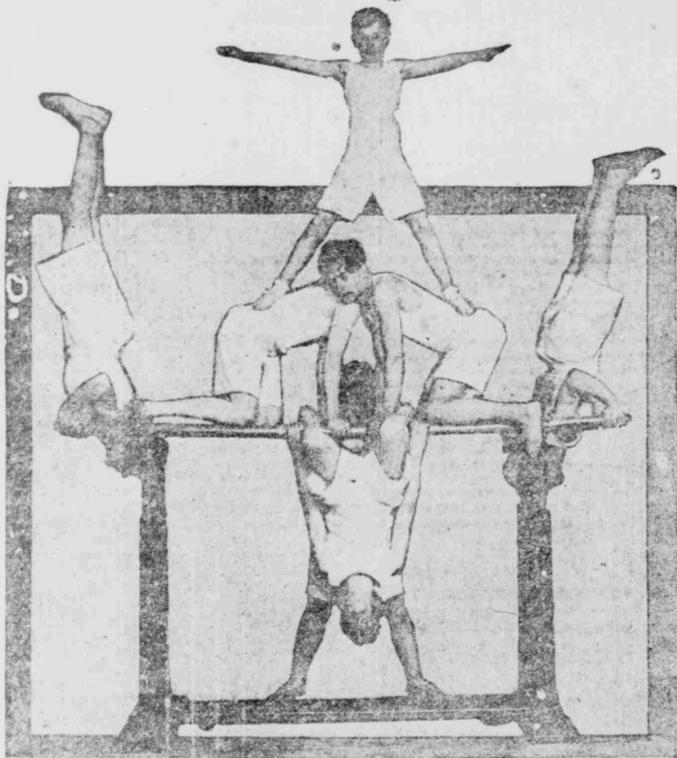


# Teaching the Blind to Laugh and Play



Maintaining Equilibrium on a Horizontal Bar During "Gym" Stunts Seems to Be Second Nature to These Totally Blind Boys.

PERHAPS it is because Providence does help them that help themselves that the darkest institution on earth—where light for the inmates has faded forever—is, in fact, the brightest spot on the globe. President Warren G. Harding of the United States of America will attest to this paradoxical assertion—will assure you that the New York Lighthouse for the Blind fairly gleams with the brilliance of cheerfulness and happiness. He paid it a visit and found it so. Handicapped as they are by that most awful affliction of lost sight, the men, women and children of the institution turn darkness into light by casting aside that pitiful timidity which has ever been the super-burden of the sorely burdened spirit of the blind, and indulging in sports with the enthusiasm and the skill of those who have not been bereft of vision.

The camera has told the story of what President Harding saw and the remarkable photographs are reproduced here to prove that the blind do just what the Executive at Washington saw them do—daily performing stunts of gymnastic grace on the horizontal bar, swimming as so many fishes in the institution's tank, whirling about a hardwood floor on roller skates, climbing trees and picking wild flowers, even bowling with an accuracy astounding. President Harding did not know whether to laugh or cry when he saw these wonderful things. "It is unbelievable," he whispered to one who stood by. "But, how inspiring!"

By Althea B. Ayres

SKATERS, take heed and look to your laurels! These little girls from the New York Lighthouse for the Blind cannot see even a tiny glimmer of light, yet the city has no more enthusiastic advocates of the life on wheels.

Can you glide perilously on one foot? She can. Can you whirl in graceful curlicues and skate backwards in long, even strokes? She is past mistress of all these arts. Yet she must depend upon a sort of sixth sense of direction and of the physical nearness of objects to take her where she wants to go. For she learned to skate in the recreation hall of the Lighthouse, where, together with the other blind girls from her school, she has been going for her gymnasium work. The sightless, just like the sighted, must have sport and exercise to keep them fit.

What games do the blind play? The number is surprisingly large and varied. For instance, it may be news to some of you to learn that eyes are in no sense a part of your equipment as an expert swimmer and diver. Ten years ago, when the Lighthouse was built, in spite of much scoffing a swimming pool was installed in the basement. An instructor was engaged. At first he experienced much difficulty in persuading his pupils even so much as to enter the water. But finally one hardy mariner was found who learned the strokes and gained such proficiency that he soon had the others on their tip-toes with envy. One or two more ventured, a spirit of rivalry developed and today meets are held and many spirited contests enjoyed.

The girls were not to be left out. A class was formed and in connection with this particular little group an interesting story is told. On a two weeks' "camping-out" in the country last summer, two girls slipped out of their tents and without a word to anybody went for a midnight dip. They returned without mishap and recounted their experience with great glee at the breakfast table next morning. The adventure brought a swift reprimand from the teacher in charge, but she confesses that she was not displeased since the girls had showed such absolute freedom from that instinctive timidity which has always accompanied blindness. "Midnight meant no more than noontime to them," she added.

### Astonishingly High Scores Are Made

Bowling has proved to be another sport for which the blind show special aptitude, even though it is a game depending greatly upon accuracy of aim. The blind bowler guides himself by the run on which the balls are returned, calculates his distance and lets drive. The pinboy, who alone is sighted, immediately calls out the number knocked down with the information as to where to aim the next shot. "Up numbers four, five and six," he sings out, or "Aim for the king pin."

