. This historical assumption, though generally accepted, is, however, contested by the Professor of Military Surgery, Army Medical School, Netley. We believe that in consequence of improved surgical knowledge this disease no longer spreads, and no case of loss of eyesight from that cause resulted in our recent occupation of Egypt.

25. Another frequent cause is the inflammation of the eyes of new-born infants, which can be prevented, and, if taken in time, cured. It has been found by the Ophthalmological Society that 30 per cent. of the inmates of asylums (*i.e.* schools for the blind) are blinded from purulent ophthalmia in early life; and about 7,000 persons in the United Kingdom have lost their sight from that cause.

Mr. Brudenell Carter recommends—

"A weak solution of perchloride of mercury as the best preventive in such cases."

Mr. Hulke prefers alum.

Dr. Glascott states that—

"It has been distinctly proved in the large maternity and foundling hospitals of the Continent, that the percentage of cases of purulent ophthalmia in the new-born can be materially diminished by simply cleansing

499i.
Dipnall.

Dr. Glascott's paper, read at the annual meeting of the Henshaw's Blind Asylum, 1886.

4528-9,
Hulke.

2625.
Carter.

See Appendix 9, also Army Medical Department Report for 1881, (Appendix) Page 240.

2624.
Carter.

2648,
Carter.

4521,
Hulke.

Glascott's paper, (See above) page 22.

the eyes of all children with clean water as soon as they are born. More recently the number of sufferers has been further diminished by the use of antiseptics, such as weak solutions of boracic or salicylic acid, a two-per-cent. solution of carbolic acid, however, giving the best results. As a further development of the preventive plan of treatment, the method of Créde has been introduced. It has the merit of being extremely simple and very efficient. It consists in washing the infant's eyes with pure water as soon as it is born, and then by means of a drop-tube instilling a single drop of a two-per-cent. solution of nitrate of silver into the eyes. This simple method of prevention should be known to, and carried out by every, midwife in the country, and what is more, parents should insist upon it being done."

The information might be circulated by the sanitary authorities or through the Post Office.

26. In Germany special precautions are enforced by law on the midwives. In Saxony as throughout Germany—

"(1.) Women who have passed through an obstetric school, and have obtained the prescribed certificate of professional competency, may be licensed to practise in the particular districts in which they have a permanent residence. The midwives so appointed are bound by oath to the conscientious discharge of their duties; they may not practise except in the district to which they are assigned, or without specific appointment. Lists of the local midwives are kept by the official medical men of the districts.

"(2.) * * * Midwives are expressly prohibited from treating any derangement of the eyes or eyelids, however slight. On the appearance of the first symptoms of eye disease, the midwives are to represent to parents, or others, that medical assistance is urgently required, or, if necessary, they are to report to the local authorities and the district doctor. Neglect of these regulations makes them liable to punishment.

27. The Society for the Prevention of Blindness, &c., has done very excellent work in drawing up and distributing, gratuitously, advice to mothers.

28. There is a good deal of defective sight and myopia (short-sightedness) in ordinary schools, and a periodical inspection of elementary schools has been recommended as useful, not merely in detecting myopia but in detecting the opposite condition of hypermetropia. Again and again children are blamed because they will not do their work, when they simply cannot see, and need glasses.

29. It has been stated as desirable that a more special knowledge of ophthalmic surgery among general practitioners should be encouraged. We, therefore, learn with satisfaction that a general knowledge of ophthalmic surgery, among medical practitioners, is regarded as an essential part of a professional education, and that the treatment of the diseases of the eye is increasingly commanding attention, in the general infirmaries of the country, as well as in the special hospitals.

State of the Law.

30. We proceed first to state shortly the existing state of the law as to the education of the blind in England and Wales:—

ENGLAND AND WALES.

Poor shall be maintained by their Parents or Children.

43 Eliz. c. 2. s. 6. And be it further enacted, That the father and grandfather, and the mother and grandmother, and the children, of every poor, old, blind, lame, and impotent person, or other poor person not able to work, being of a sufficient ability, shall, at their own charges, relieve and maintain every such poor person.

Justices in Petty Sessions empowered in like manner to order Relief by Parents, &c.

59 Geo. 3 c. 12. s. 26. And whereas by the said Act, passed in the forty-third year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, for the relief of the poor, it was enacted, &c.

And whereas it is expedient to extend the power which is by the said Act given to justices in their general quarter sessions to justices in petty sessions: Be it further enacted, that it shall be lawful for any two or more of His Majesty's justices of the peace for the county or other jurisdiction in which any such sufficient person shall dwell, and they are hereby empowered, in any petty session, to make such assessment and order for the relief of every poor, old, blind, lame, impotent, or other poor person not able to work, upon and by the father, grandfather, mother, grandmother, or child (being of sufficient ability) of every such poor person, as may by virtue of the said Act be made by the justices in their general quarter sessions; and that every such assessment and order of two or more justices in any petty sessions shall have the like force and effect as if the same were made by the justices in their general quarter sessions; and the disobedience thereof shall be punishable in like manner.

Poor Persons liable for Relief to Wife or Children unless Blind or Deaf and Dumb.

4 & 5 Will. 4. c. 76. s. 56. And be it further enacted, That from and after the passing of this Act all relief given to or on account of the wife, or to or on account of any child or children under the age of sixteen, not being blind or deaf and dumb, shall be considered as given to the husband of such wife, or to the father of such child or children, as the case may be, and any relief given to or on account of any child or children under the age of sixteen of any widow shall be considered as given to such widow: Provided always, that nothing herein contained shall discharge the father and grandfather, mother and grandmother, of any poor child from their liability to relieve and maintain any such poor child in pursuance of the provisions of a certain Act of Parliament passed in the forty-third year of the reign of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth, intitled "An Act for the Relief of the Poor."

Extract from letter from Chargé d'Affaires at Dresden to Secretary of State, dated February 20th, 1889.

5832.
Roth,

4569,
Hulke.

4589-90.
Hulke.

Guardians may maintain and educate Deaf and Dumb or Blind Poor Children in Certified Schools.

25 & 26 Vict. (1862) c. 43. s. 1. The guardians of any parish or union may send any poor child to any school certified as herein-after mentioned, and supported wholly or partially by voluntary subscriptions, the managers of which shall be willing to receive such child, and may pay out of the funds in their possession the expenses incurred in the maintenance, clothing, and education of such child therein during the time such child shall remain at such school (not exceeding the total sum which would have been charged for the maintenance of such child if relieved in the workhouse during the same period), and in the conveyance of such child to and from the same, and in the case of death, the expenses of his or her burial.

9. No child shall be sent under this Act to any school which is conducted on the principles of a religious denomination to which such child does not belong.

10. The word "school" shall extend to any institution established for the instruction of blind, deaf, dumb, lame, deformed, or idiotic persons, but shall not apply to any certified reformatory school.

Guardians may provide for Maintenance and Education of Blind or Deaf and Dumb Adults.

30 & 31 Vict. (1867) c. 106. s. 21. The guardians may provide for the reception, maintenance, and instruction of any adult pauper, being blind or deaf and dumb, in any hospital or institution established for the reception of persons suffering under such infirmities, and may pay the charges incurred in the conveyance of such pauper to and from the same, as well as those incurred in his maintenance, support, and instruction therein.

Guardians may send Deaf-Mute or Blind Children to Uncertified Schools.

31 & 32 Vict. (1868) c. 122. s. 42. The guardians of any union or parish may, with the approval of the Poor Law Board, send any poor deaf and dumb or blind child to any school fitted for the reception of such child, though such school shall not have been certified under the provisions of the Act of the 25th and 26th years of Victoria, chapter 43.

Guardians may subscribe towards support of Institutions, Associations, &c.

42 & 43 Vict. (1879) c. 54. s. 10. Whereas by section 4 of the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1851, guardians are authorised, with such consent as is therein mentioned, to subscribe towards the support and maintenance of any public hospital or infirmary as therein mentioned; and it is expedient to extend the said section. Be it therefore enacted as follows:—

The provisions of the said section shall extend to authorise the guardians, with such consent as is therein mentioned, to subscribe towards any asylum or institution for blind persons, or for deaf and dumb persons, or for persons suffering from any permanent or natural infirmity, or towards any association or society for aiding such persons, or for providing nurses, or for aiding girls or boys in service, or towards any other asylum or institution which appears to the guardians, with such consent as aforesaid, to be calculated to render useful aid in the administration of the relief of the poor.

Provided always, that nothing herein contained shall authorise any subscription to any asylum or institution unless the Local Government Board be satisfied that the paupers under the guardians have, or could have, assistance therein in case of necessity.

Guardians may pay a reasonable charge required by a certified school for Blind or Deaf-Mute Children.

45 & 46 Vict. (1882) c. 58. s. 13. The guardians of any union, who send any pauper child to a school certified under the Act of the 25th and 26th years of the reign of Her present Majesty, cap. 43, may pay the reasonable expenses incurred in the maintenance, clothing, and education of such child whilst in such school, to an amount not exceeding such rate of payment as may be sanctioned by the Local Government Board, for pauper children sent to such school, anything contained in the said Act to the contrary notwithstanding.

31. It has been brought to our notice that in several cases where the parents of deaf and dumb or blind children, were unable to afford the cost of their being educated and maintained in proper institutions, the guardians considered themselves exempted from the duty of educating the child at the cost of the union under the above Acts, on the ground that the parents were not paupers. We accordingly requested the Local Government Board to furnish us with their interpretation of the law on this point. The annexed letter shows that it is not a condition precedent to such action on the part of the guardians that the parents should be paupers.

Local Government Board, Whitehall, S.W.,
February 21, 1888.

SIR,
I am directed by the Local Government Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th ultimo, asking, on behalf of the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, &c., the Board's view as to the power of guardians to contribute to the maintenance in suitable institutions of deaf and dumb children whose parents are not paupers. The Board direct me to state that in their opinion it is competent to the guardians to send to a suitable school a deaf and dumb or blind child whose parent, though poor, may not be a pauper in receipt of relief. The approval of this Board is, however, necessary to the sending of the child unless the school has been certified under the 25 & 26 Vict. c. 43. (see s. 42 of the 31 & 32 Vict. s. 122). Moreover, it appears to the Board that, having regard to s. 56 of the 4 & 5 Will. 4. c. 76. relief given to or on account of a deaf and dumb or blind child is not relief to the father of such child. The Board may add that the power given to the guardians in this matter should, of course, only be exercised when the parent is unable to pay for the child's maintenance, education, &c. in the school.

The Secretary to the
Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, &c.,
6, Old Palace Yard, S.W.

I am, &c.
(Signed) S. B. PROVIS,
Assistant Secretary.

Classification of Blind.

32. In considering the condition of the blind it may be convenient to divide them into three main classes:—

- I. From birth up to 21.
- II. " 21 to 50.
- III. " 50 upwards.

33. There are 61 institutions for the blind in the United Kingdom, which may be classified as follows:—

Schools for resident pupils	9
Workshops, mostly for non-residents	23
Combination of the two (both workshops and schools)	26
Homes or asylums	3
Total	61

34. Most of them have been visited by this Commission.

I.

Education of the Blind under 21.

35. The problem to be solved in the education of the blind, so as to enable them to earn their living, is not only *how* to teach them but *what* to teach them.

36. There is a general feeling in favour of compulsory education of the blind, and their attendance being enforced as early as that of other children; but there is great difference of opinion in what way children should be taught. In Scotland and the North of England the opinion of the blind is now in favour of the blind being taught in board schools with the seeing, and of separating education from technical instruction. Our report on the different schools and workshops visited shows what the practice now is. At present there are Board school classes for the blind in some of the large towns, and these are gradually increasing in number, but most of the blind of school age are in institutions, though, unfortunately, some are not educated at all, in consequence of the present unsatisfactory state of the law.

37. It is the unanimous opinion of the London teachers of the Home Teaching Society that, say to the age of ten, children should be educated during a portion of their time with the sighted, and the Charity Organization Society's enquiry long ago came to the same conclusion.

38. Some of the witnesses recommend that—

Blind children should be sent as early as possible, at least after seven or eight, to an ordinary sighted school, if not before to an infant school, and kept there at least till ten years of age. Objections may be raised by the teachers of ordinary day schools, to their assuming this additional responsibility, but their objections may be and have been overcome by a number of teachers who have taken the trouble to learn Braille and other types, and so qualify themselves for the work as not to interfere in any way with the performance of their ordinary duties.

The fears that "the blind might be subjected to ill-treatment from their sighted play fellows have been shown by experience to be groundless; on the contrary, owing to the compassion with which they are regarded, they meet with the greatest kindness."

39. The free intercourse with the seeing gives courage and self-reliance to the blind, and a healthy stimulus which enables them to compete more successfully with the seeing in after life than those who have been brought up altogether in blind institutions.

40. We recommend that the provisions of the Education Acts be extended to the blind, and that the compulsory attendance at a school or institution be enforced up to the age of 16. The evidence tends to show that blind children should be educated in either of the following ways:

A.—*In Day Schools.*

41.—(a.) In rural schools,—
The teacher must have some knowledge of the Braille or some raised type, and the child should have acquired such knowledge either at a preparatory school or by being taught by its parents or by a district visitor, or, as in Scotland, by an agent of the outdoor mission to the blind.

