

COLUMBIA INSTITUTION

—FOR THE—

DEAF AND DUMB

THE CHARLES BAKER COLLECTION

A

NUMBER

LAURA BRIDGMAN.



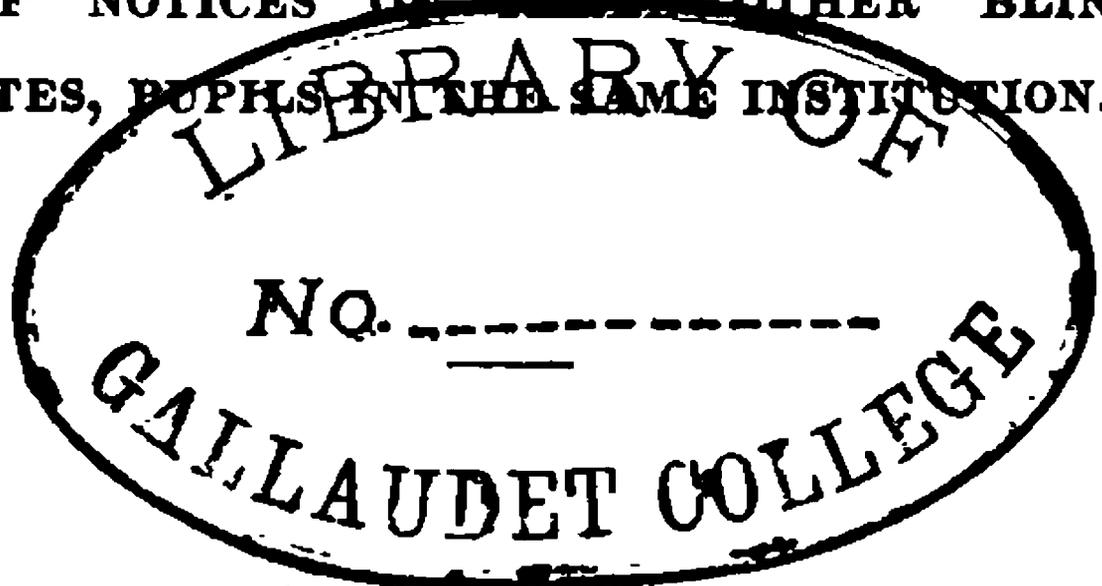
“Hear, ye deaf, and look, ye blind, that ye may see.”

“I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths which they have not known.” ISAIAH xlii.

*The Power of Education, under the most
unfavorable circumstances.*

AN ACCOUNT
OF
LAURA BRIDGMAN,
OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS,
A BLIND, DEAF, AND DUMB GIRL.

WITH
BRIEF NOTICES OF THREE OTHER BLIND
MUTES, BORN IN THE SAME INSTITUTION.



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INTRODUCTION.

THIS little volume is almost entirely compiled from the reports of the Perkins Institution, and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, in Boston, United States, in which Dr. Howe, the director of the establishment, details the history of Laura Bridgman, a remarkably deprived child, who from physical defects was excluded from all social intercourse, until brought under his skilful treatment and care.

The means used to obtain access and to develop her mind through her remaining sense, (that of feeling,) evince

what may be accomplished by ingenuity and Christian solicitude, for one who appeared so hopelessly situated; and the result is an encouragement to the pious and benevolent not to despair in any attempt to be useful to their fellow-creatures, however circumstanced.

The account of Laura's zeal and continued perseverance in acquiring knowledge, may also prove of benefit to the young, as an example worthy of imitation, and an incitement to employ the privileges and endowments which God has bestowed upon them to His service, with thankfulness for the blessings which they enjoy.

The short notices of three others under similar privation, being much connected with Laura Bridgman, it is thought will be a suitable addition.

Commending these interesting facts to the attention of the Christian public, the editor has only to remark, that any profit which may arise from the publication will be applied to a school in Nottingham, lately established to teach the blind to read, which is now in successful operation, and only needs more effectual support to extend its usefulness. Some particulars of this school will be found in the concluding pages.

