

employ the services of blind workers is, of course, not an easy matter, for the usefulness of blind workers are limited in certain respects. Nevertheless, let us remember that whatever we do to care for, educate or employ the

blind, we are not only relieving the suffering of those of our own countrymen who are unfortunately blind, but also helping society and strengthening our country in the long run.

The Work Done By And For The Blind In China

By HOMER S. WONG (元湘王)

THE world has evolved from a world of competition and struggle for supremacy into a world of correlated interests which demand mutual assistance, for the light has penetrated the darkest nooks and given root to countless humanitarian schemes to alleviate the lot of the blind. The editor of *The China Critic*, Mr. Kwei Chungshu, requested me to write presenting the problems of the blind in China and although I have been unable to do much research work on account of my studies in law, philosophy and music, I shall venture to offer a concise, general and unbiased sketch of work done for the blind in the past and present, and my criticism and suggestions for the future. Since the bulk of social work is still in its infancy in China, very little actual data are available. I must first touch on the general, political, social and economic back-ground of China, which has exerted deep influence on the subject in question.

1. *The Chinese Blind in the Past*:—Very little can be stated as to the unfavorable material condition of the blind in olden times in China as material well-being entailed no further struggle for existence. With a population of four hundred millions the Chinese enjoyed ample production for all. For this reason China was known, prior to the 19th century, to be a rich, luxurious and peace-loving country. Revolutions occurred at the end of dynasties bringing starvation and suffering in their train, but on the whole the Chinese in general had plenty to satisfy their needs, consequently the blind did not constitute a burden on society as they do now. The Chinese had, as they have today, the strongest sense of family ties and family responsibility, and the well-to-do always took care of their blind relatives themselves. The traditional conviction, inherited from Buddhism, that blindness is a punishment inflicted on those whose parents or ancestors had committed rape and forgery before the birth of these blind individuals, has led the blind to accept their fate with philosophical and superstitious contentment. They were not despised by their family as they were considered martyrs of the family. Kwei Ku-tze (2700 B. C.) initiated a profession for them, that of fortune-telling, divided into various forms of prophecy and *Chi-ko*. These vocations were monopolized by the blind. Moreover, Confucius honored "Lee Yo" (formality and music) with significant functions of government, and Mencius applauded Sze-Kwan's genius in "understanding administration as well as his ability to distinguish musical notes." Sze-Kwan was a blind official of the highest rank before King Lu in the Chow dynasty. Ne-Chen, an enemy of the tyrant Chin-Hsi-Hwang, was

blinded by the latter in order that he might become an accomplished musician. The present frequent belief that the blind are born musicians may date back to that ancient time as it was usually held that the blind could interpret the prophetic language expressed in music. The character of Chinese music (about which I wrote an article in the September, 1930, issue of *The Braille Musical Review*)—as harmony, counterpoint and staff system were then unknown—aided the blind more than the seeing, to become accomplished musicians if they were endowed with a good memory and ornamenting ability. Blind officials in charge of marriage, funeral and coronation ceremonies are known to have existed in palaces and courts, and hundreds of blind musicians were engaged in private castles as personal retainers.

The Chinese character system of writing is extremely unfavorable to the blind—yet some blind men followed literary pursuits, which was achieved through oral instruction on the part of the blind students. Wang Hsi E-chi, the most celebrated artist in writing Chinese characters, was known to have achieved his unsurpassable merit by practising his writing with closed eyes. Whether art and beauty can exist apart from perception and sense experience is a question of philosophy and not within our scope of discussion. I cite this to stress the point that the lack of sight was not looked down upon when such talent was manifested and the compensation gained from blindness was appreciated. Poets were known to rhyme with closed eyes and Tso Chiu-ming wrote volumes of historical works by dictation when he was blind. Unfortunately no record is available as to an accurate account of the achievement of successful blind people throughout history. For ordinary blind individuals fortune-telling was and continued to be their chief vocation until the dawn of Western civilization in China.

2. *The Present Condition of the Blind*:—China's reverses in several foreign wars (1842, 1894) and the Revolution in 1911 can be considered the starting point of the entry of Western civilization in her midst. Her eyes were opened to her demerits, excess of self-confidence, superstition and corruption; but the introduction into China of new ideas, modern accommodation, methods of production and social environment left the life of the blind untouched, as reforms can only take place in forms of government and systems of education. The population is still largely illiterate (though illiteracy is steadily decreasing) and the general interest of the people is still unchanged. This is favorable to the blind for a reason which will be explained hereafter.