5502.
Clarke.

See Appen-
dix 11.

3733.
Burnett.
10,285a.
Campbell,
M.P.
14,189.
Macdonald,
&c., &c.

458 and 734
Tait.

202.
Tait.
734.
Tait.
933.
Best.
12,802.
Byers.
953-4.
Best.
734.

Tait, quoting
Report of
Charity Or-
ganization
Society.

105.
Westlake.
1516.
Scott.

295 and 230.
Greene.

296.
Greene.
1956.
Johns.

42.—(b.) In towns,—

10,910.
Armitage.

The board school is suitable for all those children who have good health, live at a convenient distance from the school, and for whom arrangements can be made that they have a guide to take them to the school.

See Reports
of visits
(Sunder-
land).

43. But where, as at Sunderland, the children cannot be compelled to attend in consequence of their residence beyond the two mile limit, we think it would be necessary to extend the statutory limit of compulsory attendance, and that in such cases the children of necessitous parents, as at Berlin, should have their fares by train or tramcar paid for by the school authority.

Report for
1887-88,
p. 47.

44. In April 1875, the London School Board appointed an Instructor of the Blind (Mr. Finchard) who, with an assistant, acted until the year 1879, when the Board engaged a lady as Superintendent of the Instruction of the Blind.

45. The blind children usually attend the ordinary day schools, and share as far as possible, in the instruction there given; but they also, on specified days, receive special instruction at centres, of which there are 18. The attendance at these centres ranges from three to 15. The total number under instruction at Lady-day 1888 was 132. At the centres the children are taught reading and writing by means of the "Braille" system, and reading by the aid of Moon's type; written arithmetic by means of Taylor's arithmetic boards; and geography by the aid of relief maps and globes. Special attention is given to the teaching of mental arithmetic.

46. The children are examined with the other scholars at the annual Government examinations of the ordinary day schools which they attend.

47. At Lady-day 1888 the staff consisted of a superintendent and five female assistants, all of whom had been trained at the Royal Normal College.

48. The school boards at Bradford, Cardiff, Sunderland, and Glasgow have also undertaken the education of the blind within their districts, and 61 children in all are under instruction in these towns, 28 being educated in different schools in Glasgow alone. In most cases the children follow the ordinary time-table with their seeing companions, and associate with them both in school time and play time, Bradford and Sunderland being the only exceptions to this. The average net cost of instruction is 6l. 15s. 4d. per head per annum, the higher cost being mainly due to the fact that one or more special teachers are engaged to instruct the blind children. On the occasion of the visit of the Commissioners to Glasgow, the school board and their teachers expressed themselves as satisfied with the success of the experiment of educating the blind with the seeing in the board schools.

49. No grant is awarded by Government for the distinctive instruction which is given either to the blind, or to the deaf and dumb.

B.—In Boarding Schools.

12,235.
Hall.

50. There must always be some blind who from physical weakness, delicacy of constitution, and other causes, need the fostering care of an institution. It is also contended that it is important to give the blind a special training in sense of touch, which is not so readily given in sighted schools, and in many cases it is necessary to send a delicate or neglected child to an institution where it will be well cared for and trained.

18,378
Davis.

51. It is probable also that, under the institution system, children other than those mentioned in 42 (b), can be educated and maintained at very little more expense than it would cost to educate them in day classes attached to board schools, where they would have to be either boarded out or placed in homes.

52. In cases where there are not sufficient blind children to form a class, the guardians can at present, with the consent of the Local Government Board, subscribe to any blind institution, or may maintain and educate any poor child there. This power is only permissive, and although largely exercised by the guardians, is not sufficiently put into operation, and should, in our opinion, be transferred to the school authority or county council, and be made compulsory, as soon as there are suitable and sufficient day schools or institutions to which the children can be sent.*

* According to the Parliamentary Return, No. 326 of 1887, there were 315 children of school age receiving in-door relief and 21 receiving out-door relief from the poor rates in England and Wales on the 2nd September 1887. No fewer than 301 of these were receiving instruction in special or elementary schools: 35 not under instruction were mostly weak-minded children.

Technical instruction of the Blind, when should it commence?

53. There is some difference of opinion as to the time when industrial training should commence, and some confusion naturally arises between the technical teaching in school, which might and ought to be common to all, and the teaching of a trade which can only be properly taught in a workshop.

54. There is often a prejudice against the work of the blind, and this we believe to be the result of their imperfect instruction.

4881.
Willis.

55. In the north of England it is advocated that the ordinary education and some education in music in an elementary school or institution should be given up to 14 or 15, and the tastes and natural inclinations of the pupils studied; after that age, if the pupil have evinced any musical talent, he should be sent to a special musical school, or, if he have a mechanical turn, to a workshop to learn industrial work.

13,977 and 8.
Gilroy.

56. We think that after blind children have passed through the ordinary standards they should receive technical training in an institution or elsewhere from 12 to 16 years of age.

10,967.
Armitage.
1635.
Johns.

57. If it be determined that basket-making should be the occupation of a blind boy, it seems desirable that he should begin at 13 or 14, as it takes about four or five years to learn the trade thoroughly. If, however, it be intended to train him in music, instruction should begin as early as possible.

3660.
Burnett.
6199.
Storey.

58. In Edinburgh boys of 16, who have left the school at Craigmillar, and wish to become workers in the outside workshop, are transferred to a boarding house connected with the institution, unless they have parents or friends to board with.

13,602.
Sime.

59. In some institutions, where a school department and a work department are combined, the children occasionally intermingle very much with the workmen. We believe this to be objectionable, and we agree with the suggestion that it would be advisable to separate the educational department up to 15 or 16 from the work department, so as to prevent boys of 12 and 13 mixing with older boys and men. In many instances this has been already carried out.

10,562.
Campbell.

60. At present, when the blind leave institutions, which are more or less educational, and which they are often compelled to leave about the age of 16, their industrial training is often imperfect, and in many cases they are unable to earn their own livelihood, and there is a great want of some place where they can learn their trade thoroughly, and practice it; likewise those who have failed to get into institutions, or have obtained what education they can, and have no friends to assist them, cannot earn their livelihood, as there are not sufficient workshops where they can be taught or practise such industrial training as they may have picked up, and the result is they fail to get work, and they take to begging, playing musical instruments in the streets, or in public-houses, or sitting reading the Bible aloud to passers by and asking for alms.

326.
Greene.

61. We think that from 16 to 21 the school authority should have the power and duty to assist liberally all necessitous blind persons to maintain themselves while learning a trade.

465.
Tait.

62. Out of 389 trained persons whose cases were inquired into by Mr. G. M. Tait, only 155 were earning their living by occupations, which they were taught in institutions. Even those who have been well trained and learnt a trade, such as basket-making, brush-making, &c., find great difficulty in carrying it on at their own homes, or in selling their work when it is made. Even if they work at home they generally earn less than in a workshop, and seldom are able to earn enough to get their own livelihood.

480.
Tait.1681.
Johns.

63. The wider inquiry which was set on foot by the Commission with the object of ascertaining much the same point, viz., what proportion of the blind follow the trade taught to them in the institution where they may have been brought up, furnished the following results:—

64. Out of 1,267 blind men who had learnt trades in various institutions in the United Kingdom, only 734, or 58 per cent., proved, according to their own account, to be following the trade which they had learnt at those institutions. Of these 1,267

See
Appendix 7.

men, about 15 per cent. were earning under 5s. per week, about 25 per cent. were earning between 5s. and 10s. per week, about 16 per cent. were earning between 10s. and 15s. per week, and about 10 per cent. were earning above 15s. per week. But the 42 per cent., who had found themselves compelled to seek other means of livelihood, were earning far smaller wages, in the aggregate, than the 58 per cent. who were still following the trades taught to them at the institution.

65. Assuming that these statistics hold true of the blind at large, it must be admitted that the fact that 42 per cent. of those trained in institutions find themselves unable to continue to practice the trade taught to them, while about 34 per cent. of the remainder do work, but nevertheless earn less than 5s. per week, indicates either a great deal of indifferent teaching or want of proper facilities for working and disposing of their work.

66. The same inquiry has thrown a good deal of light on the present condition of the blind. Stated briefly, it may be described as an endeavour to ascertain the leading facts in the history of a large number of the blind, *i.e.*, more than one-sixth of the total number in the United Kingdom. We have received nearly 6,000 replies, and these voluminous statistics may be taken, in our opinion, to be a fair specimen of the condition of things which prevails generally among the blind of the United Kingdom. The detailed tables will be found in the Appendix.

67. Out of the total number, 5,848, who replied to our questions, no less than 4,605 declare their inability to maintain themselves without charitable assistance, while only 959 state that they *can* so maintain themselves; 3,282 state that they earn nothing at all. The largest number of those who earn anything are engaged in basket-making (21½ per cent.); then follow music and piano tuning (8½ per cent.), brush-making (7½ per cent.), chair-caning and cane work (6½ per cent.), mat-making (2¾ per cent.), mattress-making (2½ per cent.), rope and twine spinning, &c. (1½ per cent.), weaving (0·7 per cent.), and other minor occupations. Of those who do something for themselves, 1,549, work out, but as many as 789 work at home, while a small number, 109, work out and at home as well.

68. As may be observed from the above, handicrafts and petty trades are the favourite occupations, and the average wages earned in these are stated to be 7s. 1d. per week. The number of those gaining their livelihood as organists, pianists, violinists, piano-tuners, and music teachers is far smaller, but the earnings, 14s. 6d., are more than double those of the former class, while the highest earnings of all, 17s. 4d., are gained by missionaries, Scripture readers, visitors, teachers, collectors, and the like.

69. We believe in these returns there is a tendency on the part of the blind to understate their earnings. We found this to be the case in our personal inquiries in visits to workshops. We have not thought it desirable to state the sums which are professedly gained by begging, but consider them to be larger than the blind themselves state.

II.

Adult Blind.

70. Besides those who have become blind in early youth, with which class we have previously dealt, a large proportion of blind persons become blind between 21 and 50 from accidents and various other causes, and but few institutions give industrial instruction to such persons, who specially deserve encouragement, as they are often those who are most anxious to learn and find occupation, and they, as a rule, work with more energy than those who have been blind from childhood.

71. It has been mentioned to us as desirable, and it appears to us reasonable, that in order to enable them to earn their own livelihood, assistance should be given, while learning a trade at an institution, to persons losing their sight in adult life, in the same way and on the same principle as to those at an earlier age during their industrial training.

72. This would involve a change in the law in order to compel the school authority, on application, to contribute for this purpose, as the guardians can at present. Such assistance should be given for a reasonable time for learning a trade, and should be forfeited in cases of idleness or misconduct. These blind persons should also be taught to read some raised type.

73. At Leicester, and other places, the guardians and the local charity contribute to those learning a trade for three years, and at Sunderland out-door relief has been given to such men on condition that they will attend at the institution in the town and learn trades. At the Berners Street Institution in London the same arrangement prevails, and the guardians contribute 6s. a week for the same purpose. A striking instance of the desirableness of such an arrangement is given by a witness from Sunderland:—

"We had one man (not totally blind but quite too blind to obtain employment in an ordinary way) who was 19 years in the workhouse. They paid for him for one year 7s. per week, and he earned 22s. 3d. per week on the average in 1885. He had been (previously to that) a burden on the rates for 19 years."

Occupations of the Adult Blind.

74. The industrial occupations of the blind are limited, the work for which they are best suited is not always that which pays best, owing to the competition of sighted labour. Basket making is probably the employment most suited to country districts, or to places where there is a demand for rough baskets, such as fruit or potato hampers, or skips used in the cotton trade, as they can be as well made by the blind as by the sighted. Fancy and common baskets are made so cheaply in Germany, and admitted free to this country, that it is difficult for the blind to compete with the foreigner in that branch of labour. Chair-caning is the most simple, and can be learned in a short time by both sexes. Next comes mat-making, though the competition of prisons makes it difficult to produce mats at a profit; weaving, brush-making, knitting, &c. In some workshops mattress-making, rope-making, and, in the seaport towns, the manufacture of shipfenders and rope mats has been successfully introduced.

75. The Government have in various cases given the Institutions orders for the Post Office baskets and their repair, but no special favour is shown them. The blind have to make their tenders in the open market, and often fail to get the orders.

76. Music seems specially suited to the blind, and undoubtedly affords to them a large amount of solace and enjoyment; it should, therefore, form a part of the curriculum of every blind school. All, however, have not a gift for music, and the study should not be persevered in as a means of living, except in special and promising cases; and although probably half the total number of the blind could be taught fairly well some branch of music, the competition with sighted musicians is so great that only exceptionally good training can lead to success, and many from various causes fail to earn a livelihood or obtain a situation. It is, therefore, desirable that, except in special cases, or where music is selected as a profession, every one not physically disqualified should receive manual training.

77. It is maintained by Dr. Campbell that unless music is combined with a good general education, and very excellent physical training, it is almost worthless for the purpose of earning a livelihood, and if it be taught only as a means of recreation, it is often apt to lead the blind into the practice of playing in the streets, or in public houses, and hence into dissolute habits.

