

others. Fine and delicate work of various sorts is sometimes done, which would seem quite impossible for a blind person to accomplish. There is now in the reception-room of the New York Institution for the Blind a large and beautiful wreath of flowers, made of hair, and entirely the handiwork of a sightless person.

The blind sometimes have very false and curious conceptions in regard to sight. "I can't understand," said a clever blind man, "how things can be seen to be round or square, without passing the fingers over them." The process of seeing, to a man born blind, must be more or less of a mystery. Even Saunderston only got so far as to conceive that "the art of seeing was similar to that of a series of threads being drawn from the distant object to the eye.

Du Puiseaux, the son of a Professor of Philosophy in the University of Paris, was in some things one of the shrewdest men of his day, having attained considerable proficiency in botany and chemistry; but he was blind. He had a wonderful memory for sounds, and could, it is said, recognize by their voices persons whom he had only once heard. He could tell if he was in a street or a blind alley, in a large room or a small one; but he believed that astronomers were the only people who saw with telescopes, and that they had their eyes differently formed from other men. Nor was his notion about eyes in general a whit less incorrect. "The eye," said he, "is an organ on which the air should have the same effect as my stick on my hand." A boy upon whom Cheselden operated for cataract, had clearly been of the same opinion. Even when restored to sight, he believed that the objects he looked on touched his eyes, as those which he felt touched his skin; and he consequently had no true idea of distance. He asked "which was the sense that deceived him, the sight or the touch?" He wondered how a likeness of his father's face could be got into so small a space as his mother's watch-case; it seemed to him as impossible as getting a bushel into a pint measure. It took him some time to learn to distinguish between the dog and the cat, until he had felt them over carefully with his own hand. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that when some one asked Du Puiseaux if he "would not be glad to have his sight," he replied, "If it were not for curiosity I would rather have long arms; it seems to me that my hands would teach me better what is passing in the moon than your eyes or telescopes." Even among the educated blind there must exist strangely vague and incorrect ideas in regard to the physical and metaphysical world. Cut off as the blind man is, in a measure, from the rest of the world, and from many channels of light and information open to others, his isolation is said to give him special power and aptitude for the study of abstract things; of philosophy and of mathematics. Isolated, undoubtedly he is; when he wishes to think, his blindness saves him from the intrusion of external objects and the busy crowd of ideas which wait about on the world of visible things; it may free him from some illusions of the senses, and the snares of outside appearance; he easily becomes abstracted, where a man with sight would often find it hard: so far, therefore, his way toward deep, inward thought is cleared; wind and tide seem in his favor. Yet, although more than one philosopher is said to have plunged himself into darkness, for the purpose of intense and absolute thought, few, we fancy, would agree with the old woman who said to Dr. Guyse, her minister, who had suddenly become blind, "God be praised that sight is gone! You're more powerful than ever, now ye've no notes."

The comparative statistics of blindness in different countries reveal some very singular facts. In the United States there are fewer blind persons in proportion to the inhabitants than in any other country in the world, there being only one in about 2460 inhabitants. Norway, for instance, has 1 in 540, Denmark 1 in 1523, Sweden 1 in 1419, Bavaria but 1 in 1986, and France 1 in 938; while Newfoundland has 1 in 1426, Nova Scotia 1 in 1788, and Prince Edward Island 1 in 1880. It is quite impossible to find a satisfactory reason for all of these differences,

although variations of climate give an explanation of some. Between 20° and 30° north latitude the rate of the blind to the whole number of inhabitants is stated to be 1 too to 109; between 50° and 60° 1 to 1400; while between 70° and 80° it is 1 to 550.

In round numbers, the entire number of blind persons in the United States is about 12,000; in Great Britain, about 30,000; in France, 38,000. There are numerous institutions, both in this country and in Europe, conducted on liberal principles, which aim to give this unfortunate class an education which will fit them for any position in life which their infirmity will allow them to fill.

The New York Institution for the Blind has had 155, pupils during the last year. The course of study is carefully arranged so as to be adapted to pupils at all stages of advancement; such instruction is given in the Industrial Department as will be of practical benefit; and special attention is paid to the general health and comfort of the inmates. A visit to such an institution as this, while it awakens the deepest sympathy for those deprived of sight, also causes one to rejoice that so much has been done by systematic benevolence to relieve their condition.

Notwithstanding all that can be done for them, yet the great majority of the blind do, more or less, dwell in a separate and peculiar domain of their own. However we may try to lessen the sharpness of the line which divides them from the seeing world, still they are divided, and, at certain times, stand, as it were, aloof from the multitude of seeing men. They are utterly barred off from a thousand channels through which intelligence from the outer world speaks with silent yet living voice to the whole human race. It is impossible to measure what their loss is, or how sharp the privation. When all has been done that can be done for their relief, guidance, and support, the cloud under which they still live is deep and dark. However bright the lining of that cloud—and no one learns to be more fully conscious of its beauty and brightness than the sufferer himself—there must be times when the darkness grows deep and heavy and hard to be borne. Yet it is never too early with a blind child to teach him that he is not alone in the darkness. Never too early to lead him to believe that the same living and mighty Being who has made, and controls, and will judge the rest of the world—is the very same that, unseen, is about, and keeps, and will judge *him* at the last; that there is but one Father in the heaven above, in whom we all alike must trust.

And no one is more ready and more willing to learn to believe this than the blind child if he fall into the hands of a kind and loving teacher.—*Harper's Montly.*

EDUCATION.

A Finished Education.

"I think," said Mrs. B., "I shall take Angelina out of the public school, and send her to a 'Young Ladies' Seminary.'"

"What is the matter with the public school?" asked Mr. B.

"O! I've no particular fault to find with it; but Angelina is now thirteen years old, and ought to begin to think of finishing her education. It's of no use for her to keep drumming over arithmetic, grammar, and geography. She ought to be attending to the advanced branches. Why, there is little Francena across the way, only ten years old, and she studies French, Spanish, Botany, History, and Philosophy, and her teacher says she is making wonderful progress. Our Angelina has been joggling along in the public schools, and is really behind the times. So next week, she must commence taking lessons in music and dancing, drawing and painting, and in the modern languages. In a year, at most, she must finish her education and come out into society."

"A finished education!" Of all the humbugs of our sham-ridden race, that of a finished education at a boarding school is the greatest. And of all ludicrous objects next to a dandy pedant