

Indiana's Blind

By IDA HELEN MCCARTY, Pennville

The State School for the Blind, is in Indianapolis, and is now 75 years old. Here can be accommodated 125 pupils, 16 teachers, and other officers to the number of 54 persons. This is not a charitable institution, but for educational purposes only; and the cost to the state, per capita, is \$568.83.

Children over eight or under 21, if passing health requirements, may be admitted; and 12 years are required for graduation. The outline of work in this School for Blind is as nearly like that of our common schools as it is possible to make it. The character of this school at Indianapolis and the work accomplished here is very similar to that of any blind school of any other state.

The text-books are in New York Point, except in grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in which the revised Braille, grade 1½ has been introduced.

Much attention is given to memorizing work, typewriting, Sloyd (desk manual training), and a 45 minute period of each day is devoted to reading aloud from standard authors.

There are four departments, Literary, Music, Industrial and Physical Training. Forty credits are required for graduation from the first two departments, and all students must take a certain amount of work in the other two.

Chorus classes are required throughout the year, and is the most general division of the Music department. There are classes in Voice, Piano, Organ, String and Wind instruments, Recital and Chapel work, and History and Composition.

In the Manual Training department are taught many of the useful arts and trades that, in later life, will enable graduates to become skilfully and gainfully employed; to take their places alongside other graduates of our public schools.

In several states a fee of \$100.00 is given each graduate of this department, (if his circumstances warrant it), with which to purchase tools and material. This would enable him to start in business for himself, thus eliminating a great deal of

anxiety. Several attempts have been made to establish a fund to assist our worthy blind, after graduation; but, in Indiana, this is not settled, as yet. It is to be hoped that philanthropic friends of this institution will make this part of such a worthy cause a permanent arrangement.

As a result of the efficient work done in our School for Blind, many of its graduates are encouraged to take up higher education. What a stupendous task, when one considers all the handicaps. What an amount of ambition, pluck and patience must be behind a resolve like that: though blind, to complete a College course! How many of us, in like condition, would attempt it?

There are in Indiana university, at the present time, three students who have passed under the careful training of Mr. George S. Wilson, for 25 years the superintendent and director of Indiana's School for Blind. These students are doing excellent work, and merit worthy mention, according to the secretary of Indiana university.

They are: Everett Addington of Farmland who is tuning pianos to help defray his expenses, and who has been honored with a political office in his county; Russel Ray Judd of Evansville, totally blind, also tuning pianos; Jaunita Schardt of Indianapolis, totally blind.

A thorough search of the colleges of Indiana rewards us with other students: Ray Johnson is attending Chiropractor college at Indianapolis; Morris Field is with the Indiana University extension; Dean Ferguson is attending the Terre Haute State Normal; Ella Jeannette Slutz came from Ohio State university School for Blind and attended Butler college 1917-18, and also attended College for Missions, near Butler; Mr. Arthur G. Henkel of Rock Springs, Wyoming, attended Valparaiso university in 1915, taking Preparatory work leading to the study of Law. According to President Bowman, "he was a student of unusual intelligence and remarkable working ability."

Each blind student of a university in Indiana is now furnished with a reader, at the expense of the state.

Another force for the betterment of the condition of our Indiana blind is the Industrial Aid for Blind, a state institu-

tion. This aims to meet the adult blind, all over the state, in their own homes. In this way busy mothers (blind) who cannot leave their families or their work, may be taught to read raised type, and thus become able to use books and periodicals from the State Library. They are taught to do sewing, crocheting, knitting, rug and basket-making, and other useful arts.

Adult male blind are taught chair-caning, rug-weaving, broom-making, brush-making, mop-making, and needle-craft. As broom-making is more arduous than rug or basket-weaving, the very aged blind are taught the latter arts.

In connection with this work, field agents canvass the state, seeking out the blind who are eager for instruction, especially lessons in hygiene and home-making.

Mr. C. D. Chadwick, the executive secretary of the Industrial Aid for the Blind reports 1,922 calls made in 1922. Of these 519 were for the purpose of instruction.

Once or twice each year is held in Indianapolis a sale of articles made by the blind of our state. The Federated Womens' Clubs of Indiana have charge of these bazaars, and the money realized is given to the persons who did the work.