78. On the other hand, where a good musical training, combined with good general education and good physical training has been given, a large number of the past pupils are earning considerable sums and gaining their livelihood.

In all, 130 pupils have had a sufficient length of training to enable them to undertake business for themselves, and may thus be regarded as a practical test of our work. Of these, 3 are failures, 11 have died, 16 who have recently left the College are already earning something, and their work is increasing, 19 have been moderately successful, and 81 have been *highly* successful, earning from 60l. to 400l. a year. Several of the young women have earned from 70l. to 100l. a year, and the aggregate earnings of 100 ex-pupils in the year 1886, amounted to close upon 10,000l.

79. Piano tuning opens a fair career for those who are well trained, and we have had evidence that there are many organists in this country who have obtained situations and are able to support themselves.

80. The success of pupils in after life, who have gone through a musical training, very much depends on the nature of the teaching and the care which is taken to find employment for them. In Paris two-thirds of the school hours of those intended for the musical profession are devoted to musical training.

81. During the last 10 years 370 pupils have been admitted to the "Institution Nationale pour les jeunes aveugles" at Paris, but of these 30 have died during school life. Of the remaining 340, 92 have been sent home on account of being infirm, unintelligent, or otherwise incapable of receiving instruction, and 45 on account of

See Reports of visits. 4942. Willis.

12,722. Byers.

See paras. 67 and 68 *supra*.

See lists of occupations and trades in Appendix 7.

664. Johns. 10,933. Armitage. 10,571. Campbell. 9679. Stainer. 9763-4. Macfarren.

10,571. Campbell.

Excerpts from Norwood College Reports, 1885 and 1886.

9708. Stainer. 11,039. Armitage. 12,218. Hall. (See also preceding paragraph.)

See Appendix 7. See also p. 7. of Parliamentary Paper C.—4747 of 1886.

1671, 1770, and 1771. Johns. 12,232. Hall.

4942. Willis.

13,693. Sime.

Letters from M. Martin to the Royal Commission, dated 3rd January and 20 February 1889.

Letter from M. Martin, dated 20 February 1889.

Verhandlungen des V. Blindenlehrer Congresses in Amsterdam, p. 200.

misconduct, while 15 have been withdrawn by their parents before the completion of their studies. Of the 205 who have left school, more or less completely educated, and with whom the Institution is able to keep in touch, 87 are organists or professors of music, and most of these understand tuning in addition, and can practice the same if required; 7 males and females are professors in institutions; 53 are professed tuners of pianofortes; 34 (males and females) are artisans; 17 are not engaged in business at all, having private means; and 7 have failed to make use of their knowledge and acquirements.

"Therefore from 370 blind of school age, taken at hazard, there are 198 who are fit to follow a profession or trade, say, 54 per cent. There are 87 who are fit to be organists or professors of music, say, 23 per cent. But, if one takes into consideration only those who have had sufficient aptitude to enable them to receive instruction, and have finished their course of studies, one ought to consider the case of only 188 out of 370, and out of these 188 there are 87 who can follow a musical profession, say, 46 per cent.; and if the tuners are counted as following a musical profession, the total is 87 plus 55 = 140, say, 74 per cent.

"Inasmuch as the chief thing to be done is to find out which are the professions that are best for the blind to follow, it appears clear to me that these last (46 per cent. and 74 per cent.) are the proportions of which we ought to take account. The other cases, being just as incapable of becoming chair caners as they would be of becoming musicians, must be left out."

82. It is said by M. de la Sizeranne that in France since 1840 music has been successfully practised in a great number of instances in addition to manual occupations.

83. It is only on the condition that the blind are equal to or superior in ability to the seeing that an appeal can be made to the general public to employ the blind as musicians; nor can they rely on the preference which, as blind, they can only claim from the sympathy naturally accorded to them on account of their unfortunate position.

84. It is also stated by M. de la Sizeranne, that to obtain a good musical education, the blind pupils must be (1) under training for at least nine years; (2) should form part of a large school of trained musicians so as to form a complete orchestra from their own body; and (3) be in the centre of a community containing the highest artistic talent.

85. These conditions are obviously difficult of attainment, and can only be hoped for in some great central institution in or near a large town.

86. On considering how far the teaching of industrial occupations is suitable to the blind as a class, as compared with a musical training, we are disposed to think that industrial training is more useful to a large number of the blind than that of music, as there is more certainty of employment for them. The profession of music, however, is one that offers the greatest prizes to those who have ability and application, and which it is a legitimate object of ambition for them to pursue.

11,290.
Buckle.
12,310.
McCormick.

Condition of the Adult Blind.

10,903.
Armitage.

87. In 1866, according to Dr. Armitage, it was found that the blind visited in connection with the Indigent Blind Visiting Society, whether trained in institutions or untrained, had scarcely anything to do, that they were to a very great extent idle, mendicants, or depending on charitable relief in some form, either from the guardians or from private societies or individuals, that in fact they were not earning their own living. In the case of musicians, as far as it was possible to ascertain, only 1 in 200 of all the pupils trained in the institutions seemed to be able to support themselves fully by the profession of music, while in Paris the education of the blind as musicians was infinitely superior to anything that we then had in England, and 30 per cent. were able fully to support themselves by the profession of music.

88. This is probably not an accurate description of the general condition of all the blind at that time, since there were institutions which in London and the large towns gave industrial training and some knowledge of music to their pupils. But the conviction that great improvement might be made in the education of the blind resulted in the foundation of the Norwood College.

89. While we acknowledge the great services rendered to the education of the blind by the institution at Norwood, we do not think that all blind institutions should be formed exactly on the same model.

Higher Education of the Blind.

90. It has been contended that there should be the same facilities given to the blind to rise from the elementary schools as are given to the seeing.

91. We are of opinion that, from the primary schools, they should go to institutions or secondary schools. In these it would be seen which children have musical, technical, or literary tastes; they would fall naturally into classes which could enable the musicians to become either tuners or artists; the technical pupils would become either artisans or foremen in their trades; the literary would be ready to receive the higher education of the university.

16,773-4.
McNeile.

92. In order to encourage such pupils, and place them on a level with the seeing, there must be educational grants and scholarships.

16,769.
McNeile.

93. There will always be some among the blind who are suffering from want of the physical strength associated with the causes which produce blindness, but the blind boy with healthy body and brain ought to have the same chances as his seeing brother, as he is the same except in his being heavily handicapped in the race for knowledge or distinction by his loss of sight.

Rev. S. S.
Forster's
Report on
Worcester
College.

94. There is want of a higher class college which should receive a State grant, where classical, mathematical, and general literature can be effectively taught, to prepare a youth for the universities.

95. There have been many distinguished blind men who have become such in mature years, but up to the present time no attempt has been made to give a higher education to those blind from childhood in any college except Worcester.

96. The education given at Worcester seems by the results to be calculated to fit the pupils for the university, some of them having overcome all the disadvantages of their position, and passed through an university education even with distinction; one who gave evidence before us has become a solicitor in good practice, and several have taken Holy Orders, and have been appointed to livings.

20,350, &c.
Forster.

97. The college at present is on a small scale, and not sufficiently of a public character to justify our recognition of it as such. But it has done good work during the last 20 years as the only college for the higher education of the blind, and we have ascertained that legal steps are now being taken to convert it into a public institution.

16,553-5.
Marston.

98. We think it questionable whether, in the interest of the pupils, such a college should be isolated as it is at present, and not rather attached to one of our existing collegiate institutions for the seeing, either at one of our university centres, or in the neighbourhood of London.

Gardner's Trust for Blind.

99. The blind are largely indebted to the funds of the Gardner's Trust established in 1882. It has been of the greatest service in supporting existing charities, in encouraging the foundation of new ones, and in assisting the blind to help themselves.

100. In order that the fund should be employed in the best possible way, and in accordance with the wishes of the testator, the matter was referred to the Court of Chancery, where a scheme for the administration of the fund, dated January 20th, 1882, was drawn up and approved, of which the following are the four general headings as to the distribution of the income of the fund, after payment of the necessary expenses of management:—

17,438, &c.
Bishop of
London,
4,278, &c.
Wilson.

1. Two-ninths shall be applied in instructing the blind in the profession of music.
2. Two-ninths shall be applied in instructing the blind in suitable trades, handicrafts, and professions, other than the profession of music.
3. Two-ninths shall be applied in instructing the blind in suitable trades, handicrafts, and professions, including the profession of music.
4. Three-ninths shall be applied in providing pensions and donations, and generally in such other manner as the Committee shall think best for the benefit of the blind.

101. Since receiving evidence from the secretary of the Gardner Trust, a resolution has been passed by the Committee of the Trust, the effect of which will be (if sanctioned) to alter the third and fourth headings of the scheme to the following effect:

3. "Two other of such nine equal parts shall be applied in instructing the poor blind in suitable trades, handicrafts, and professions, including the profession of music, and generally in such other manner as the Committee shall think best for the benefit of the blind."
4. "The remaining three of such nine equal parts shall be applied in providing pensions or donations for the poor and deserving blind."

I 20082.

d

102. The Charity Commissioners have postponed the consideration of this application till the publication of this Report.

103. In administering the fund, the Committee desire as far as possible:—

- (a) To make grants from this fund the means of eliciting the contributions or assistance of other persons and societies.
- (b) To give to the persons aided such assistance as will call out their own exertions, and put them in the way of maintaining themselves; but this is not meant to apply to the cases of persons who are considered fit subjects for pensions.
- (c) To avoid such application of the fund as will merely do that which would otherwise be done by the parochial rates.

No person is disqualified from receiving assistance by reason of his religious opinions; but no person can receive assistance unless the Committee are first satisfied that he is of good moral character and in real need of help from the fund.

The scholarship does not cover, as a rule, the entire cost of the pupil's expenses at the institution. In the first instance, the scholar is sent for three months on trial, and the Committee reserve to themselves the power of declaring the scholarship vacant if the result be unsatisfactory to them; if, however, the result be satisfactory, the scholar holds his scholarship for a year from the time that he entered the institution, and then is re-elected from year to year, provided that the Committee, at the expiration of each year, are satisfied, by such evidence as they may require, that the scholar has shown capacity, and applied himself diligently to his studies, and has otherwise conducted himself in a satisfactory manner, and is in need of further instruction. The decision of the Committee as to the re-election of a scholar or otherwise is final.

(b) Assistance by way of contribution is given to institutions or persons undertaking the instruction of the blind, and also to individual blind persons, adults, or children, who are unable to meet the whole expense of such instruction.

2. *Pensions.*—Grants by way of pension are made without restriction as to age.

Persons in receipt of parochial relief are, by one of the regulations drawn up by the Committee for their general guidance, ineligible. Every applicant should, in the first instance, send his name in full, age, and address to the Secretary, and state the average amount of his weekly income, and from what sources it is derived. A letter from the clergyman of the parish in which the applicant lives, or from the minister of the chapel which he attends, should also be sent to the Secretary, certifying from personal knowledge that the applicant is of good character, thoroughly deserving, and in real need of assistance from the Trust.

The pensions, which are of the amounts 10*l.*, 15*l.*, and 20*l.* a year, are terminable by the committee on six months' notice, and are withdrawn without notice if the pensioner prove undeserving or no longer in need.

As only a small portion of the income of the Trust (at most not more than one-third) can be applied in granting pensions, and as the applicants number over 3,500, and vacancies occur but seldom in the list of pensioners, very many deserving persons must, perforce, be disappointed.

3. *Grants by way of free gift* are made in the following and other cases:—

- (a) To institutions for the purchase of furniture and apparatus required for the instruction of additional pupils beyond those already there, or otherwise in special cases.
- (b) For the manufacture of books in blind types, and grants of such books.
- (c) To assist local efforts for the establishment or fitting up of schools, at which technical training may be given to the blind in trades or handicrafts.
- (d) To enable persons who have received instruction in a trade, handicraft, or profession to begin the practice thereof by providing them with tools, materials, &c., and also
- (e) To those persons who require capital to continue their trade, handicraft, or profession, and are unable to procure it.

Grants under headings *d* and *e* are not made with the intention that they will be repeated, but with the hope of permanently establishing the recipients in some trade, handicraft, or profession.

Comparison of the work of the blind with that of seeing persons.

6,211,
Storey.

104. The general character of the industrial work of the blind is good, but hardly equal to that of the best seeing workmen, as they cannot generally compete with the seeing in quality and finish. Some can earn a fair living, but in most cases they require sighted assistance, and this is found to be necessary on commercial principles; for instance, in some of the best workshops it is found to be more economical to employ sighted labour in finishing the brushes rather than leave it to be done entirely by the blind, as it is in some cases in Germany as well as in England.

105. We found in many workshops for the blind an unwillingness to use the "forms" for baskets which have been successfully adopted in some of the workshops of the United Kingdom and Canada, and which enable the blind to work with greater accuracy than without.

18,910,
Scholfield.