At this period the Braille system was first intro-

duced into China by the Rev. William Hill Murray of the Bible Society of Scotland, when he first founded a school for the blind in Peking in 1874. At this point I should like to classify the blind in two categories—those who know Braille and those who do not. In China's population of four hundred million there are perhaps more than a million blind; statistics are not reliable but there are presumably about two million partially and totally blind people. The rate may be roughly taken at 500 per 100,000 and it may be considered reasonable compared with statistics of other countries. India has 1,500,000 totally blind, varying in different localities from 450 to 900 totally blind persons per 100,000; the U.S.A. 49 per 100,000; England and Wales 119; Belgium 36; Japan 105; and Egypt with 1,219 per 100,000 has the highest percentage.

This period is characteristic of its successive wars, revolutions and communistic upheavals, which brought the populace to starvation level with its degeneration, mortality through ignorance of sanitation, hygiene and Western medicine, and blindness without any private or State organizations to offer preventive and curative aid. Those ignorant of Braille still support themselves by practising the ancient profession of fortune-telling and music, if their conditions at home compel them to beg. I shall deal with these two professions inclusively as they are unique to China and are the only doors of escape through which the Chinese blind can retreat from a world of struggle and the only means by which they can meet the sighted on a more equal footing. Just as massage, acupuncture, shampooing and moxibustion have been the privileged professions monopolized by the Japanese blind, so fortune-telling has been the traditional occupation of the Chinese blind and only a very small number of persons with sight make inroads into this profession. The demand for fortune-telling among the mass of Chinese people—regardless of age, class and education—is so great that soothsaying, necromancy and all sorts of superstitious practises flourish. My country's shortcomings in this respect are found today reflected in the ultramodern society of New York and Paris, with their foreign palmists and psychiatrists. After a superficial study of the subject I have come to the conclusion that there is something in this branch of knowledge which is as yet uncomprehended and undiscovered by scientific minds; that the peculiar terminologies such as "metal," "water," "fire," "earth," "ying," "yang" (negative and positive) the law of "keh" and "sen" (cycle), etc., merely represent some system of philosophy and logic which might contain some truth as yet unknown to those who practise it. Without being agnostic or pragmatic I maintain that unless it be a science it can never withstand the future progress of civilization and culture. There are Chinese people who still accept this vocation as a tradition, formality or custom but their number is decidedly on the wane. To meet the present demand three thousand blind fortunetellers in a population of three million at Shanghai are able to support themselves and make a decent living with less unemployment than the

seeing and they naturally scoff at the insignificant number of blind who know Braille and whose condition will be described shortly. For this reason some of the blind who are acquainted with Braille are tempted to take up the profession of fortune-telling, even after an education of one, two, four, six and even eleven years in Braille Institutions (graduates of high school who are personally known to me). Without any further discussion of the system of fortune-telling (which would take volumes to complete), I simply wish to call your attention to the fact that even "obscure" fortune-tellers who wander through the streets ringing their little bells, are able to earn from \$30.00 a month. Some, with establishments of their own, amass modest fortunes, averaging \$500.00 per month at the least. "Blind Wu", a well-known blind character at Shanghai and who has his office on Nanking Road is reported to harvest an income of \$1,200.00 a month. The writer knows half a dozen like him in various localities who have enriched themselves and acquired important property simply by practising fortune-telling. They have their own guild. Pupils are initiated into the mysteries of the necromancer's art by their blind tutors, who keep them either in their homes or in offices as apprentices. The course, which includes the committing to memory of a complicated system of prophecy and interpretation of omens with reference to specific occasions, usually requires three seasons to three years, which depends upon the pupil's talent and very often upon the diligence of the teacher which is usually influenced by the amount of tuition. Tuition and board, in the more ambitious contracts may come to three or four hundred dollars, but shabby little offices tucked into hidden byways offer less elaborate instruction to pupils recruited from among the poor. Among Chinese families who still cling to the old tradition, a necromancer must determine the auspicious date for betrothals and marriages. When some one is ill, the fortune-teller is asked to diagnose the mythical causes (such as too much water, fire or earth element, etc.) and to foretell the date of his recovery, so-called "passing the danger zone" or the limit of his living days. When a person dies, again the fortune-teller must work out proper days for the funeral and decide the question whether his coffin should face east or west, the calculation of which is based on the minute, hour and date of birth and death of the deceased. It is all intricately bound up with the doctrine of "feng-shui" (the wind-water elements) which is supposed to exercise a powerful influence on the relation between the dead and the living. When one goes on a journey, initiates a new enterprise, sends a child to school, erects a new building, invites some friends to a party, in fact for every important event in life, the necromancer is solemnly consulted. I have heard a fortune-teller make statements in which he may reserve excuses for his blunders, and put a series of questions that would indirectly lead to an answer which he infers from the rejoinders. At the same time I have known many cases

