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EDUCATION OF THE BLIND.

The claims of those deprived of sight to share in the benefits of a free education, have been duly considered in our former Reports. Their reconsideration, however, in this Report, may prove of service in preparing the public for the reception of the Act with reference to this class, to be discussed in the Provincial Parliament of 1881.

The cause of humanity has prompted civilized man to make a special provision for those classes in the community who have by accident, disease, or other causes, been rendered incapable of providing for themselves. Among others, the blind have ever been regarded as, perhaps, the most helpless class, and have therefore been provided for in the best manner that warm-hearted sympathy could suggest. Accordingly, we find in all old christian countries, numerous asylums in which blind persons of all ages are received and boarded, lodged, and clothed, without any exertion on their own part. These asylums are purely charitable, and are generally richly endowed. During the year 1879, a gentleman in England left a single bequest of one hundred thousand pounds sterling, to be equally divided among four asylums for the blind in that country. Such establishments are undoubtedly serving a most humane purpose, but it has not yet been satisfactorily demonstrated that the providing of these refuges promote the exercise of that self-reliance in the blind so essential to the development of true manhood. However this may be, it is certain that these asylums are only to be found in countries like England and France where enormous wealth is possessed by individuals. Subsequently to the founding of these homes, schools for the training of young blind persons were organized under the same charitable auspices and carried on in connection with the parent asylums, frequently under the same roof. This gave rise to the misnomer of asylum being applied indiscriminately to the parent home, and to an Institution of a purely educational character, and it also gave rise to the idea that the latter should, like the former, be supported as a charity. It is evident, however, that in a new country where wealth is very generally diffused, it would be practically impossible to thoroughly equip and defray the annual cost of supporting even an institution for the education of the blind as a charity without it ending as all such schemes do end, in the burden having to be

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