106. Many blind workmen contend that institutions are too much for the benefit of the sighted. We endeavoured to test this statement by ascertaining what were the annual amounts received by the blind and sighted employes respectively. In 33 of these institutions the payments to the blind amounted to 28,370*l.* and to the sighted 19,736*l.* but in the latter, establishment and educational charges are in many cases included. One blind witness considers that all teachers in blind shops, collectors of accounts and managers, should be blind, and adds that a blind man is the best teacher of basket work to the blind, because a sighted man teaches from his own standpoint, whereas a blind man teaches him to work by feeling.

20,484,
Plater.
20,430,
Plater.
20,435,
Plater.
18,809,
Scholfield.
2157-9,
Farrer.

107. We think that in workshops for the blind sighted supervision is necessary.

10,318,
Campbell,
M.P.
11,503,
Buckle.
12,719-20,
Byers.

Suggestions for Improvement of the Condition of the Industrial Blind.

108. We have received some memorials from blind working men, a summary of which and of those received from School Boards, &c., will be found in the Appendix.

109. There are a good number of institutions (33) which provide workshops for the adult blind, but as we have shown in para. 71, the blind require assistance to learn a trade, and an increased number of workshops in which they can work for themselves, a good central depôt in each populous district, with a shop for the sale of their goods in a leading thoroughfare, a list of customers, a register of skilled workmen, and good materials obtainable at cost price.

2726 & 58,
Neate.
4313,
Wilson.
3019-37,
Moberly.
12,265,
Buckle.

110. We have inspected the books and labour sheets in the workshops connected with various institutions. In most cases the books are admirably kept, showing what each individual earns in the Institution and the charitable addition to his wages, which amounts, in nearly all cases, to a bonus varying in extent from 8½ to (in a few cases) 100 per cent. Twenty-six Institutions supplement the wages of the workmen in their workshops by means of a bonus averaging about 25 per cent. At Oldham there is a workshop started in a small way by a benevolent society, unconnected with any institution, and conducted on strict business principles; no supplement whatever is given, while good wages are earned. This class of workshop seems well adapted to the wants of the blind in the manufacturing districts, where a ready sale for the special baskets and their repair give constant employment to the blind. At Newcastle there is a workshop of a co-operative character which is fairly self-supporting.

See List
of Blind
Institutions
Question 22.

111. Blind workmen are at a disadvantage in various ways in competing with the seeing in the labour market.

2091.
Farrer.
12,479.
McCormick.

112. The existing workshops of the blind have no system of inter-communication, and often instead of helping each other are competing in the same market.

See Reports
of visits
(Cardiff).

113. At Leicester it is thought that the great want for the blind is some institution which could be managed by the sighted friends of the blind, to bring all the blind in more intimate relations with each other, to assist them to find employment and to dispose of their products.

16,376.
Harris.

114. This would include—

- (a.) A department for obtaining all information respecting manufacture of goods by the blind, and travelling commission agent attached thereto; and
- (b.) The starting a newspaper, the recognised organ of institutions for the blind.

16,463,
Harris.

115. Such an institution was recommended by the Conferences held in 1866, 1867, and 1883; also by the Charity Organisation Society in 1876. One was actually established in the year 1867, but for want of wealthy and influential supporters never got a fair start. Mr. Richardson Gardner, in a memorandum submitted to the Gardner Trustees in 1884, advocated the establishment of a similar institution or "Central Aid."

116. We do not think that such a central institution, however desirable it might at first sight appear, would be workable alongside of a large number of independent institutions; but in all the large centres, we think that where there is not one already, there should be a central shop and workshop for adult skilled workers in correspondence with other institutions, and connected with branches where they exist in the neighbouring towns.

1676.
Johns.
18,925,
Scholfield.
12,359,
McCormick.

117. A leading defect in the present condition of the blind is that, with a few exceptions, no care or supervision is exercised by institutions over the past pupils who have been trained in the institutions, and consequently many fail to earn their living or maintain themselves by honest labour after they leave school.

Saxon (Fürsorge) System.

118. The Saxon system endeavours, and, so far as we have seen, successfully, to meet this want.

10,926,
Armitage.

See Reports
of visits
(Dresden).

119. The following memorandum from Hofrath Büttner, Director of the Institution at Dresden, furnishes an explanation of the system.

"Long experience has taught us that the care and supervision of the blind, after their discharge from the Institution, are quite as important as their education and training in the Institution. It would, in our opinion, be unjust to remove them from their sad surroundings, educate and accustom them to higher wants, and then allow them to sink backward into their former miserable way of life.

"The Institution at Dresden, at first only a school, afterwards became an establishment for the industrial training of the blind. After their discharge they seldom, however, carried on the trade learned, but became beggars, whether with or without some musical instrument.

"This state of things convinced us that the blind were incapable of becoming independent labourers in the world, and steps were taken to establish an asylum in which they might live free from care and the chicaneries of the world. This asylum was not a success, for the expenses were so great that only a few of the blind discharged from the Institution could be provided for; the greater number fell back again into beggary. Moreover, most of the blind refused to enter the asylum; they wished to return to their parents, and the parents also wanted to have their children back again. There was great discontent in the asylum. The men thought it beneath their dignity to rise, take their meals, and work by the clock. They only thought of the restriction to their liberty, and, having grown accustomed to the acts of benevolence done them, they demanded them as a right.

"The women, living without care and distraction, became shrewish, and embittered their own lives for mere trifles.

"From this ingratitude and discontent it became evident that man, if he suffers from blindness only, will not surrender his liberty, and will not be separated from his relations, and that his happiness cannot be attained without the cares of life, and without work.

"After a trial of some 20 years, the asylum was closed, and the old begging system was resumed.

"After much deliberation it was decided to remain in connexion with the discharged blind, to visit them in their places of abode, to learn their wants, to study the difficulties which they experienced in supporting themselves independently, and, as far as possible, to remove their grievances. Director Georgi began this work in 1843. Director Reinhard continued it from 1867 to 1879, and the present director has followed the same path. With the knowledge of these difficulties the Fürsorge (care) for the discharged blind steadily advanced, and has won the confidence of the Saxon people.

"The system of training was proved, in many instances, to be defective. Very often the blind people could do work in the Institution under the supervision of teachers which they could not perform in their own homes alone and independently.

"The number of handicrafts taught was, therefore, reduced. The only ones at present taught are:—

Basket-making	since 1821
Rope-making	" 1832
Brush-making	" 1880
Piano-tuning	" 1882

"(The last-mentioned had already been tried in the years 1854 and 1873.)

"Different kinds of female work, and plaiting, ever since the establishment of the Institution. It was further proved that handicrafts were taught in the Institution which, indeed, the blind could carry on after their discharge, but for which there was no demand; they were therefore, given up.

"Further, it became certain that the blind were trained too much for the Institution, and not enough for life in the world. The conscientious teacher well knew what was required to make an upright and virtuous man; but he did not know what were the special qualities required by the blind in every-day life. The blind boy entered the Institution as a child; and at 20 he was discharged simple and innocent as a school girl, and now he had to combat the difficulties of life, and carry on a trade independently. It was, therefore, determined to change the training, and now permanent communication is kept up with the relations of the pupils. Quarterly reports are sent to them, with a letter written by the pupil. The relations return the report, also accompanied by a letter. The pupils go home every year for a month's holiday. Every-day life is made familiar to them by the reading aloud of newspapers. They have the advantage of society, both male and female, they learn the laws and usages of ordinary life, commercial letter-writing, the making out of accounts, book-keeping, to reckon the value of their own manufactured wares, the value of money, the elements of political economy, and ordinary housework; they are also taught to walk about the streets alone. All instruction bears as much as possible on every-day life, and the station in life in which the blind will find themselves after their discharge is taken, as much as possible, into consideration.

"It was also found that the blind children were taught many things in school which were useless to them in later life, and that exercises in manual dexterity were begun too late.

"School teaching and manual training are now carried on simultaneously. Objects from natural history, geography, and geometry are modelled and designed in clay and wax. One of the difficulties which the blind experienced on quitting the Institution was that they often could get no suitable workshops, because no one would trust them for the rent, or because they themselves did not know what kind of a workshop would be suitable for them. In consequence it was decided that the director should go to their places of abode and select suitable homes and workshops for them.

"Experience also showed that the discharged blind person, especially at first, could find no sale for his goods. It was, therefore, arranged that the wares which he could not sell should be taken by the Institution for sale.

"Very often the blind person had to buy raw material from a rival tradesman who was not blind, and, as may be easily imagined, this often led to his being cheated. The system was, therefore, introduced of allowing the discharged blind to buy their raw material from the Institution.

"Further, it was remarked that the discharged blind were often taken advantage of by their neighbours, and that very often no one was there to give them good advice, and that they were thus left to their own resources.

"It was therefore decided, that on the discharge of the blind person, the director should select a trustworthy person, residing in his future place of abode, to give him advice and practical help, to protect him from imposition, and to keep up communication with the director. If this guardian is unable to advise or help, he then writes to the director, who, if necessary, comes to the place, and this is all the easier, as he travels free on all railways in Saxony.

"The result of these visits, as well as all communications from the guardian, the letters from the blind person, and every document relating to him, are entered in a register kept at the Institution.

"These guardians are respectable, benevolent, practical men, capable of procuring custom for their wards.

"But there was no doubt, that, in spite of these arrangements, the discharged blind were unable to support themselves without the assistance of capital, whether in money or outfit. The blind man can do as good work as the man who can see; but, as a rule, he does not work so quickly, and if the man who is not blind has to use every exertion to support himself and his family, the blind man to do the same requires some special help, without which he will either not be able to compete, or will have to lead a life of great privation.

"The first difficulty when a blind pupil is starting in life is to provide himself with the necessary tools and material. These the Institution supplies to him, and continues through life to afford him moral and material help; and by this means the greater part of the blind are enabled to save money for sickness and old age.

"Those who cannot return to their relations, cannot at once meet all their expenses, and the weak and old need special help. A part of the money for their board and lodging is paid for those who have to be settled in other places, on account of the death or untrustworthiness of their relatives.

"There is an asylum for the old and feeble at Königswartha, where a permanent division of labour is rendered possible by the constant presence of three workmen, who, although blind, are strong and healthy. Also, in other places, weak and able-bodied workmen co-operate together and make use of their powers under a proper division of labour.

"One may say that these blind people, altogether, on an average, need a yearly assistance of 100 marks, some more, some less. In the year 1886, 40,460 marks, 41 pfennings, were given for assistance to the discharged. This assistance is by no means always given in actual money, but always in such a way that the blind are encouraged by it to work. Mere money assistance is often actual poison to the blind. They therefore receive the assistance in materials for work, clothing, &c.

"The fund for the discharged blind provides the money for this.

"This fund was started in 1844, under the Director Georgi, with 150 marks; from 1867 to 1879 it was increased under Director Reinhard from 113,670 marks to 768,520 marks; and at the end of 1886 it amounted to 1,014,199 marks.

"This sum, which is a large one for Saxony, was collected by contributions from municipal, district, and parochial communities by donations of all kinds, and by the wages of the pupils of the Institution. The whole of the money which the blind earn during their apprenticeship in the workshops is divided into five parts, of which the blind workmen themselves receive one. Four parts go to the fund.

"The number of donations has for a long time been very considerable, for there are in the country many wealthy people who have learned from their own experience the value of work for every man. These men it is who give liberal donations of money to that fund, because they do not wish their money to be spent in alms, but to be used to enable the afflicted to gain a livelihood.

"The fund for the discharged blind is administered by the Director of the Institution. The number of those assisted amounts at present to about 400, who live respectably in all parts of Saxony, are almost self-supporting, and feel themselves free men. For just as a son does not feel galled by a gift from his father, so they are not ashamed to receive assistance from their second paternal home, the Institution.

"At the end of 1885 the 'Fürsorge' Fund amounted to 971,702 marks.

"In 1886 were added:—

Marks 9,520	in legacies.
" 3,043	from village communes.
" 1,250	from district unions.
" 2,930	from town communes.
" 846	from Protestant and Catholic churches.
" 183	from freemasons' lodges.

"Year by year these voluntary donations have increased in proportion as the effectiveness of the Fürsorge system has become known to the population of Saxony.

"The State does not directly support the Fürsorge system, but it pays the director's travelling expenses on his visits to the discharged pupils, and as the State guarantees the expenses for the education of the blind, it has a right to the proceeds of the pupils' work. This, however, it foregoes, but, as already observed, gives one-fifth to the blind workpeople, and four-fifths to the fund, the managers of which it also pays.

"The capital of the fund is invested, the interest only being used for the assistance of the discharged blind pupils.

"A register is kept for every blind person from the time he enters the Institution, and is continued after his discharge till death, or till the 'Fürsorge' is withdrawn. This register also shows how much raw material the blind person has bought from the Institution, what clothes and tools were given him on his discharge, how much he earned when in the Institution, and to what extent he is supported. In this book also the director makes the remarks he considers necessary after his visits to the discharged blind pupils."

120. During their tour the Commissioners saw no blind beggars in Saxony, and were informed that begging on the part of the blind had practically ceased to exist.