Nottingham, 1843.

LAURA BRIDGMAN.



THERE is much in the simple story of the past sufferings and dreary isolation of LAURA BRIDGMAN to interest and instruct. The privation of any *one* sense is supposed to be a dreadful calamity; but when a fellow-being is known to be *deaf, dumb, and blind*, without smell, and with imperfect taste, that being excites the tender compassion of all who feel, and becomes an object of great interest to those who reflect as well as feel.

She was born of intelligent and respectable parents, in Hanover, New Hampshire, U.S., on the 21st of December, 1829. She is described as having been a very sprightly, pretty ~~infant~~ infant, with bright blue eyes; but until she was a year and a-half old her

parents hardly hoped to rear her ; she was subject to severe fits, which seemed to rack her frame almost beyond the power of endurance ; life was held by the feeblest tenure, and a breath would have blown out the flame.

At that age she began to rally ; her health became fully established, and her mental powers, which had been hitherto stunted in growth, were rapidly developed ; and by the time she had attained her second year, she appears to have displayed a considerable degree of intelligence ; she could readily prattle some words, and had mastered the difference between A and B. But her sky was again overcast :—she suddenly sickened ; the disease raged with great violence during five weeks ; at length it seemed to be subdued, but it was soon perceived that her sight and hearing were for ever destroyed. She was kept in a darkened room, in bed, for five months, at the end of which it was discovered that her sense of smell was almost entirely gone ; and, consequently, that her taste was much blunted.

In four years her bodily health was nearly

restored ; but what a situation was hers ! The darkness and silence of the tomb were around her ; no mother's smile gladdened her heart, or "called forth an answering smile ;" no father's voice taught her to imitate his sounds. To her, brothers and sisters were but forms of matter, which resisted her touch, but which differed not from the furniture of the house, save in warmth and in the power of locomotion, and in these respects not even from the dog or cat. It would seem that in this dreary solitude,—this separation from all communication with kindred spirits,—the immaterial mind must have remained in infantile imbecility, while the body grew in stature and strength, or have attained a perception of its loneliness only to pine and die at the discovery.

But the immortal spirit which had been implanted within her, could not die, nor be maimed or mutilated : and though most of its avenues of communication with the world were cut off, it began to manifest itself through the others. She could, it is true, for a time, pronounce the few words she had

previously learned, but not hearing the *sound of her own voice*, she soon lost the command of her articulation. The sound answered not to the thought, she will lost the government of the tongue, and the last word she was ever heard to utter was "book."

The sense of touch alone remains; and the sight of this afflicted girl fills one with admiration, not only of the perfectibility of the senses, but of the wonderful power of the mind to adapt its operations to any circumstances of its bodily tenement,—to put itself in relation with external things, and to manifest its own emotions through the most imperfect media.

As soon as she was able to walk, Laura began to explore the room, and then the house; she became familiar with the form density, weight, and heat, of every article she could lay her hands on.

She followed her mother, felt her hands and arms, as she was occupied about the house, and her disposition to imitate led her to repeat every thing herself. She even learned to sew a little, and to knit. Her affections too, began to expand, and seemed

to be lavished upon the members of her family with peculiar force.

The means of communication with her, however, were very limited ; she could only be told to go to a place by being pushed, or to come to one, by a sign of drawing her. Patting her gently on the head signified approbation ; on the back, the contrary.

She showed every disposition to learn, and evidently began to use a natural language of her own ; she had a sign to express her idea of each member of the family,—as drawing her fingers down each side of her face, to denote the whiskers of one, twirling her hand round, in imitation of the motion of a spinning-wheel, for another ; and so on.

But although she received all the aid that a kind mother could bestow, she soon began to give proof of the importance of language to the development of human character. By the time Laura was seven years old, the moral effects of her privation began to appear. There was nothing to control her will but the absolute power of another, and humanity revolts at this ; she had already

begun to disregard all but the sterner nature of her father ; and it was plain that as the propensities would increase with her physical growth, so would the difficulty of restraining them.

