

of such an institution, and of the peculiar advantages which it may be made to offer, it will be both interesting and advisable to trace the origin and growth of the system of instruction generally adopted for the blind. Knowledge may be imparted by two methods, both of which are applicable to those who cannot as well as those who can see. The first or *vivá voce* method, which is obviously the more ancient, is open to two objections, namely: the arbitrary use of modes of expression, due in part to possible want of culture or readiness of the teacher; and the varying aptitude or perceptiveness of the taught, whereby the result must always be to a greater or less degree inaccurate, owing to the indistinct or unsettled statement and comprehension of the idea. Thus it can be readily understood that a pupil who cannot catch the exact terms of a proposition, when uttered orally, and who consequently cannot even attempt to apprehend its solution, may, by careful study of the same proposition, expressed in clear unchanging language, either visible or tangible, eventually arrive at its accurate solution. The second method, which supplies the defects of the *vivá voce* system, is based upon the principle of conveying ideas through fixed characters, to the brain of the seeing by means of the eye, and to that of the blind by means of the sense of touch. Without devoting any extended attention to the history of written language in general—a course which would be somewhat foreign to our present purpose—we may remark that the particular branch of written language which is available for the blind, has its origin at a comparatively recent period. It is terrible to think of the thousands of unhappy beings who sighed their lives away in an almost intellectual chaos before the invention of printing for the especial benefit of those deprived of sight, and the facilities now afforded for the mental culture of the blind should be a source of infinite satisfaction, not only to themselves but also to all true philanthropists. After the invention of printing many attempts were made to render the art available for the blind, several of which are mentioned as occurring in the sixteenth century. Archbishop Usher is said to have been taught to read by two blind aunts by means of movable wooden letters: while in 1640, a printer in Paris named Moreau, cast some movable characters in lead for the blind, but made no progress towards printing books. The following memorandum, furnished by Mr. Robert C. Winthrop to Dr. Howe of the Perkins Institute, is quoted by the