121. Dr. Armitage's evidence supplies a very clear account of the working of the system. He adds that:—

"A few years ago some of the smaller States adjoining Saxony made arrangements for their blind to be educated in the Dresden Institution. These children were in all respects educated as the Saxon children. They returned to their home after completing their education, but, unfortunately, there was no system of supervision after leaving the school, and the result was that they almost all failed: while their Saxon companions, living under the same circumstances, almost invariably succeeded. This difference could only result from the want of supervision, and timely help and advice in the case of the children belonging to the small States; these have, however, now undertaken the supervision, and the result is as satisfactory as it is in Saxony."

122. The Saxon system has not yet been fully tried in this country, though its introduction has now for some years been advocated by Dr. Armitage. A plan similar in its main provisions has been adopted in Paris in the Société de Placement et de Secours, which is an indispensable supplement to the "Institution Nationale." The society has been recognised by the State in France since 1856, and has a capital of nearly 6,000*l.* sterling. Its example has been followed by similar institutions in the provinces.

Reports of
Visits
(Dresden).
10,926,
Armitage.

See Reports
of Visits
(Paris).

123. We think that the adoption of the Saxon system is of the utmost importance to the blind of this country in the four following respects, as soon as the funds can be raised to carry it out:—

1. That a register should be kept of all pupils leaving the Institution.
2. That they should be assisted in carrying on a trade, should they wish to set up for themselves, and in the first instance be provided with tools and materials gratis, and, subsequently, at cost price.
3. That the Institutions should endeavour to provide funds to supplement the workman's earnings, grant loans, or afford him assistance in case of illness.
4. An endeavour should be made to interest some influential local agency with which the Institution could correspond on behalf of the blind.

III.

The Aged Blind.

124. The State does nothing for the aged and infirm blind, except through the guardians to offer them the workhouse,* without any special provision for them to alleviate their lot, or to distinguish them from the general mass of the paupers reduced by their own vice or folly, idleness or improvidence, to seek poor law relief. Before discussing in detail the suggestions made to us, we would observe that on general grounds we think that the aged blind should be treated on a different principle from the ordinary pauper; they are deserving of more generous treatment, and, as their poverty does not arise from any fault of their own, we consider that in many instances the ordinary workhouse test should be relaxed, and out-door relief given to them on a liberal scale, which should not subject them to any legal disqualification.

Compare the Medical Disqualification Removal Act of 1885. 14,057, Gilroy.

125. Evidence has been given to us that the blind in all workhouses are not treated with the consideration they deserve. The Rev. C. Andras, chaplain of the Woolwich union, says, "there they drift, for want of some better provision, herded with many who are just outside the criminal class, and who have little or no sympathy with genuine distress or helplessness, though themselves needy. Unions are not built suitably for the blind. . . . Very little help is given; they are just treated as the others."

Letter to Chairman of Commission.

He justly feels the sad position of the respectable blind in a workhouse, the rules of which are framed for a totally different class.

18,283, Browne.

126. In a few cases a more liberal arrangement prevails, and special workhouse rules have been drawn up for their treatment.

18,257, Browne.

127. It has been suggested that there should be an asylum for the maintenance of those who have become blind in middle age or upwards, by accident or otherwise, and who have no friends to support them; and that the cost should be in London a charge upon the Metropolitan Common Fund, as is the asylum for imbeciles.

128. It may be more just to the blind, quite independent of economic grounds, that they should be kept out of the workhouse; and in London such a central asylum or home may be necessary, as it is at present difficult to get middle-aged blind into institutions; but the blind in England are disposed to live in their own homes rather than in an institution, and if a liberal grant to the necessitous blind were given, it might be found unnecessary to found such a central home.

See Reports of Visits (Paris).

129. We have had no evidence that there is any wish for an institution like the Quinze Vingts, at Paris, where each blind inmate, with his family, keeps house, and forms part of a large community.

11,663, Turner.

130. The guardians in one case brought before us gave 1s. a week per head to out-door blind more than to sighted people, and although the relatives with whom these blind people lived, did not treat them well, yet the same relatives objected to the blind being transferred to a cottage home, for fear of losing the total subsidy which they were receiving for their maintenance.

See earnings of blind women in Appendix 7.

131. While the blind men, as long as they can work, can earn something for themselves, the blind women must always be largely dependent on charity, as they

* Number on the 2nd September 1887 of blind persons in the United Kingdom above 21 years of age receiving relief was 3,278 (in-door) and 4,895 (out-door). (See Parliamentary Return, No. 326 of 1887.)

seldom can earn sufficient by the chair-caning, knitting, or crochet, which in many cases is their only means of livelihood.

132. To establish for such a cottage home or house where a few women could live together, as in the homes at Bath and Leicester, would seem to be a very desirable object of charity.

11,704, Turner. See Reports of Visits (Leicester). 12,094, Hall.

133. We found this system adopted at Kiel, in Schleswig-Holstein, and, according to Mr. Hall, the same prevails at Philadelphia.

134. The aged blind in many workhouses at present pass a wretched existence. The Commissioners were struck by this when visiting the workhouse at Cork; 22 aged men and women, totally blind, are retained in this workhouse, little or nothing being done to alleviate their condition.

135. But it must be remembered that those are the older people, for whom probably little can be done; all those able to work and the children, to the number of 80, are maintained at the Guardians' expense in various institutions, viz.:—Cork Blind Asylum, 54; St. Raphael's Blind School, 13; St. Joseph's, Dublin, 6; and at Merrion, Dublin, 7. In these Institutions they are being educated or are employed in industrial work, and the elevating and improving effect of such treatment on their characters was plainly perceptible to the Commissioners.

136. In consequence of evidence given by two or three witnesses respecting the condition of the blind in workhouses, and from our own personal visits to a few of the workhouses, we requested the Local Government Board for England and Wales to furnish us with a report on the subject, more especially with reference to the following points:—

See Reports of Local Government Board Inspectors in Appendix 10.

- (1.) Are any special arrangements in force in any of the workhouses for enabling the blind to be treated with greater consideration than ordinary paupers?
- (2.) What provision is made for instructing the blind to read, or is permission given, or facilities afforded, to visitors from the Indigent Blind Society, or other kindred society, to teach the blind to read and to lend books to them?
- (3.) What arrangements, if any, are made for blind inmates learning trades outside the workhouse?
- (4.) To what extent have your board of guardians availed themselves of the powers conferred upon them of sending blind paupers to institutions specially provided for their reception and treatment?

137. The Local Government Board desired the inspectors of 15 districts to report on the points respecting which information was desired, and the reports of these inspectors will be found in the Appendix. They appear to have been drawn up in most cases from particulars supplied by the masters of the workhouses, though some of the inspectors made careful personal inquiry in addition.

138. As regards the first point, it appears that, with some rare exceptions, the treatment accorded to blind paupers is the same as that shown to infirm inmates of the workhouse. Several of the inspectors question moreover whether it would be right to show the blind any special favour in regard to diet, hours, &c., which are not shown to epileptics and other analogous cases.

139. All the unions are apparently disposed to offer reasonable facilities and encouragement to mission societies, branches of the Home Teaching Society and others to visit and teach the blind in the workhouses. But although many of these agencies show a praiseworthy activity in this work, in the majority of cases no such visits are made, probably because there is no society near enough to the unions in question.

140. When the blind are desirous of learning a trade, it is usual for the guardians to send them to a special institution for the blind, where such instruction will be given them, and to pay the cost of maintenance. At Sunderland, and a few other places, however, a somewhat different plan has been adopted, and there out-door relief has been granted on the condition that the blind will attend at the institution in that town and learn basket-making, mattress-making, &c. This plan, to which we have already referred, is reported to have worked well, and to have succeeded in instilling a greater amount of self-reliance into the blind than they would have acquired in an institution where they are boarded and lodged.

See Report No. 13 (Appendix 10). Also para. 72 supra.

See Report
No. 12 (Ap-
pendix 10).

141. It appears that, on the whole, most of the guardians avail themselves fairly of the powers vested in them to send suitable cases to institutions for education and training, but a good deal more might undoubtedly be done in this direction. Mr. Kennedy speaks of 12 cases in his district which deserve further consideration at the hands of guardians, and Mr. W. E. Knollys, in his suggestive and careful report, says, "I am acquainted with several instances of blind men comparatively young who appear to have no resource whatever, either within themselves or provided for them, to relieve the tedium of their existence, and I have noticed them with regret purposelessly pacing up and down their yards or lounging without occupation over the day-room fires."

142. This entirely agrees with our own observations in the few workhouses which we visited.

143. We observe a recommendation made by Mr. Kennedy, Inspector of the Yorkshire District, that middle-aged blind paupers who become chargeable to county unions might preferably be sent to a workhouse in a town where a society (or institution) for the blind exists. The suggestion appears to us to be an eminently practical one, and we think that the Local Government Board should do all that they can to encourage it.

See me-
morial of
the industrial
blind and
others in
Appendix 1.

144. One or two witnesses representing a general feeling among the poor adult blind, both in England and Scotland, have suggested that "state aid of a regular and reliable nature be granted to all blind persons unable to earn a sufficient livelihood, and (particularly) that it should come to the individual direct, and not go through the official channels of existing Institutions." This plan, however, has never been submitted in a workable shape, so as to secure the State from assisting undeserving persons, and even if it were on general grounds deserving of support, it would be open to the objection that, to a great extent, all inducement to work would be taken away.

145. The condition of the blind of 50 and upwards, who are not able to do much work from illness or infirmity, depends mainly on the charitable institutions which are homes for the aged blind, and on the pensions which are distributed by certain charitable societies and some of the City Companies.

Pensions.

146. We have been enabled to collect particulars respecting 35 charities which assist the blind by way of pensions. Several of the larger charities do not give pensions except to those over 50 or 60 years of age. A list of all those charities of which we have heard will be found in the Appendix.

147. The pensions given by the London charities, though generally open to all England, are chiefly distributed in London and the Southern counties, and seem to be but rarely participated in by the blind in the North.

See list of
counties in
which re-
cipients
reside, Ap-
pendix 14.

148. These London charities, which constitute much the larger proportion, amount to nearly 30,000*l.* per annum, and are distributed among about 3,550 persons in sums varying from 2*l.* to 20*l.* Careful precautions appear to be taken in some charities in the distribution of these funds, but it does occasionally happen that one applicant will secure several pensions from different trusts.

21-24,
Longley

149. A considerable amount of money is available for pensions, and endowed charities for the blind are continually being founded. Yet the applications for them far exceed the number of annual vacancies in the hands of the various trustees.

See Reports
of visits
(Bradford).

150. The Harrison Fund, Bradford, has been of great use in enabling small monthly pensions to be given to 16 blind people of the town too old and infirm to work, and who, but for this help, would be in great want. We were informed when visiting Bradford that twice the amount of the money now at their disposal could be advantageously distributed in this way.

See Report
of Wilber-
force School
for the
Blind.

151. The fund established by the late Mrs. S. Markham in connexion with the Yorkshire Institution in 1886, for the purpose of aiding former pupils to establish themselves in industry, consists of 800*l.*, the interest of which is devoted towards (i) providing apparatus, materials, or tools; (ii) making small grants of money to paupers well reported of; or (iii) affording assistance in case of sickness, &c.

152. Evidence has been laid before us leading to the conclusion that the pensions are in some cases abused, and are not always administered to the best advantage, the persons who award the pensions sometimes have no personal knowledge of the training, aptitude, and character of the blind persons, and the result is that pensions are often granted when they would have been better withheld, and withheld when they might with advantage have been granted. The pensions are often awarded to those who have the most influential friends, and are given sometimes by several societies to the same individual without any inter-communication between the societies. Such interchange of lists is carried out by some of the leading London charities.

725 and 726
Johns.
4,783.
Terry.
5,528,
Clarke.
5,598,
5,601,
Wilkinson.
729,
Johns.
4,050,
Lester.

153. From the evidence given there would seem to be no objection to such registration being generally carried out.

154. The City Companies charge nothing for the administration of their charities, every penny received by them for the blind goes to the blind.

5,240,
Roberts.

155. Pensions, as at present given, do not always contribute to thrift, and are rather a discouragement to industry. Many blind men who are strong, healthy, and vigorous will not work, because they expect to get a pension, or having obtained a pension will not put forth their proper energies.

725 and 730,
Johns.
767.
Tait.

156. It has been suggested with reason, that if the funds now given as pensions could be used to supplement still further the earnings of skilful workmen, it would be an immense stimulus to work, and the pension would be looked upon as a reward for industry rather than an excuse for idleness. Under the present system no supervision is exercised to test the way in which the pensions are used by the recipients. It is contended that the present limitation of age in some of the charities does not tend to make the pensions conditional on self-help.

5,237,
Roberts.
767,
Tait.
770.
Tait.
859,
Tait.

157. It is difficult to exaggerate the want of self-reliance of blind people who have been brought up in dependence on existing or expected charity. As an illustration it is stated that there is a general hope among many of the indigent blind that the result of the Royal Commission will be that every one shall have a pension.

453,
Tait.

158. However desirable it may be that the aged and infirm should be well cared for, yet it is obvious that it would not be for the general welfare of the blind that they should form an exception to the general law, that every man should, as far as he can, earn his bread by work. The hardworking man, of whatever age, and those struck down by sudden loss of sight, may fairly be considered as fitting objects of relief by Blind Pension Societies; while the old and decrepid have especial claims on those of the City charities which were established for their sole benefit.