The first blind man in Indiana to finish a college course was Fred Morton McCartney, totally blind, having been left so from measles contracted when he was 17 months old. He was born at Flat Rock, Shelby county, Indiana, 1887, and was one among eight children. He entered the State School for Blind when he was 6½ years old, beginning in the kindergarten.

He was still in the lower grades when Mr. Wilson took charge of the school (1898) and Mr. McCartney, in his story of his life, avers that he will always remember Mr. Wilson for getting him started right in his school career.

Fred McCartney completed the four years high school course in three years, by working at his books all vacation and taking examinations in the Fall. He specialized in the Literary department, carrying piano-tuning, Sloyd and some music.

In 1909 he entered Indiana university. He was the pioneer in this field, and of course had no reader. His only assets were

ambition and grit; piano-tuning was the only thing he could do to help buy books, pay fees, and other college expenses; and his parents and friends were skeptical about his being able to compete with the sighted.

He was a problem to the university, and a puzzle to himself, the solving of which made many of the professors rub their heads and think. Where to place him, and what to do with him? He was the topic for discussion at many a faculty meeting. He groped about for several weeks trying to find a place to anchor. Never once did he despair or falter. He says he knew he would find some way out of his dilemma, for his yearning for a college education was so strong.

Realizing, at last, that this young man really meant to do just what he had undertaken, his parents moved to Bloomington, the better to aid him. (Even yet they doubted the outcome of such an unheard of venture.)

At this time the story of Helen Keller was fresh in the minds of everyone and Fred McCartney thought that he, with fewer handicaps than she, might try the college course. So he secured the necessary readers, at his own and his father's expense, engaged work in piano-tuning, and thus started on his freshman year.

But right in the very beginning he met a stumbling block in mathematics. After much consultation, the professors permitted him to substitute American Poetry and Psychology, both of which were his favorite subjects. He signed up for all the other required subjects, and, in addition, took German and French.

All his notes, note-books, themes, examinations, were prepared on an ordinary typewriter, after having the keyboard fitted with the French accent marks, and the German Umlaut.

In 1910 he successfully passed the state teachers's examination for grades, and for High School English, and later, History. He took a course in Astronomy, under Professor Cogshall, and found the study most fascinating. He was especially fond of Professor Lindley, Psychology; and of Professor Stephenson, English.

In 1912 he received his A.B. degree. The following year he enrolled for the A.M. degree, with Psychology as his research subject. He won his second degree in 1914.

Mr. McCartney was married in 1914. In 1918 he went to Cincinnati as piano-tuner with the Werner Industries Company where he remained until 1921.

At present he is with the Cincinnati Board of Education.

Fred McCartney, overcoming all obstacles, spent six years in hard work at Indiana university. He says his dreams of usefulness have not been realized. However that may be, he has set an example for the other blind of our state, and of other states. His was the great task, and with infinite patience he kept at it. It is not a glorious thing he has done, but, nevertheless he deserves what he literally carved, by dint of hard chiseling: Fred McCartney, Indiana's first blind college graduate—1912.

The first blind woman in Indiana to complete a college course was Lola Lydia Walling, born in the village of Pennville, Jay county, Indiana, December 20, 1892. Her mother, Josephine Underwood Walling, was the daughter of Isaac Underwood, farmer, merchant, manufacturer, treasurer of Jay county, state representative, and state senator. He was a Master Mason, a Good Templar and a leader in the Quaker Church.

Lola's father, Lewis Grissell Walling, was the grandson of the founder of the town of Pennville, sometimes known as Camden and New Lisbon. The Grisells were all Hicksite Friends. Lewis Walling was a druggist and a farmer.

So it was in a home that used the plain language of thee and thou that this beautiful brown-eyed maiden, bearing the name so beloved of all Quakers, Lydia, was born. And if ever a child was born with the silver spoon, this girl was the subject of our sketch. She was the idol of all her relatives and they were a goodly array of worthy, enterprising citizens. Not only was she lovely of face, but she was lovable of disposition, talented and industrious.

The Walling home was noted for culture and refinement and its many social gatherings. It was a great, rambling house of twenty rooms, a wing of which was used by grand-

father and grandmother Underwood. Here, the golden-haired girl spent many happy hours listening to stories told by her aged grandfather, and in watching the process of cookie-making bread and pie-making, in which the grandmother was always engaged.