in which fortune-tellers have been right in their predictions.

Owing to shyness and inconvenience this profession is rarely practised by blind girls. Personally I have not yet heard of one. The total number of blind fortune-tellers I cannot venture to give.

One thing of which I am sure is that, except those blind who suffer from other deformities which prevent them from following this vocation, those who are too poor to afford an apprenticeship and others who are idlers and are satisfied with their lives at home, professional blind fortune-tellers suffer no unemployment. From the basic principle illustrated above you will understand the truth of this statement, which I make with sadness instead of comfort and pride, for should we accept fortune-telling as a proper profession?

As to the profession of music, please turn to my former article mentioned above, in summary of which I may state that there are a few who join the Chinese opera as fiddlers. Some in Shanghai, especially Mr. Shen Yi-shu, have distinguished themselves as soloists, who perform with a bow instead of plucking (the usual method) on the three-stringed guitar. The method of playing on this instrument was invented by Mr. Shen who has earned great acclaim. It has a sound so nearly like the human voice that experienced and fanatically attracted listeners often praised the art by declaring that the exact pronunciation of the Chinese words is to be distinguished in the sound produced by the strings. Of course this is a mere suggestive power which we call psychology. Unfortunately this art is not easily learned, and many seeing fiddlers have been more successful in this profession. The poorest class of street musicians, who are really little better off than beggars, are those singers going through the streets with a sort of loud, narrow, three-stringed guitar we call "*San-shuan*." This inevitable part of the equipment of the blind street-musician has become known as the "blind guitar." So proficient are some that they might be Chinese Segovias, if given the proper setting and publicity for their performances. Like the troubadours or minstrels of old Western Europe, they call at inns or tea houses, or appear in the compounds of private homes. Their ballad-singing is thoroughly enjoyed in a country where reading has not as yet advanced to the tabloid-newspaper stage, where professional story-telling is still a favorite form of entertainment, where harmony, complexity of chords, counterpoint, and forms of music are not yet evolved, where the staff system and notation are unknown, and where, in short, the musical standard is still in its primitive stage with mere play songs. These are composed of not more than two or four musical phrases grouped in two sections, the second one being in fact a recapitulation of the first with scarcely any variation and different embellishments at the end. This as a matter of fact offers the blind a temporary chance to compete with the ordinary seeing musicians who are also bound to memorize all music.

The blind singers have a versatile repertoire of historical and religious legends, love songs, ditties, and also for patrons who demand them, a stock of ribald songs. Therefore I repeat emphatically that in such social environment and taste in art, the Chinese blind are not handicapped and I submit that there are fewer blind beggars (beggary in the real sense of the word) in China than some people imagine. I hesitate to state, owing to my limited knowledge of the most up-to-date statistics of foreign countries, that I think it possible that the Chinese blind with no knowledge of Braille rank only next to Japan in having employment, disregarding the question of the justification of these professions. I only state facts as they stand.

3. *The Blind with a Knowledge of Braille*:—Those who know Braille are but a small portion of the total blind population of China. Those who have learned to read and write Braille are not more than three thousand, and the present number of students still in schools is a little more than one thousand, the girls being double the number of boys. Most boys who can earn their living do not care to learn Braille, which at present has degenerated into a matter of housing the blind in institutions for exhibition and in order to solicit contributions. These Braille students are distributed among thirty-three schools in fourteen different provinces. Of the thirty-three schools nine are private, twenty missionary and only three governmental. In addition to these there are eight associations and blind homes of which five are missionary, two private and only one governmental. The history of this period is characterized by the history of three schools which have stood out from among all the rest of the institutions.