At this time Dr. Howe heard of the child, and hastened to Hanover to see her ; he says :—

I found her with a well-formed figure, a strongly-marked, nervous, sanguine temperament ; a large, beautifully-shaped head ; and the whole system in healthy action.

Her parents were easily induced to consent to her coming to Boston, and on the 4th of October, 1837, they brought her to the Institution.

For a while she was much bewildered, till she became acquainted with her new locality, and somewhat familiar with the inmates ; the attempt was made to give her knowledge of arbitrary signs, by which she could interchange thoughts with others.

The first experiments were made by taking the articles in common use, such as knives, forks, spoons, keys, &c., and pasting

upon them labels, with their names embossed in raised letters. These she felt very carefully, and soon of course, distinguished that the crooked lines *s-p-o-o-n*, differed as much from the crooked lines *k-e-y*, as the spoon differed from the key in form. Then small detached labels with the same words printed upon them, were put into her hands ; she soon observed that they were the same as those pasted upon the articles. She showed her perception of this similarity by laying the label *k-e-y* upon the key, and the label *s-p-o-o-n* upon the spoon.

She was encouraged by the natural sign of approbation,—patting on the head.

The same process was then repeated, with all the articles she could handle, and she readily learned to place the right labels upon them. It was evident, however, that the only intellectual exercise was that of imitation and memory.

She recollected, that the label *b-o-o-k* was placed upon a book, and she repeated the process, first from imitation, next from memory ; with only the motive of love of

approbation, but, apparently, without the intellectual perception of any relation between the things.

After a while, instead of labels, the individual letters were given to her on detached bits of paper ; they were arranged side by side, so as to spell *b - o - o - k*, *k - e - y*, &c. ; then they were mixed up in a heap, and a sign was made (that is, the action was performed by her teacher, she feeling his hands, and imitating the motion) for her to arrange them herself, so as to express the words *book* and *key*, which she did.

Hitherto, the process had been mechanical, and the success about as great as that of teaching a very knowing dog a variety of tricks.

The poor child sat in mute amazement, and patiently imitated every thing her teacher did ; but now her intellect began to work, the truth flashed upon her, and she perceived that there was a way by which she could herself make a sign of any thing that was in her own mind, and show it to another mind :—at once, her countenance lighted up with a human expression ; it was

no longer as a mere instinctive animal, it was an immortal spirit, eagerly seizing upon a new link of union with other spirits ! I could almost fix upon the moment when this truth dawned on her mind, and spread its beams upon her countenance ; I saw that the great obstacle was overcome, and that henceforth, nothing but patient and persevering, but plain and straight-forward efforts, were necessary.

The result, thus far, is quickly related and easily conceived ; but not so was the process, for many weeks of apparently unprofitable labour were spent, before it was effected.

The next step was to procure a set of metal types, with the different letters of the alphabet cast separately on their ends : also a board, in which were square holes, into which she could set the types, so that the *letters* could alone be felt above the surface.

Thus, on any article being handed to her, as, a pencil, or watch, she would select the component letters, and arrange them on her board, and read them with apparent pleasure, assuring her teacher that she understood, by

taking all the letters of the word and putting them to her ear, or on the pencil.

She then learned the arrangement of the letters in the alphabet, and that of letters into words.

In this way she was exercised for several weeks, until her vocabulary became extensive; and then the important step was taken, of teaching her how to represent the different letters by the position of her fingers, as used by the deaf-mutes, instead of the cumbrous apparatus of the board and types. She speedily accomplished this, for her intellect now assisted her teacher, and her progress was rapid.

This was the period, about three months after she had commenced, that the first report of her case was made, in which it is stated, "Her teacher gives her a new object, first lets her examine it, and obtain an idea of its use, then teaches her how to spell it, by making the signs for the letters with her own fingers; the child grasps her hand and feels her fingers as the different letters are formed,—she turns her head a little on one side, like a person listening closely, her lips

are apart, she seems scarcely to breathe, and and her countenance, at first anxious, gradually changes to a smile, as she comprehends the lesson. She then holds up her tiny fingers, and spells the word in the manual alphabet ; next takes the types and arranges her letters ; and lastly, to make sure that she is right, she takes the whole of the types composing the word, and places them upon or in contact with the object."