The great, old-fashioned attic was also one of her favorite places; for here were stored treasures of trunk, of chest, box, and drawer, the relics of many generations of Grisells, Wallings and Underwoods. Many of the things here had been brought from "way back east." This attic was typical of the many attics of the old town.

The library, too, was a place where the child spent many hours; for here were the large oil paintings, the portraits of her ancestors, gazing down at her from their great gold frames. Here, too, were the cases of specimens and relics that had been continuously in her father's family for more than a century. Often she had been tempted to open those glass cases and to take out the cherished specimens; but there was ever the strict admonition of her father checking that desire. It was this: "Lola, thee must not look with thy fingers, look with thy eyes."

In after years those words were to be vividly recalled by all the family: Thee must not look with thy fingers. It was literally the very thing that she was forced to do. When Lola was just beginning the eighth grade she had an attack of the Grippe which lasted many weeks. When she recovered from this, it was found that she was semi-blind. All that medical skill could do was tried; but of no avail. She is, today, unable to read; or to do close work of any kind, though she distinguishes faces and objects, and travels everywhere unaided.

Although the shock of this misfortune was terrible for the parents, the mother, with true heroism, set to work. She was determined that Lola should have the education that now seemed so unattainable. The living-room of the Walling home was converted into a class-room, provided with black-boards, charts, maps, globes, and all things pertaining to school work.

So carefully and thoroughly did this mother instruct the daughter that, although she was present in the public school

but a few days of the nine month session, she was enabled to finish with her class, at the eighth grade commencement, carrying off first honors; in fact taking highest rank in Penn township, and second highest in Jay county.

During the vacation Lola continued her piano lessons under competent instruction of Mrs. Nellie Place Chandler and Mrs. Edna Line Gordon. The notes being read to her, then played for her, she quickly memorized them. Even at that age, she was considered a very remarkable pianist. Mrs. Gordon has often declared that Lola Walling was the aptest music pupil she ever found.

Lola entered the School for Blind at Indianapolis, taking the literary course. She had to acquire the point system, and accustom herself to this new mode of living in a community of blind, where lights at night were not a necessity, as the inmates walked by remembering each detail of the building; and where looking with the fingers was the only way.

She spent five years here, not only taking the piano instruction which the school afforded, but having a private teacher as well. Her musical instruction now was in the point system.

Lola's mother had learned point and typing, and was enabled to keep up a correspondence with her which was very encouraging and helpful; and lessened the homesickness from which she sometimes suffered. She graduated on the honor roll.

Now came a time for decision. Lola wished to go to college. There was but one way to accomplish this, and with her wonted unselfishness the mother disposed of the matter. She would go to college with her daughter.

Mrs. Walling's brother, Charles Underwood, was professor of sacred history at Butler college. The mother and daughter decided to attend Butler. Accordingly she arranged her household affairs in the little home town and, taking her son Kenneth, now in high school, the three of them became domiciled in Irvington.

Lola registered at Butler college, and the mother began her duties of reader, secretary, critic, housekeeper and companion for the daughter in college, and the son in high school.

Every book that was required of her, each lesson, each reference, extra line of work, examination, theme, was attended to by this careful mother. Eyes and soul she was striving to help the girl who had been deprived of her vision. How well she succeeded has been proven.

Lola completed the four years' course, majoring in English, and she was one of the honor graduates of 1917. The mother, having had only the advantages of the common schools, returned to the village of Pennville with a college education. True, she did not receive a parchment and her name was never on any roll of honor or engraven on cup or medal. But with Cornelia of old, she had proven that her children were her jewels, and as such she considered that no sacrifice was too great for their sakes. Modestly she slipped back home, and into her old place among her neighbors.

After completing the course at Butler Miss Walling continued piano instruction under the best professors, and is now prepared to give recitals. When at home she assists in home talents, club and church and lodge programs. Her name is always a drawing card, but she is very modest and prefers to play for her home folks and the old family friends.

For four years she has been a teacher in the School for Deaf and Blind at Cedar Spring, South Carolina, where she has endeared herself to all, and where her talents have added much to cheer the pupils who are found there.