Firstly, the Hill-Murray Institution for the Blind was founded in 1874 by the Rev. William Hill Murray of the Bible Society of Scotland. It was Mr. Murray who first introduced the Braille system into China, and who invented a system of Braille in which a number was given to each of the four hundred and eight basic sounds in the Chinese language. The embossed dot numerals and each of the 408 numerals are written in two cells with each number standing for one sound or word. The pupils had to learn not only the Braille dots for 408 separate numerals, but also the sounds associated with them. Although the method was unwieldy, it attained great success. The Bible was first embossed in Braille by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Despite its bulkiness, I must admit that this system of Chinese Braille has merits unattainable by the later Union Mandarin System (which I shall describe later). Like the contractions used in German and French Braille, the mechanically related forms of the numerals give pictures of the different sounds of words instead of separate letters spelt together. This increases the speed in reading though it decreases it in learning it. Again economy of space saves much time in writing. This numeral system was finally abandoned in 1914, when Miss Garland of the China Inland Mission invented the Union Mandarin System, in which each of the 18 initials is united to one of the 36 finals (the former is a consonant and the latter a vowel to express the basic sounds of the Chinese language). This was soon adopted and promoted by the Institution

the Chinese Blind and has become the current system used throughout the country. Each character of Chinese is spelt with one consonant and one vowel, with an additional third cell for one of the five signs of the five accents in the Chinese language. Compared with the former system it is less economical in space and time, but its simplicity makes it easy for beginners. One must remember that the Chinese language in its written form is not a phonetic system with letters from an alphabet as in most Western languages. Its characters are all different, each character representing one word only and there are a thousand different words or characters, with only a few thousand of them in common use. Each word has a monosyllabic sound. The basic sounds including the five accents are not more than five hundred, so the greatest difficulty lies in the fact that there are often as many as twenty or thirty words pronounced in exactly the same way to the ear but which are entirely different to the eye. These characters would naturally appear in precisely the same spelling if a phonetic system were applied to them, a Braille being a phonetic system cannot answer the demand for these forms of characters with so many varied meanings. I must make it clear also that the Chinese as spoken and Chinese as written differ considerably. Though the former kind of plain language (*Pei-hua*) has been proposed, it is only used in daily speech and very simple and regular writings. If a written sentence is read, the blind does not know what each word means even if it is given in its context. The English word "bear" may mean an animal or an action, but a Chinese sound may mean twenty different things and words. A piece of literary writing presented in such a style that with some archaic words and complicated characters it is absolutely impossible for a scholar to understand it through hearing without the assistance of a printed copy of the same in characters.

These difficulties can never be overcome by any of the former Braille systems since they do not make enough distinction among these various characters having the same spelling, sound and accent. The writer invented a system which is in fact a modification of the Union Mandarin system which has successfully surmounted these difficulties. Being a student of several European languages in Braille he has been able to adapt some of the changes of contractions used in contractions. The same initial and finals are kept but the third space or cell for the accent is saved for each word by shifting the forms of the two letters brought together, such as from upper to lower cell and from right to left; there are just five changes available to accommodate the five accents. With a few additional contraction signs and contractions the ordinary plain language can be satisfactorily and clearly written. This system claims greater simplicity for learning, reading and writing and can be summarized in ten rules including the regulations governing the use of signs. For the literary language an additional third cell is used to signify the radical root and sometimes even parts of every word. With a code or dictionary arranged in alphabetical order which should be embossed in Braille as well as printed in ink, a blind student can look up the meaning of any new word and refer the form of the

visible character to the seeing when necessary. If the present Chinese type-writer can be arranged accordingly, it will be accessible to the blind who are unable to use the one in existence. In this way the blind will again be brought into closer relation with the seeing and the Chinese blind will enjoy all the facilities of the foreign blind. The system above described may well take the place of the Chinese characters altogether when it will have been perfected. The writer, having become blind at an age when still pursuing his studies, feels that he is in a position to judge the faults of the Chinese writing from the viewpoint of the blind and to recommend improvements in the existing Braille system; to realize the merits of a phonetic system of writing and the demerits of an unscientific though artistic system such as Chinese.