The process of teaching her, is of course slow and tedious ; the different steps to it must be suggested by her successive attainments, for there are no precedents to direct. She has not yet been long enough under instruction to have gone beyond the names of substances ; the more difficult task of giving her knowledge of names expressive of qualities and feelings, remains yet to be accomplished. There is a strong hope that her life may be spared, and that patient, persevering efforts, will succeed in throwing much light into her dreary prison ; and that these will be rewarded, not only by the satisfaction of imparting happiness, but by new views of the operations of mind.

Laura is constantly active ; she runs about the house, up and down stairs, frolics with the other children, or plays with her toys ; she dresses and undresses herself with great quickness, and behaves with general propriety ; she knows every inmate of the house by the touch, and is very affectionate to them.

Her greatest pleasure is to learn a new stitch,—a new way of knitting or braiding,—a new word,—or to discover the application and use of any new thing. But interesting as this is, it is nothing compared with the mental phenomena which she presents ; she has a nice sense of propriety ; a love of approbation ; a desire to appear neatly and smoothly dressed, and to make others notice that she is so ; and a strong tendency to imitation, insomuch that she will sit and hold a book steadily before her face, in imitation of persons reading. It is difficult to say whether she has any sense of right and wrong, disconnected with the feeling that such an action will be reprov'd, and another approved by those about her, but certain it is, she will retain nothing belonging

to another ; she will not eat an apple or piece of cake which she may find, unless signs are made to give her permission to do so. She has an evident pleasure in playfully teasing, or puzzling others. The different states of her mind are clearly marked upon her countenance, which varies with hope and fear, pleasure and pain, self-approbation and regret ; and which, when she is trying to study any thing, assumes an expression of intense attention and thought.

The Report for the year 1839 represents Laura as happy and as playful as a bird, with all the buoyancy and gaiety of childhood ; fond of fun and frolic ; and when sporting with the rest of the children, her shrill laugh seems the loudest of the group.

If left alone, she will busy herself for hours in knitting or sewing ; or if she had no occupation, she evidently amuses herself by imaginary dialogues, counting with her fingers, or spelling out the names of things. In fact, she signs words and sentences so fast and dexterously, that only those accustomed to this manual language, can follow

with the eye the rapid motions of her fingers. In her lonely self-communion, she seems to reason, reflect, and argue ; if she spells a word wrong with her right hand, she instantly strikes it with her left, as her teacher does, in mark of disapprobation : if right, she pats herself on the head, and looks pleased.

But wonderful as is the rapidity with which she writes her thoughts upon the air, still more so is the ease with which she reads the words thus written by another, grasping their hands in hers, and following every movement of their fingers, as letter after letter conveys their meaning to her mind. It is in this way that she converses with her playmates, and nothing can more evidently show the power of mind in forcing matter to its purpose, than a meeting between them.

When Laura is walking through a passage, with her hands spread before her, she knows instantly every one she meets, and makes a sign of recognition ; but if it be a girl of her own age, and especially if one of her favorites, there is immediately a bright smile—a twining of arms—a grasping of hands—and

a swift telegraphing upon the tiny fingers, whose rapid evolutions convey the thoughts and feelings from one mind to the other : there are questions and answers, exchanges of joy and sorrow, kissings and partings, just as between children with all their senses.

During this year, six months after she had left home, her mother came to visit her, and the scene of their meeting was an interesting one. Her mother stood for some time, gazing with overflowing eyes upon the afflicted child, who, all unconscious of her presence, was running about the room. Presently Laura ran against her ; and at once began feeling her hands, examining her dress, and trying to find out if she knew her ; but not succeeding, she turned away as from a stranger, and the poor woman could not conceal the pang she felt, at finding that her beloved child did not know her. She then gave Laura a string of beads, which she used to wear at home, which she recognised at once, and put them round her neck, and sought Dr. Howe eagerly, to tell him the string was from her home. The mother now tried to caress her, but poor

Laura repelled her, preferring to be with her acquaintances. Another article from home was now given her, and she began to look much interested; she examined the stranger much closer, and signed that she knew she came from Hanover; she even endured her caresses, but would leave her with indifference at the slightest signal.