See
Johnson's
"Annuities
to the
Blind."

159. To meet the objections which have been raised by various witnesses, we think—(1.) That co-operation should be established amongst all the various pension societies, whereby a united register should be kept of all recipients, and thus the possibility be avoided of undeserving cases being relieved, and of blind persons becoming recipients of more than one annuity, except under special circumstances.

5248-9,
Roberts.
4050,
Lester.

160. (2.) That, by legislation or otherwise, the rules and regulations of the pension system should be revised, so that the limits of age might be altered in many cases, and greater facilities given for distribution of funds for the use of the industrious adult blind.

161. (3.) The pensions should not be given quarterly in lump sums, as they are liable to be wasted and misused, either by the blind or by those who accompany them to the distributor of the money, but they should be paid weekly or monthly through the agency of either a local magistrate, medical practitioner, or of the parochial clergy, or minister, who might from time to time report on the conduct and deserts of the pensioners in their parish. This distribution might well be facilitated by the adoption of the Saxon system.

11,709,
Turner.
5467,
Clarke.
5648,
Hyams.
5732,
Storey.
10,140,
Hampton.

Blind in their private Homes.

162. Besides those in institutions and those who are employed in workshops, there is a large class who live at home, or who are too sick and weakly to be admitted into blind institutions.

*Societies in aid of the Blind.*390, 401,
and 430,
Tait.

163. The Home Teaching Society for the Blind declares its objects to be to visit every blind person not in an institution. It employs 18 blind teachers, divides London into districts, visits 2,210 blind in London (of whom 1,493 are able to read Moon type); it has formed a great number of branches, and thus indirectly creates a direct interest in the blind, which leads to other institutions for their welfare.

164. But the ground is not as yet all covered; though other agencies are employed in visiting the adults in their own homes, reading to them, and teaching them to read and write; there are many localities where no branch of the Home Teaching Society exists.

3953,
Lester.

165. The Indigent Blind Visiting Society visits at their homes about 1,000 of the metropolitan blind, assists them when required, starts them in trade, and employs many in knitting and other work. It has also 15 day classes in various parts of London, in which the blind learn to read and write, and the women to knit, &c. In this society all the visitors and the secretary are blind. All types are taught, especially Braille.

4041,
Lester.20,654,
Day.

166. The evidence of one witness from Worcestershire shows that there are a great number of blind in his district who are never visited, and a great number of blind children who do not at present go to any school.

167. There are other associations and agencies, a list of which will be found in the Appendix.

See Appen-
dix 12.

168. We have collected information respecting 55 associations and missions to the blind in the United Kingdom, whose functions are mainly to visit the blind, teach them to read and write, assist them to obtain work, and afford them general relief and help.

169. These societies number 11,640 blind who either belong to the associations or are visited by their agents, and the number of uneducated blind of school age, which they have come across in the course of their researches is reported by them to be 261, and above school age, 2,825.

Types.

170. We give specimens of the principal types for the blind on separate pages in the Appendix.

171. Some societies have for their principal aim the dissemination of literature for the blind in various types, the leading types being, in alphabetical order, Alston or Roman, Braille, Lucas, and Moon.

172. The types used by the blind are various, and no general system is in use either in this country, the Continent, or America. In the latter the New York Point and Howe's are in use.

3981-2,
Lester.
See Reports
of Visits
(London
Soc., Re-
gent's Park).

173. It is contended that the Braille type is capable of being used both by old and young. It is gradually gaining ground, and appears likely to supersede the others for the young and intelligent of all ages, were it not that some institutions which have libraries in other types do not like making a change, and teach their own special type, whether Moon or Alston or Lucas generally, in addition to Braille.

174. The books in the latter type have been extensively printed and distributed by the British and Foreign Blind Association.

175. It would no doubt be convenient in theory to have one universal type for the blind, but it does not seem likely to be generally adopted, as there seems a considerable feeling in favour of Moon's type, in which a comparatively large literature exists.

See Reports
of Visits.

176. The St. John's Wood School, which was founded for the purpose of teaching the blind to read by means of the Lucas type (which is a form of shorthand), and for the purpose of embossing books in that system, has now adopted both Braille and Moon as well.

See Reports
of Visits.

177. From the information received by the Commissioners on their visit to this Institution, it was evident that this Society continues to print and to teach the Lucas

type, on account of restrictions by which they considered themselves to be legally bound.

178. There is very little demand for the books printed in this type, and but few blind people can read them. In fact, like the phonetic system of Frere, it is gradually dying out.

179. It appears to the Commissioners that the present managers of the Institution would gladly be relieved from this restriction as to type.

180. If the Government were to give assistance to the blind by supplying them with books "gratis" or at reduced prices, it would no doubt tend to uniformity of type in time, though one witness remarks "that to regard one type as having any inherent value over others is ridiculous, and that Moon, Braille, and Alston should be subsidised equally." We do not, however (as we observe later on), recommend that any such subsidy should be given by the Government.

16,730,
Marston

181. The board school teachers mostly adopt the Braille type for the use of children, though they also sanction, in some instances, Moon's type.

182. For those blind from birth or from early childhood, Braille seems to be, without doubt, the most suitable, as it can be read more quickly and can be printed in a much smaller bulk than any other. It also is capable of being written quickly in a frame, and is the only one well adapted to musical notation.

183. It is claimed for the Moon type that it is specially suited to the aged.

184. The cost of a copy of the Bible in any raised type is about 5*l.*, which would be almost a prohibitory price if there were not societies to assist the blind in obtaining such works.

185. It seems desirable that the blind should also be taught to read the Roman type as well as the other types (as it can be taught to the blind easily by any seeing person), before they go to school, and to write it in the ordinary way, so as to put them more readily in communication with the seeing world; we have seen several simple frames which enable the blind to write letters and send them by post directed in ordinary writing; some of these have the additional advantage of being written in relief letters, enabling the blind person to read his own writing.

12,593,
Hall.
13,590,
Sime.
14,508,
Neil.
16,723,
Forster.

186. It is said that the Roman type is taught in those schools where the principal directors are seeing, and that they adopt it in accordance with their prejudices as seeing persons; while, when blind directors or teachers have the control of the education the Roman is not taught except as a writing system.

10,980,
Armitage.

187. Many experienced witnesses, however, are in favour of the retention of this type, viz., the Rev. B. G. Johns, Mr. Buckle, Mr. W. J. Day, Mr. Harris, and the Rev. R. McNeile.

659,
11,185,
20,672,
16,371,
16,789.

188. In America the Boston modification of the Roman letter was the most prevalent, on the ground that it was better for the blind not to be cut off from the rest of the world, but Mr. Hall informed us that opinion was changing, and the institutions which used to order books to be printed in the line type now order them half, and some all, in New York point type.

12,038-42,
Hall.

189. It seems better for the young when at school to be first instructed in Braille; afterwards they can easily learn to read Moon or Roman type, and thus profit by the existing literature printed in those types. In fact, it is useful to the blind to know all the leading types.

190. Besides these appliances there are several type-writers that are found to be of great service to the blind to enable them to write rapidly.

Course of Instruction to the Blind.

191. We are of opinion, from the evidence we have received, and from personal inspection of the schools, that a special code for the blind is unnecessary. There appears to be no difficulty in teaching the blind reading, writing, and arithmetic. Nay more, they show great proficiency in mental arithmetic, and generally a blind child can take his place and pass his standard examinations with his seeing companions. It will be necessary in order to facilitate the teaching of the blind in our elementary

16,219.
Walker.
1,084,
Lovell.
1,352,
Weaver.
1,542,
Scott.

schools that the ordinary text books now used there should be easily procurable in embossed type. There is no reason why, as soon as they have mastered the special type, they should not be taught in elementary schools up to a certain age. Every school for the blind should be expected to teach all the elementary subjects, and, in addition, modelling and Kindergarten work should be added wherever practicable.

192. In the schools in Germany we found that more importance was attached to the training of the touch of the blind than is generally the case in England with the exception of Norwood; in fact, they proceed upon the principle that the fingers must replace the eyes, and an accurate sense of touch is cultivated by modelling, Kindergarten work, and a variety of gymnastics and games, which are calculated to develop it and their general physique.

Teachers in Schools.

193. Under the present Code of Regulations of the Education Department it is not necessary for the purpose of earning grants, that the teachers of the classes for the blind established by school boards throughout the country should be certificated, so long as the principal teacher of the school to which these classes are attached is certificated. Moreover, it would be difficult for the teachers of these classes, many of whom are themselves blind, to pass the examinations for the seeing, without some relaxations of the provisions of the Code. There is, therefore, no guarantee that teachers of the school board classes for the blind, whether themselves blind or seeing, are adequately and properly trained.

194. We are of opinion that the conduct of the education of the blind should in all cases be under certificated teachers, and that they should be placed under the same regulations as the seeing teachers in elementary schools before being allowed to teach, and in all cases should have such sighted assistance as may be necessary to ensure the efficiency of their teaching.

195. The existing teachers of the blind in institutions are, in most cases, not so good as the best of the teachers in the elementary schools, and they are certainly not so well paid.

Should they be "Blind"?

196. There is among the blind a great wish to become teachers of the blind, both because it opens out to them a remunerative occupation, and because the blind teachers are popular with the blind.

197. They are said to be more patient with their pupils, and having themselves experienced the difficulties of acquiring knowledge, are more in sympathy with them; their sense of touch is also more delicate, and they encourage the children to make more use of it; and the very fact that their teachers are blind and are doing such good work as their pupils know that they are doing, and are able to move about freely, stimulates the ambition of the children, and gives them confidence.

198. It has been urged by some witnesses that a teacher should have keen sight as well as keen intelligence, and if he has lost one of those faculties, he can be hardly so well qualified as a man who has all.

199. Our experience is that some few blind teachers, who are thoroughly trained, can teach exceedingly well, and better than most sighted persons, and we think it advisable to make use of blind teachers with sighted assistance, but where there is only one teacher he should be sighted, because there are many defects of manner and habit in blind children which a sighted person alone can correct.

200. It has also been proved that the ordinary certificated teachers can, without much trouble, teach the blind without any special training, if they will take the trouble to learn the system of reading and writing.

201. In America men so distinguished as ex-President Cleveland and Mr. Blaine began life as teachers of the blind; and the teachers of the blind are there taken generally from a higher and better informed class than in England, and they are better paid.

202. It is hoped that the Norwood College will be of use in training teachers for the blind. When we visited it in 1887 all the resident sighted teachers in the school

department were American, and trained in the best normal schools of Massachusetts, and on asking the reason we were informed that they were better trained than any English teachers that they could then obtain for the same salary. A number of blind teachers who have been trained in the College are now successfully employed in the College and elsewhere, as at Leeds and Sheffield, and by the school boards of London, Bradford, and Cardiff.

203. In the Institution Nationale at Paris all the classes are under blind professors, most of whom have been trained at the institution. The candidates for such professorships have to pass two long and minute examinations after an interval of two years before representatives of the university or existing professors; but the general supervision, exclusive of the teaching staff, is under sighted superintendence, viz., director, treasurer, house steward, censeur or controller, and four surveillants or overseers.

Management of Institutions.

204. The blind institutions which we have visited are generally well managed by Committees; and on the occasion of our inspections we have found members of the committee as well as the officers of the institutions always ready and willing to give us any information in their power and to listen to any suggestions that we made. Some dissatisfaction has been expressed at the imperfect training of the blind in trades or technical work during their stay at institutions, and a belief is found to exist among a few workmen that what they are taught is more for the pecuniary benefit of the institution than for themselves. A basket maker is sometimes not taught to make the kind of basket for which there is a local demand outside the institution.

205. Objection is also taken that in some cases the blind become more helpless after being at an institution, because they are not encouraged to help themselves, do household work, or even to feed themselves. In the best managed institutions this is not the case.

206. Several of the larger institutions are under special Acts of Parliament, such as Liverpool, Southwark, &c. The regulations of the Royal Blind Asylum, Edinburgh, appear well suited for the government of an institution which includes a school, asylum, and a workshop for old pupils. The Henshaw's Blind Asylum at Manchester, which appears to be well managed, is governed under regulations amended under an order of the High Court of Chancery.

207. One witness wishes to have a blind representative of the blind on the governing body of a blind institution, not in order to control the funds, but to make known the views of the blind. He believes that the opinions of the blind would thus be brought more quickly before committees, and if there was discontent at their treatment it would reach the ears of the committees far more quickly than at present. We have found that blind persons are not unfrequently on the governing bodies of Institutions, and we may cite the names of Miss Gilbert, the late Viscount Cranborne, and others whose labours for the blind are so well known.

208. While we do not think it advisable to suggest any change in the constitution of the voluntary bodies which have done good work in the education and training of the blind, we have made many comments on individual institutions in the report of our visits. We recommend that, subject to inspection, all the control of the internal domestic affairs of such institutions should be left as heretofore with the existing governing bodies.

Cost of maintenance in Institutions.