Despite all petitions, the workers for the blind in China have unfortunately no organization among themselves, and most of them being foreign missionaries and philanthropists instead of real educationalists, they can hardly be convinced that a reform, if not a revolution, in the Chinese Braille system, is of more importance and service to the blind in China than mere donations and funds to shelter, clothe and feed them. Yet with the handicaps of being isolated from the seeing society, incompetence in practical occupations and absolute impossibility to follow literary pursuits, the Chinese blind are still taught and made to use the old system of Braille.

The Hill-Murray Institution for the Blind at Peking has turned out a number of blind evangelists but is insignificant in its present form.

Secondly, the David-Hill School for the Blind at Hankow was founded in 1888 and is now under the auspices of the Wesleyan Mission of Great Britain. This school deserves commendation as it has produced a number of able and very successful organists, musicians and evangelists as well as teachers for the blind. It has a Braille system of its own but when the Union Mandarin System was declared to be the National Braille, it immediately abandoned the old for the new without the slightest prejudice. The institution is always ready to accept various reforms and improvements, with courageous workers (most of them missionaries) who devote themselves to the welfare of the blind. They have the spirit of the Americans who, I remember, gave up American for International Braille. A former branch school for girls was moved to my native city Changsha in 1905 and has been ever since under the auspices of the China Inland Mission. Miss Vassel, a German missionary, is in charge of the school and is piloting it through fair and foul weather.

Thirdly, the Institution for the Chinese Blind, founded by Dr. John Fryer in 1911, and directed from the beginning by his son, Mr. George B. Fryer, is comparatively speaking, the best school for the blind in China. It is still far from the ideal school that China

really needs. Dr. Fryer, who came to China in 1860 and who counted among his pupils Dr. Wu Ting-fang and others who later distinguished themselves in both the official and industrial life of the country, was for many years professor of Oriental languages and literature at the University of California. He was equipped to bring the best of Western thought to China and to transport Chinese culture to the West. The writer was practically brought up by Mr. and Mrs. G. B. Fryer immediately following his blindness and he has been deeply impressed by their kindness, courage and patience not only in educating the blind but also in alleviating the suffering of the Chinese blind and above all in offering themselves as an example of sacrifice. What they did for me (including reading to, encouraging, looking after and caring for me) is but a small part of what they have done for countless others. The work of this institution is divided into two parts, literary and industrial. With regard to literary work, there are a kindergarten, a school for boys and another for girls with nine grades (from first year primary to the third year of Junior Middle School) and a normal school which gives appropriate training of teachers for other blind schools. The curriculum followed is that of the ordinary school for seeing boys and the courses of study are those authorized by the Commissioner of Education, some being specially selected courses which are deemed necessary for the education of the blind. The institution has a stereotyping and printing machine (the only one in China) which publishes general texts, a weekly and a monthly magazine.

For industrial work the institution has a workshop in which the blind are taught to make rattan furniture which is sold to local customers. Those blind who manifest no decided talent for anything else are taught manual work most suited to them. The totally blind twelve full-time workers can turn out about five thousand dollars' worth of goods every year and receive on a commission basis over a thousand dollars a year in wages which affords them a reasonable living. The girls' schools for education and training of the blind girls in China will, I think, be more important as Chinese society is most unfavorable to them. So far most blind girls in other blind schools have been taught knitting, which offers such a scanty income that it hardly keeps the wolf from the door. Knitted goods as well as rattan are only in demand in ports and modern cosmopolitan cities like Shanghai.

Another institution worth mentioning is the A. M. C. Ling Kuan School for the Blind in Foochow which was founded in 1898. It has a very important position in the Chinese history of education for the blind, from the fact that it has been successful in teaching brass-band playing and piano tuning. This brass band once visited England and Scotland to raise funds. In China there are scores of dialects entirely different from one another, and a Fukienese can never be understood if he cannot

speak Mandarin. This school had consequently a Braille system of its own to meet the educational demands for that province or rather that locality, since there are many different dialects in each province.

4. *Suggestions for the Future*:—Conscious of his limited experience and foresight in offering any suggestions so significant for the work of the blind in China, the writer must apologize for any conclusion or criticism, which might appear impracticable under present conditions. He has however during his eleven years' blindness tried his best to come into close contact with various kinds of blind people, with or without a knowledge of Braille, old and young, successful and unsuccessful, blind girls who know Braille, old and young, successful and unsuccessful, blind girls who are despised and ill-treated at home or those shut up in institutions entirely isolated from the world, and, being a student, he is deeply interested in questions of education and sociology; he therefore feels that he is in a fair position to understand the real needs of the Chinese blind as a whole and what program would seem the most urgent and desirable for the great task of improving the lives of the blind.

