

THE PEARL

DEVOTED TO POLITE LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND RELIGION.

Vol. I.

HALIFAX, N. S. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1837.

No. 14.

MAY THE YOUNG QUEEN BE HAPPY.

By THOMAS H. BAYLY, Esq.

May the young Queen be happy, and calm her renown,
While the sword in the scabbard reposes ;
On the forehead of youth may the sovereign crown
Press no more than a chaplet of roses.
May the Arts, as they did in Elizabeth's reign,
Shed round intellectual glory,
And Victoria's annals be free from the stain
Of the errors that darken'd her story.
May the young Queen be happy, unsullied her court,
And the love of her people her pride and support.
May the young Queen be happy; should peace pass away,
Not a heart in her kingdom would falter,
Her voice would call forth a triumphant array
In defence of the throne and the altar.
But laurels enough ready gather'd we find,
And no spark of right feeling he loses
Who prays that the olive may now be entwined
With the evergreen wreath of the Muses.
May the young Queen be happy, unsullied her court,
And the love of her people her pride and support.

"HERE'S VICTORIA, OUR QUEEN, FOR EVER!"

By MRS. CORNWALL BARON WILSON.

AIR.—"Here's a health to the King, God bless him."

Though England, while blessed with a King on her throne,
Many glorious triumphs has seen,
Yet the palmiest days which she ever has known
Have been those when she boasted—a Queen.
When Elizabeth reigned 'twas that Shakspeare arose,
And heroes, whose fame will die never;
Since 'tis to her Queens, then, so much England owes,
Here's Victoria, our Queen, for ever!
A King must respect and obedience claim,
For 'tis of our duty a part;
But, ruled by a Queen, there's a charm in the name
That finds its way home to the heart.
'Tis there is the throne where a monarch's secure;
And her name from our hearts nought can sever.
O, there to the last shall affection endure,
Here's Victoria, our Queen, for ever!

LITERATURE FOR THE BLIND.

We have much pleasure in laying before our readers some very remarkable information regarding the means recently discovered, and now in operation, for facilitating the education of the Blind. What we state may be depended on as perfectly consistent with truth, our information being drawn partly from an authoritative source and partly founded on personal observation.

The blind are now able to read nearly as fluently as those who see. Books are now printed for their use. They are also able to write letters to each other by post, and to read what is thus written. They can cast up accounts with no other apparatus than common pins; and draw for themselves diagrams, with the same materials, for the study of geometry. Not only are books printed for their use, but also maps, drawings, and music, which add greatly to their means of improvement; and besides the invention for writing what they themselves can read, a very simple instrument has been invented, by which they are able to write the common written character, in a style as small, and even more elegant than is generally found among those who see.

These things are curious, and may be noticed separately. Persons who have the use of their eyes, read by the sense of sight; the blind, who are deprived of the benefit of this sense, read by the sense of touch or feeling; they

read with the points of the first two fingers of the right hand. To feel common printing is impossible; the printing for the blind is done without ink, and the faces of the types are pressed so hard on the paper as to produce marks in relief on the other side. These marks resemble raised letters, and may be felt and read by the fingers, notwithstanding that the rise is not greater than the thickness of an ordinary thread. Printing of this kind for the blind was attempted in Paris during the last century, but failed, on account of the alphabet which was employed for the purpose. Within the last ten or twelve years, the invention has been revived by Mr. Gall, a respectable printer in Edinburgh, who has laboured enthusiastically to render the invention of extensive practical utility. Complete success has crowned his endeavours. The chief error in the Parisian printing was too great a roundness and smoothness in the letters which were of the ordinary alphabet, and which few, except those blind who were in the asylums, could ever be taught to read. Mr. Gall, perceiving that angles were more easily felt than rounds, and that the outside of the letter was more easily felt than the inside, modified the shape of the alphabet into its most simple form, throwing the characteristics of each letter to the outside, and using angles instead of rounds. The alphabet for the blind is thus a series of sharp angular marks; the original character of each letter, however, being so far preserved, that a person with sight may read any book so printed after a little examination. The letter o, for instance, is a quadrangular instead of an oval mark, so that its four corners may be easily felt. Mr. Gall has also added another improvement to the art, by using fretted types instead of smooth ones. Every printed letter is therefore a mark composed of small jagged points, as if it were made by punching the paper with blunt pins. This is a modification of material importance. When the letters are smooth in their lines, they are apt to be pressed down again into the paper by the friction of the fingers, or any accidental pressure on the leaves; but when they are fretted, each point offers the resistance of a vaulted arch, and by that means it cannot be depressed but by violence. The size of the letters hitherto in use is considerably larger than those used in common printing, and they also stand farther apart from each other. One side of the paper can only be used, unless wide spaces be left between the lines, when the printing may be made on both sides. All these peculiarities render the printing comparatively expensive; what usually occupies a small pocket volume being expanded to the magnitude of a quarto. Means are in progress, however, by Mr. Gall, for introducing a smaller sized type, whereby it is expected that ere long a New Testament may be published for the use of the blind at about 5s. a copy. At present the price of a copy would be about 30s. It is to be hoped that philanthropic and wealthy individuals or societies will contribute towards the production of a cheap copy of this and other works.