209. The cost of maintenance and education appears to vary considerably in the different institutions, as the accounts are not always kept on a uniform plan, and the different branches of expenditure overlap each other to such an extent as to make it impossible to separate them by a sharp line. Hence the deductions to be made from them are not reliable for the purpose of comparison. A witness, speaking of St. George's, Southwark, says, that in 1881 in that institution the cost, excluding the fixed capital, was in round numbers about 50*l.* for boarding, lodging, clothing, teaching, and training.

20,769,
Day.20,767,
20,777,
Day.16,187.
Walker.
16,184.
Walker.621,
Johns.

See Appen-
dix 11.

210. In ten of the schools which have made returns to us, the average cost of education is estimated at 6*l.* 4*s.*, and of board and lodging, 16*l.* 18*s.* These institutions, however, do not include the somewhat exceptional cases of the Royal Normal College, St. George's, Southwark, and Worcester College, where the cost per head of education and maintenance is estimated at 59*l.* 15*s.* 0*d.*, 50*l.*, and 90*l.* respectively.

Election of Candidates.

211. Candidates for admission to most institutions are elected by the votes of the subscribers. In many cases the number of the applicants, especially now among the blind under 12 years of age, far exceeds the number admissible.

Gymnasia and Physical Exercises.

212. As the blind have lower vitality than the sighted, they therefore require everything to assist their physical development, bathing, influence of sunlight and air, and gymnastic exercises.

213. One witness stated that the blind leave institutions in a weakly state, whether from want of exercise or insufficient food. We have observed the blind suffering from want of physical exercise, but we have not had any complaints of insufficient food, nor have we seen anything to lead us to such a conclusion.

214. The success of the blind in after life depends largely on their physical training, to keep up their energy. We think that healthy out of door sports for the blind should be encouraged as much as possible.

215. A good gymnasium is a necessary adjunct to an institution. At Norwood there are two: one for boys and one for girls; skating, swimming, rowing, cycling, and other games are freely practised. The Henshaw's Asylum and St. George's, Southwark, are well fitted up with gymnastic appliances, and boys and girls both mount the ladders and swings as if they had sight. The military or musical drill is also very useful in keeping up discipline, while it exercises the body. At Kiel sixteen of the men and women, employed in the workshops, danced the lancers and waltzed afterwards with ease.

216. We saw the pupils at Worcester College playing at football with a wicker basket ball enclosing a ball, and walking on stilts with perfect fearlessness.

State Inspection.

217. Under any system of State aid there must necessarily be State inspection; should the inspectors be specially trained in the education and industrial instruction of the blind?

218. The school inspectors for the blind should be selected, if possible, from inspectors of elementary schools who should have made themselves acquainted with the methods, types, and appliances used in the education of the blind.

219. It has been impressed upon us by some blind witnesses that there should be blind inspectors, or at least one blind inspector, in addition to sighted inspectors, because a seeing man would never be severe enough in demanding the full powers of the blind; no man who has not himself gone through the course of education of a blind man knows how much he can do, and how much he might fairly expect. It has also been stated that there should be more than one inspector: one to be specially skilled in the training of the blind, and one in industrial work. At present there is no Government inspection where there is not a certificated teacher; though a certificated teacher is desirable, yet there should be inspection of all existing schools, whether there be a certificated teacher or not. The inspectors should also examine and inspect the industrial department of institutions or workshops, should they be established, which are not now examined. This would also indirectly have a beneficial influence upon institutions and lead to uniformity of teaching throughout blind schools, encourage inter-communication between institutions, and lead up to the attainment of a more uniform standard of progress.

172,
Westlake.
196,
Greene.
12,944,
Chambers.

20,768,
Day.
See Reports
of Visits
(Leeds).

16,206.
Walker.
16,570.
Marston.

16,168.
Walker.

Proposals for State Aid.

220. We have previously stated that the Boards of Guardians have the power to send, under certain conditions, blind children to an institution, and to pay towards their maintenance and education in all cases where the parents are unable to pay without pauperising the parent by such a payment from the rates.

221. They have also the power of providing for the maintenance and instruction of blind adults in an institution. But with the exception of these and of the school board classes for the blind, the education of the blind has hitherto been largely dependent on private charity, and the necessity for direct State aid, as practised in some British colonies, in the leading European countries, and in the United States, has not been generally recognised in this country.

222. Bequests or endowments for the blind have been frequently made of late years, yet, in the distribution of general endowments for education by the Charity Commissioners, the blind have not hitherto received any benefit. 21 and 45,
Longley.

223. It is agreed by all witnesses that the benefits of the Education Acts should be extended to the blind, to the fullest extent, and they should be treated on the same grounds as ordinary children (they are not specifically excluded from the Education Act, and in Scotland are included specially by the Act of 1872, in its compulsory provisions), and that a larger grant than is given to the seeing in proportion to the additional expense in educating them is necessary.

224. The present education grant for blind children under the London School Board varies from 18*s.* 5½*d.* per head to 18*s.* 11½*d.*, and up to 21*s.* in Scotland, calculated on the average attendance.

225. The aggregate amount of the grant must depend upon the necessity or otherwise of the training of blind children in separate institutions. There will always be some who will require such assistance; the State would then have to provide for the maintenance as well as education. The present grant from guardians is generally insufficient, and varies from 5*l.* to 20*l.*, and higher in some exceptional cases. See List
(Appendix
11).
column 5(a).

226. The Manchester School Board have passed a resolution, that the Education Department, might with propriety make grants to institutions for the education of the blind, and that such grants might be made either towards maintenance, as in the case of certified industrial schools, or upon examination, as in the public elementary schools. Parly. Paper
C.—4639 of
1886, p. 5.

227. Under the London School Board the annual net cost of educating a blind child is 9*l.* 10*s.* 5*d.*, this amount being arrived at by taking the net cost per head in the schools in which blind children were instructed at Lady Day, 1888, viz., 1*l.* 13*s.* 11*d.*, and adding to it the cost per head of the special instruction of the blind, viz., 7*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* In the cases of the three school board classes at Cardiff, Bradford, and Sunderland, the average net cost of education of each blind child is 7*l.* 3*s.* 1*d.* per annum.

228. In Scotland, it has been suggested that a grant of 10*l.* for each child, 5*l.* from the State and 5*l.* from the local authority, would be sufficient, leaving voluntary efforts to provide the buildings and the other half of the cost. 13,568,
Sime.

229. In Glasgow, though the school board admitted that the cost of educating a blind child was about 35*s.* higher than that of educating a seeing child, which is about 2*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* per annum, they stated they did not wish to claim any larger grant from the State on that account. See Reports
of Visits,
(Glasgow).

230. It has also been suggested that the grant for a blind child should be double that for an ordinary child. 15,204,
Walker.

231. Mr. H. E. Oakeley and the Rev. T. W. Sharpe, two of H.M. Inspectors of Schools, recommend that school boards should have power to establish central schools where they are required, and that for cases sent to institutions for the blind, an additional grant should be paid annually, which would cover the difference between the contribution which is at present allowed to be paid by guardians and the total cost of annual maintenance at some institution, which difference, he believes, to be about 10*l.* annually. Parly. Paper
C.—4747 of
1886, p. 5.

Parly. Paper
C.—4747 of
1886, p. 5.

232. Mr. Fitch, another of H.M. Inspectors, recommends that:—
“On a satisfactory report from an inspector, the school board should be allowed to claim at each of the centres of special instruction an additional grant for every blind child who has attended the class during half the year, and who has also passed the standard examination. Such additional grant should not exceed one-half of the total extra cost of the blind child's instruction.”

10,610,
10,614,
Campbell.

233. Dr. Campbell thinks it is the policy of the State to give the blind the best practical education that they are capable of receiving; if the State has to support a blind person in a workhouse for 40 or 50 years, it is quite evident that it is cheaper for the State, to say nothing of the humanity at all, to educate rather than pauperize. In support of this it may be mentioned that the Board of State Commissioners of Public Charities in the United States, say in their Report:—

“As observation shows that educated blind persons seldom become a public charge, it would seem important, not only in its social bearings, but as a question of political economy, to bring as many of the blind as practicable under proper educational training.”

10,634,
Campbell.

Parl. Paper,
C.—4747 of
1886, p. 7.

234. The Gardner Trustees by their scholarships enable those leaving the board schools to obtain technical instruction at various institutions, and higher education at Worcester; but there are always more candidates than can be elected, and it is satisfactory to find that the children from the public elementary schools generally succeed best in the open competition for such scholarships.

235. The Gardner trustees have it under consideration to assist in founding a college at Worcester, if it should be re-constituted as a public trust.

236. It has been suggested* that the State, by the Education Department, might give grants of books to institutions and asylums, which would relieve them from the heavy cost of printed books, and that the types to be selected should be a Braille type for the young, and Moon type for the aged.

In his book,
“Education
of the Blind.”

237. In America, the printing for the blind is largely subsidized. Mr. W. Wait, Superintendent of New York Institution for the Blind, says, “The Act of 45th Congress, established a permanent fund, the annual interest on which, amounting to 10,000 dollars, is to be distributed in the form of books and apparatus adapted to the use of the blind among the institutions in the United States.”

238. In this country the printing for the blind is in private hands, and, we think, it must be left, as it is now, to private enterprise.

19,606,
Cumin.

239. We do not think that it would be wise for the Education Department to make grants of books, but in giving the annual grant the expenses of providing books should be borne in mind.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

State aid.

240. The recommendations which we make are founded on the general idea, which has been strongly impressed upon us by various witnesses, and by the observations made during the visits of the Commission at home and abroad, that the blind should, as far as possible, be treated like seeing people, and that the object of their education and physical training should be, as far as practicable, to make up for their physical defects, and to train them to earn their livelihood. This principle is not only right, but it is politically and economically sound. It is better for the local authority or the State to expend its funds on the elementary and technical education of the blind for a few years rather than to have to support them through life in idleness, or to allow them to obtain their livelihood from public or private charity.

241. It has been frequently impressed on us that while the parents might be able to pay for the ordinary cost of education of a seeing child in an elementary school, they might not be able to defray the extra cost of maintenance in an institution for the blind. We therefore think they should be treated liberally in this respect, and that the parents should not only receive the assistance for their children without being compelled to apply to the guardians, but that such assistance should be given for the whole period, say, from 5 to 16 years of age. We are aware that the guardians are empowered to send such cases to an institution, even though the parent may not be a pauper in receipt of relief, but we have nevertheless had abundant testimony of the very natural disinclination on the part of poor parents to apply to the guardians in

Letter from
Local Gov.
Board, 21st
Feb. 1888.
See para. 31.

* Reports of Visits, (Macdonald of Glasgow). 485-6, Tait. 13,910, Martin. 15,967, Meldrum. 17,501, Moon. 20,371, Forster.

such a matter for aid, and also of the reluctance of some boards of guardians to afford such aid. There appears to be a general consensus of opinion in favour of vesting the power of making the grant in the hands of the school authority rather than leaving it in the hands of the poor law administration, with whom it would assume the form of a charitable concession rather than an educational duty. Para. 52.

242. It has been advocated by some that the education of the blind should be free, and we think that if free education should be given by the State, the blind ought to have the first claim; but we do not consider that the parents of the blind should be absolved from the responsibility of their education and maintenance, or from paying for them to the extent of their ability.

243. We recommend therefore*—

- (1.) That the provisions of the Education Acts be extended to the blind, and that the compulsory attendance at a school or institution be enforced from 5 to 16 in the following way:— Para. 40.
- (2.) That the education of the blind in the elementary school should commence at five in the infant department, and after passing through the ordinary standards, the technical or industrial training should begin at from 12 to 14 in an institution or technical school, and that parents should not have the power of withdrawing the children before the age of 16. Such of the blind pupils as show exceptional promise, should be encouraged by scholarships to qualify for education at a high class college. Independently of the position of the parent, a capitation grant, equal to at least half the cost of instruction, should be given to all in the same way as in ordinary elementary schools. If intended to be trained in music, instruction should be given as soon as possible. Para. 56.
- (3.) Where the number is too small to form a class, or where the child is unable to attend an elementary school, the school board or school attendance authority should have the power and be required (a) to send a child to an institution, and to contribute to his education and maintenance such grant as would be equivalent to the contribution now allowed to be paid by guardians; (b) if there should be no institution available or willing to receive such child, the school authority should have the power to board out the child, or, either by itself or in combination with other school authorities, to establish an institution for the purpose, and to educate the child under certificated teachers and proper inspection. Para. 94.
- (4.) That the school attendance should be compulsorily enforced for at least eight years, without any existing limit of distance from school; and power given to the local authority to pay the rail or tram fare of children when necessary. Para. 57.
- (5.) That the grant on behalf of children, whether in a day school or in a boarding school, up to the age of 16, should be given under the certificate of a properly qualified inspector, who should certify the character of the teaching in the school, and the grant should depend, not only on the merits of each individual scholar, but on the aggregate proficiency of the blind pupils. Para. 52.

244. Legislation would be necessary to extend the compulsory period under the Education Acts for the blind, and to vest the power in the school authority rather than in the guardians. Whatever may be the authority, it should provide a certain sum towards the maintenance of the blind in an institution either at an early age or after a course of training in some elementary school.