Apparently the bowler carries in his mind an accurate plan of the pins after each shot, for with the experienced player some astonishingly

high scores are made. Each individual tally is kept at the Lighthouse night by night until the end of the term, when prizes are offered for the highest. And so great is the enthusiasm aroused that bowling has the reputation of being the



Turned Loose Into an Apple Orchard These Blind Girls, in Bloomers and Middie Blouses, Soon Climbed the Veteran Apple Tree.

sport of the Lighthouse which is 100 per cent. attended.

A well-equipped gymnasium is open at all hours and the muscular shoulders of the young men show the same devotion to horizontal bars as those of any college athlete.

The girls are very fond of dancing and recently four of the best gave a public performance at one of the largest balls of the New York social season.

"Was it hard to teach them dancing?" the inquiry was recently made.

"I consider it one of the biggest achievements

Actual Photographic Evidence of How the Mysterious Sixth Sense of the Sightless Is Being Utilized Now in the Mastery of Daring Gymnastics and Even Roller-Skating.

This Is "John Wilson," Star Bowler of the Blind Men's Team, Who Ran up His Score to 163 One Night and Amazed Witnesses.



with no equipment that we of the seeing world do not have. They do intricate folk and aesthetic dances as well as social dancing, depending entirely on the music for keeping together."

### Play Poker, Pinochle and Bridge

For summer vacations the Lighthouse maintains the "Riverlight" at Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, a great rambling, old farmhouse with every facility for a royal good time for all ages. The younger members room at will over the fields with no fear of whizzing automobiles. They are up and over fences and into the topmost branches of the gnarled old apple trees. The boys run foot races, guiding themselves by a wire along one side of the course, and row boats are provided for those who have learned the art of rowing. The boys are in khaki, the girls in bloomers and middie blouses, and no more bronzed and healthy young men and women are to be found anywhere than these on their return.

For quieter hours all the year round, there are checker boards with raised and sunken squares alternating, so that the clever fingers that have been trained to work without eyes need make no errors. Checkers for one player will be round, for the other square, and when the checker reaches the king row, instead of being crowned it is turned over so that a small depression on one side may mark it off from its fellows.

Dominoes have tiny brass buttons to indicate the numbers, and are made interlocking, or saw-toothed, so that they fit tightly together and cannot slip out of position. Poker, pinochle and even bridge are by no means beyond the powers of the sightless, when regular playing cards are



When President Warren G. Harding Saw This Little Blind Girl Roller Skate Tears Blinded His Eyes.

clearly embossed in one corner in the Braille raised type.

The Lighthouse is the work of Winifred Holt, who has devoted the last fifteen years of her life to the sightless. The New York Lighthouse is not only a recreational centre, but it provides workrooms where blind men and women may become self-supporting, and the training in those trades which makes this possible. Fifteen years ago Miss Holt had to seek out the blind in their homes. Today they are clamoring for admission to the Lighthouse in New York and to the seven other Lighthouses modelled on that plan.

In order that the work may be extended in this country, France and Italy, the Committee for Lighthouses for the Blind has been organized and is seeking a fund of \$2,000,000. National headquarters have been established at 111 East Fifty-ninth street, New York City, where contributions may be sent. The campaign organization includes President Harding as honorary



Three Sightless Girl Swimmers Splashing in the Lighthouse Tank.

chairman and Secretary of the Treasury Andrew W. Mellon as honorary treasurer. Franklin D. Roosevelt, former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, is chairman and Lewis L. Clarke is treasurer.

When visiting the Lighthouse recently, President Harding said:

"If there is anything I can do to set aglow a flame in a heart that is denied the light, that, God helping me, I mean to do. I would like to make all America realize what this great work means and do its utmost to help those who cannot see."

### Danger of Sunstroke and Freezing in Mountain Climbing

MANY mountain climbers have reached 20,000 feet elevation in the Himalayas, but above this height there is a rapidly decreasing list. Gen. C. G. Bruce, a veteran climber in the Himalayas, calls it enjoyable up to 20,000 feet, but a serious grind thereafter. Camp at 15,000 to 16,000 feet is far more comfortable than above 20,000, where special equipment of all kinds is necessary to maintain life.

Most stoves refuse to burn above this altitude, but one must have good and hot food. In spite of warm clothing, a sleeping-bag, and the protection of a tent, there is usually little real comfort at night. By day the ultra-violet light, which is far less hindered by the atmosphere at high altitudes than at sea level, literally burns the skin, and fever results.

The intense cold of high altitudes is most dif-

ficult to resist, and combines with the exhaustion of climbing in rarefied air to lower the forces of even the best trained mountaineers. From experiments which Dr. A. M. Kellas has recently conducted from 15,000 to 22,000 feet, it is estimated, according to a writer in *Leaside*, that it may be 60 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, on the summit of Everest! At these great heights the climber is in danger of sunstroke while he is being frostbitten. Camping at 21,300 feet on the Nun Kun, the Workmans recorded a change in temperature in 15 hours of 197 degrees! What wonder is it that the bravest mountaineers often succumb to mountain sickness?

In the Himalayas the usual difficulties of rock climbing and of ice and snow work are many times increased. Frequently their gigantic peaks may be approached only by days of the most laborious travel up the all but impossible glaciers which reach the heart of the range.