The Gospel of St. John was the first part of the Bible which was printed in Great Britain for the blind. At first it was feared, that although the blind might be able to feel the letters, they would be so long in reading one verse, that all the pleasure they would get from it would not be worth the trouble. Shortly after it was published, a number of individuals began to teach the blind to read, rather from a feeling of curiosity than from any hope of its being useful; but they were surprised to find, that the blind learned to read as fast, and in some cases faster, than children who see. Belfast seems to have been the first place where it excited any great degree of wonder. It had been adopted there in a Sunday school; and the blind children improved so rapidly, that the school was generally filled

with visitors; and public interest was so much excited that an institution has been since built in that town for their education, along with the deaf and dumb. The blind children in that institution are the best readers at present in the kingdom. The reading is now adopted with complete success in various asylums, but more especially by private individuals in different parts of the country. A school has also been opened in Edinburgh, the first which has ever been established exclusively for the education of the blind. A little boy, totally blind, from the Belfast Institution, lately exhibited his powers in our presence in Edinburgh. The facility with which he read, by passing his fingers along the lines, was surprising; and we proved that his skill was not an effect of memory, by causing him to stop frequently and go back to point out particular words. This boy was on his way to London for exhibition.

So expert do blind children become in the acquisition of the art of reading by the touch, that we are assured they can in time read with a glove on the hand, or with a piece of linen laid over the page of the book. In this we may perceive one of the beautiful arrangements of nature, by which a deficiency in one sense is compensated by an additional vigour in another. From all that we can understand, it is not likely that any kind of hand-labour in which the blind may be engaged, will have the effect of destroying or rendering unavailing the delicacy of touch required to distinguish the surface of the letters in reading. Any injury resulting from labour, is more than counterbalanced by the cultivated habit of trusting to the sense which is called into activity. After the fingers have been trained to recognise letters and other minute marks, the pupil is advanced to the stage of examining pictures, diagrams, and maps; indeed, some of these things may be submitted to his touch before going to school, and made the subject of parental instruction. In the execution of works composed of diagrams and other illustrations, for the blind, the Americans are already considerably ahead of British publishers. Mr. McComb of Belfast, who has been a zealous advocate in the cause of the blind, has laid before us several American works, which depict in relief a complete series of drawings illustrative of the different branches of natural philosophy, as mechanics, optics, hydraulics, astronomy, and so forth. By these various means, the difficulty of teaching the blind to read and to study by their own unassisted efforts, no longer exists. The blind child, furnished with a spelling-book, or other elementary work, printed in relief, may now take his place in the class along with children who see; and provided books be executed to meet his wants, he may proceed with his more gifted companions through nearly the whole routine of classical and scientific study. To the minds of those who have pleasure in contemplating the melioration of human misery, few things can be more delightful than the intelligence of the great improvement we speak of. Henceforth, the poor blind child who in bypast times would have been left in total ignorance, or deprived of the solacements of literature, in so far as his own personal resources were concerned—who would have been left perhaps to beg his bread with the assistance of a dog and string—need not grow up in a state of mental darkness. He may be schooled, taught and morally and religiously cultivated, the same as any other member of a family; and when left alone, when overtaken by sickness or old age, he may draw upon an inexhaustible fund of happiness, by the perusal of the book which is most suitable to his feelings.

The blind are taught to write, or put their thoughts on paper, in two ways. The most obvious is writing by means of stamps. The principle is similar to that of printing for the blind. If we prick a piece of paper with a pin, so as to form a letter, we feel the shape of the letter