Primarily, the vital change must come about in a reform of the Braille system, for the present Union Mandarin Braille cannot meet the practical demand, since it carries simply the sound and not the meaning of the words. If we want an education in literature, history, law, philosophy, etc., permanent and standard Braille must be embossed, and all permanent and standard books are in comparatively more literary Chinese, which cannot be represented by any of the past and present Braille systems. Secondly, for the Chinese blind as a whole the present system of education is unsatisfactory with neither aim nor program. The problem is twofold: the blind must be given at the least a common-sense knowledge and they should be equipped with a means of self-support. A newly invented Braille system should be imparted for a period of six or seven years and education must be professional in character. There must be one institution either in the form of a primary school or home for the blind, where the use of Braille and a preliminary education is imparted for six years, and adults are taught a trade. There must be one central school in every province; the school is to be divided into two departments, one general, the other special. The general department is equivalent to the ordinary junior and senior high school with studies in elementary science, literature, geography, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, history and so forth and with six years' training a graduating scholar would be ready to enter ordinary colleges. The "special" starts from the last three years (senior high school) and would give special training in some profession to gifted individuals who are unable to continue a university career. The special department will provide professional training to musically gifted individuals to become music teachers, soloists, band or

chestra members, piano tuners (all these will have a promising future in China as the country is in dire need of such experts). Massage is another profession to be started. Story-telling is and always will be a good occupation for the blind as it requires no vision and will be useful for the radio. The special blind department should include a normal school devoted to the training of expert blind teachers for other blind schools. A few printing presses, lending libraries, organizations with headquarters where blind workers can meet to discuss questions of reform, improvement and amelioration among themselves. Preventive work, which is quite as important as educational and social work must, for the present, be left in the hands of the central and local health administrators. The work which I have outlined should never be carried out by private philanthropy or missions. It requires the support and co-operation of the state, and if this support is withheld the army of two million blind will exhaust part of the production of the society as parasites. Years ago Mr. F. P. Van and I started a Chinese Foundation for the Blind but lacking moral and financial support it was disbanded. Louis Braille was confronted with almost insurmountable difficulties which one realizes more vividly when one visits the Paris Institute. Before consecrating himself wholly to the task the writer hopes, after a careful study of the problem of the blind in his own country, to be able to study the question in advanced foreign countries. He is sincerely grateful to the many foreign

THE LITTLE CRITIC

EDITED BY LIN YUTANG

The Cowherd And The Spinning Maid, A Legend

By V. T. BANG

"Tomorrow you wed the princess or to the prison go."
Thus spoke the emperor to his son.
His eyes flashed fire;
His voice shook with thunder.
His gold scepter gleamed crimson, yellow, white,
In the clutch of a ghastly hand.
For sore sad was the emperor,
And sorrow filled his mighty soul.
For eighteen years he had trained his son,
For eighteen years he had loved him—as an emperor could love.
He had given him his name, his throne, and the hand of a princess royal.
But, "No," said the wilful son,
"I am too young to rule.
I want to go out and see the world."
Out into the deep, silent dark the young prince fled,
Fled into the bosom of nature, into the heart of universe.
Days and nights he wandered,
Till his weary feet would fain give way.
But the haunt of the throne spurred him on,
And the folly of the court made him heedless of rain or sunshine,
Till the crown was beyond his reach
And the castle out of sight.
Beside a brook he sat down to take a drink,
Desolate and lone,
No hope, no love.
Only one little wandering star shone in the western sky.
He buried his face in his hands:
Out of the silence and dark came a sobbing cry.
"Do not weep, little one,"
Said a voice from the star.
"I am here to guide you,
I am here to comfort you.
I travel across the heavens once a night
Seeking souls like yours to save.
Tell me what ails you.
Look up and let me see your face."
The young prince turned his face to the star.
"Lovely child, you are my son!
Ah, you do not remember your mother?
You do not remember the emperor's deserted wife?
You were only six then.
But when I left you,
I made a wish that I might meet you.
So here you are.

friends, blind and seeing, who are the leading workers for the blind in the world, and to whose encouragement, co-operation and assistance his present success is largely due.

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