Industrial Training.

245. In any legislation for the encouragement of technical or industrial training, we think that the claims of the blind should be duly considered in the direction we have suggested.

246. There seems a want in London of a metropolitan industrial school for the blind, which one of the existing institutions might supply, as the expense of sending London children to provincial institutions is very great. The parents do not like their children going far from home, and the guardians are not empowered to visit them in the institutions at a distance from London, except at their own expense. Such an

18,276-8,
Browne.

* The numbers at the side refer to the paragraphs in the body of the Report where the recommendations occur, and where the arguments are fully stated. The two should be read in conjunction with one another.

institution should consist of (1) a preparatory school for the infant classes, where Kindergarten work should be carried on; (2) an elementary education school where modelling and the making of maps, and some knowledge of music and technical training should be imparted, in addition to the ordinary curriculum in elementary schools. (Should the education of the blind be carried on under the same law as at present is applied to elementary schools, the two first-named departments would be unnecessary); (3) after they leave an elementary school technical instruction should be given in the trades suitable to the blind, together with a continuance of their educational studies, and those who may show such special aptitude for music or tuning as would lead to their adopting it as a profession, should be sent elsewhere for superior training; games and gymnastic exercise should be strongly encouraged, and form part of the ordinary school work. Such a school might become a model school, and from it teachers specially trained in industrial work might be distributed over the United Kingdom.

247. We recommend—

Paras. 217 and 218. (1.) That the technical instruction in industrial handicrafts, as well as the educational training of the blind should be placed under the Education Department; an efficient inspection of industrial work, by a Government inspector, would tend to raise the standard of work, and to produce good instead of indifferent workmen, as is too often the case at present.

18,800, Scholfield. (2.) That from 16 to 21 the school authority should have the power and duty to give to all the necessitous blind a liberal grant to maintain themselves while they are learning a trade.

Para. 61. (3.) That a central shop and workshop for adult skilled workers should be established in every large centre where the same has not yet been started. But the State should not directly subsidise their work, and it should be left to private benevolence to start such central workshops and boarding-houses, where the blind could be assisted to obtain work or be provided with materials at cost price, if they wish to live at their own homes, and where they would obtain a ready sale of their work.

Para. 71. (4.) That the adult blind and those who have become blind from 21 to 50 should equally receive either help from the school authority to learn a trade and to read some raised type, in the same way as if they were under 21, or if they have passed through an institution, the old pupils should be assisted and supervised on the Saxon system,

Para. 123. as soon as the funds can be obtained for that purpose, and it should be the duty of the inspectors of institutions for the blind to ascertain what supervision is exercised, and to report accordingly, this being one of the regulations which might reasonably be imposed by the Education Department as a general condition of the grant.

Endowments.

248. We have ascertained in the course of our inquiries that in Scotland and in Ireland a few of the institutions for the blind and deaf and dumb have been brought by recent legislation under Endowed Schools Commissioners appointed specially for those countries.

See Appen-
dix 16. 249. In respect of the charitable institutions in England and Wales, we have received from the Chief Charity Commissioner a statement of the general powers of that Commission, and of their special powers over the same under the Endowed Schools Acts. These differ considerably from the powers more recently given by legislation for Scotland and Ireland.

See
Appendix 4.

250. In England, owing to the limit of time within which the Charity Commissioners could exercise their jurisdiction under the Endowed Schools Acts being fixed anterior to the foundation of most of the blind and deaf and dumb institutions, namely 1819, and from other causes mentioned in the statement of the Chief Commissioner, these institutions have not been dealt with by the Charity Commission.

251. The institutions for the blind and the deaf and dumb in England (except those under special statutes) are within the jurisdiction of the Charity Commissioners, under the general powers of the Charities Acts, and trustees have the power, if they should think necessary, to apply to the Charity Commissioners for an amended scheme, as the Gardner Trustees recently have done. The institutions for the blind are either wholly or partly educational or industrial. The income accruing to them from their endowments or trust funds was about 23,000*l.* in 1887. The invested sums themselves arising in some cases from savings, amounted to about 500,000*l.* sterling, in

addition to which the institutions hold real property, sites, land, and buildings, amounting to about 300,000*l.* in value.

252. Should the Education Acts be extended, as we suggest, so as to include the compulsory education of this class, it might be possible and right to apply some of the funds so liberated from educational purposes to the enlargement of the workshops connected with the institutions, or for the supervision and assistance of old pupils on the Saxon system; but should the funds be so rearranged, we recommend that they shall be exclusively employed for the benefit of the blind connected with the institution to which they belong. If this should be the case, we think that the precedent of recent legislation might be followed, and two unpaid Commissioners be temporarily added to the Charity Commissioners to be assessors and advisers in the preparation of any schemes which might be submitted by them to the governing body of these institutions, and the powers of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales in respect of these institutions should be extended. But we have every reason to anticipate that many of the suggestions made in the report of this Commission will be cordially received and adopted by the governing bodies.

253. We think, however, that in any legislation it should be made quite clear that the *sole object* of legislation should be to extend the usefulness of the institutions and their endowments without prejudicially interfering with the powers or privileges of the existing governing bodies. See Appendix 4.

Pensions.

254. With regard to the cognate subject of pensions, the amount of money thus given amounts to over 35,000*l.* annually, which is the interest of the invested funds left by various charitable persons for that purpose. There appears to be no likelihood of the blind receiving any benefit from the funds applicable under the City of London Parochial Charities Act, 1883. We have previously stated that the conditions of the pensions vary considerably. Some make the receipt at any time of parochial relief by the applicant a disqualification for pension. There is often a difficulty for the distributors of pensions to ascertain whether an applicant has ever been in receipt of parish relief, and this provision is a direct temptation to making a false return. We think that instead of excluding those who have ever received parish relief, it would be better, as in the Gardner Trust, only to exclude those who have received it within a year or two of their application, within which time it would be perfectly easy to verify the correctness of the applicants' return. Others cannot grant a pension to anyone below the age of 50 or 60. On that point we have already remarked that we consider the State should provide liberally for the aged blind, and when that is done there will not be the same necessity for limiting the age. See Memo. by Sir H. Longley, Appendix 16.

255. Without wishing in any way to divert the pensions from their original purpose, we should like to see the hard and fast conditions attached to some of them so relaxed as to enable the trustees to reach all meritorious cases of adults of any age, so that the pensions should act as an incentive to industry. The Charity Commissioners can now vary these conditions only on the application of the trustees, and they have hitherto received no application from them. We recommend that with respect to the pensions they shall be dealt with by the Charity Commissioners in the same way and under the same conditions as we have recommended with regard to the other endowments in paras. 252 and 253, and with the proviso that we have mentioned in para. 254 that the State should provide liberally for the aged blind. Sir H. Longley's Memo., Ansr. 3.

Pensions.—Further suggestions.

256. The following recommendations we make respecting pensions can be carried out without legislation, viz.,

257. Co-operation amongst all the various pension societies should be established, whereby a united register should be kept of all recipients, and thus the possibility be avoided of undeserving cases being relieved, and of blind persons becoming recipients of more than one pension, except under special circumstances, and with the knowledge of the trustees. Paras. 159 and 161.

258. The pensions, except for the aged and infirm, should be so distributed as to assist those who are assisting themselves. Para. 156.

259. The pensions should not be given quarterly in lump sums, as they are liable to be wasted and misused, either by the blind or by those who accompany them to the distributor of the money, but they should, as a rule, be paid weekly or monthly through the agency of either a local magistrate, medical practitioner, or of the parochial clergy, or minister, who might from time to time report on the conduct and deserts of the pensioners.

Saxon System.

260. The Saxon system should be adopted as far as possible by all institutions. But any subvention under this system to the adult blind who have left institutions should not be given out of the Imperial Exchequer.

261. It is desirable that the institutions for the blind should start a system of supervision of the pupils who have been trained in their workshops, and should raise funds for their assistance after leaving the institutions, and for providing them with materials and obtaining a sale for their industrial work, and it would be quite practicable for some of the larger institutions to start this at once with their existing machinery. We think that this would be preferable to its being undertaken by the direct aid of the State. We think that it should be the duty of the inspectors of blind institutions to ascertain what supervision is exercised over the ex-pupils, and to report accordingly, this being one of the regulations which might be imposed by the Education Department as a general condition of the grant.

Higher or Secondary School.

262. We think that the State might fairly be called upon to assist a secondary school for the blind, which should prepare the most intelligent for an University career, but we do not think that a large number would avail themselves of it, and the object might be obtained through scholarships, as the Fawcett scholarship, or grants such as have been given by the Gardner trustees.

Blind in Workhouses.

263. We think that when the industrious and well conducted blind are unable to work, and have to fall back on the assistance of the Poor Law, the workhouse test should not be applied, and we recommend that there should be a liberal out-door relief (which should not subject them to any legal disqualification) given to those who have friends to live with, and that the blind be not forced to go into the workhouse; and in the case of those who are admitted into the house, the workhouse selected for the purpose should be in a town where an institution or association for the blind already exists; the blind inmates, moreover, ought to be treated in a more generous way than the ordinary paupers, and power should be given to the guardians in London or elsewhere to set apart a separate ward or home for the reception of the aged pauper blind, or to combine with other boards in providing a separate home for them. In the case of women, it might be expedient to place them in a cottage home.

Teachers.

264. That blind teachers should be placed under the same regulations as the seeing teachers in elementary schools before being allowed to teach, and in all cases should have such sighted assistance as may be necessary to insure the efficiency of their teaching.

Statistics.

265. That for the purpose of the census there should be a uniform schedule of inquiry for the blind throughout the United Kingdom, including causes and extent of blindness. Every school or institution for the blind should have their pupils on admission examined by an oculist or medical man, and a record kept of the causes and extent of the blindness, which should be furnished to the Government inspector as well as a register of all pupils who have passed through the institution, and their subsequent career, whether successful or unsuccessful.

Miscellaneous Suggestions.

266. Besides such of the recommendations as would require the sanction of the Legislature, there are many improvements on the existing system which can be secured for the blind without any legislation or the intervention of the State, and we think that there is a disposition among the friends of the blind and the institutions for the blind throughout the country to welcome any suggestion which we may make to promote their welfare and which can be carried out.

We recommend—

- (1.) That greater attention should be paid generally to physical exercises and healthy out-door sports, and gymnasia and covered play sheds should be attached to all schools for the blind. Para. 212.
- (2.) That the supervision of the blind at night should be obtained by a sighted officer sleeping in a cubicle in the same room, or in one with a window looking directly into the dormitory. We attach great importance to this. See Reports of visits to institutions,
- (3.) That there should be some sighted supervision of workshops. Para. 107.
- (4.) That except in special cases, or where music is selected as a profession, or where a pupil is being prepared for one of the liberal professions, every one not physically disqualified should receive manual training. Para. 76.
- (5.) That boys up to 16 should not be employed in workshops with the adult blind. Para. 59.
- (6.) That the management of industrial work should be placed on a strictly commercial basis, and if it be found necessary to give any bonus it should be clearly shown in the books of the institution. Para. 110.
- (7.) We think—
That the industrial work taught in many of the institutions is not sufficiently practical, and that, generally speaking, the manual dexterity is not sufficiently developed when the pupils are young. Para. 192.
- (8.) That there should be greater solidarity among the institutions and interchange of information and opinion between them, so that they should work harmoniously together, and in the management of the workshops each endeavour to take up some one branch of work, and purchase from other institutions anything they may themselves have orders for, and that this policy should be reciprocal. Para. 112.
3967-70,
Lester.
5495,
Clarke.
- We recommend—
1801, &c.
Johns,
13,955,
Martin.
- (9.) That the intermarriage of the blind should be strongly discouraged. Para. 25.
- (10.) That information respecting the treatment of purulent ophthalmia should be circulated by the sanitary authority, or through the Post Office.
- (11.) That children with defective sight in elementary schools should be periodically examined by a medical officer, and the use of glasses, &c. ordered so as to preserve their sight as much as possible. Para. 28.
- (12.) That greater attention to ophthalmic surgery should be encouraged among general practitioners. Para. 29.

THE DEAF AND DUMB.

Census.

267. According to the census of 1851 the deaf and dumb in the United Kingdom were 17,300; in 1861 (in which decade additional care was taken), 19,588; in 1871, 18,150; and in 1881, 19,518. The increase in the second decade (of 1861) was not owing to a real increase in the deaf and dumb population, but to the obvious blunders in the enumeration in 1851. Some of these have been eliminated in the later census. From a comparison of the returns in the last four decades the census appears to be less inaccurate in 1881 than on previous occasions. 9,187 and S.
Buxton,
and Article
on "Deaf and
Dumb," in
"Chambers'
Encyclo-
pædia."

268. During the last two decades the proportions of the deaf and dumb to the general population, have decreased from 1 in every 1,484 in 1861, to 1 in every 1,742 in 1871, and again to 1 in every 1,794 in 1881.

269. The census of the deaf and dumb in England and Wales is very incomplete, and it is obviously open to causes of inaccuracy which do not occur in the case