It was now painful to behold the mother's distress; for though she had feared her child would not recognise her, the painful reality of being treated with cold indifference by one so dear to her, was too much for human nature to bear.

After a time, on her mother's taking hold of her again, a vague idea seemed to flit across Laura's mind, that this could not be a stranger; she therefore felt for her hands very eagerly, while her countenance assumed an expression of intense anxiety;—she became very pale—then suddenly red;—hope seemed struggling with doubt, and never were contending emotions more strongly painted upon the human face; at this moment of painful uncertainty, the mother drew her close to her side, and kissed her

fondly, when at once the truth flashed upon the child, and all mistrust and anxiety disappeared from her countenance, as with an expression of exceeding joy she nestled to the bosom of her parent, and yielded herself to her fond embraces. From this period the beads were all unheeded, the playthings offered to her utterly disregarded; her companions, for whom but a moment before she gladly left the stranger, now vainly strove to pull her from her mother and though she instantly obeyed Dr. Howe's signal to follow him, it was evidently with painful reluctance. She clung to him as if bewildered and fearful, and when in a moment she was restored to her mother, she sprang to her arms with eager joy.

They were now left to indulge unobserved those delicious feelings, which they who have known a mother's love may conceive, but which cannot be expressed. The subsequent parting between them showed alike the affection, the intelligence, and the resolution of the child. Laura accompanied her mother to the door, clinging close to her all the way, until they arrived at the threshold.

where she paused, and felt around to ascertain who was near her : perceiving the matron, to whom she is much attached, she grasped her with one hand, holding on convulsively to her mother with the other ; and thus she stood for an instant,—then she dropped her mother's hand, put her handkerchief to her eyes, and turning round clung sobbing to the matron, while her mother departed, with emotions as deep as those of her child.

Having learned to spell every thing within her reach, Laura was taught the use of adjectives ; but it was found too difficult, at that time, to make her understand any general expression of quality ; as *hardness*, *softness*, in the abstract. Indeed this is a process of mind most difficult to any, but especially to deaf-mutes. One of her earliest sentences after acquiring the adjectives, was this ; she had found the matron ill, and understood that she had a head-ache ; she said, "*Smith head sick, Laura sorry.*" Next she was put to the positive expression of relation to place, which she could understand ; a ring was taken and placed *in* a

box, then the words were spelt to her, and she repeated them from imitation. Then the ring was placed *on* a hat, and a sign given her to spell ; she spelt “*ring on box ;*” but being checked and the right words given, she immediately began to exercise her judgment, and as usual seemed to be intently thinking. The same was repeated with a bag, a desk, and other things, until at last she learned that she must name the thing *on* which the article was placed. Then the ring was put *in* the box, and the words, “*ring in box*” given her. This perplexed her for many minutes, and she made mistakes ; for instance, after she had learned to say correctly, whether the ring was *on*, or *in* a box, a drawer, &c., if she were asked Where is house ? she would say “*in box.*” Cross questioning, however, is seldom necessary to ascertain whether she really understands the force of the words she is learning ; for when she sees the true meaning, the light spreads over her countenance.

In this case, the perception seemed instantaneous, and the natural sign by which

she expressed it was peculiar and striking. She spelt *o-n*, then laid one hand on the other; then she spelt *i-n*, and enclosed one hand within the other.

Some idea of the difficulty of teaching her common expressions may be derived from the fact, that a lesson of two hours upon the words "right and left," was deemed very profitable, if she in that time really mastered the idea. No definite course of instruction can be marked out, for her inquisitiveness is so great, that she is very much disconcerted if any question which occurs to her is deferred until the lesson is over. It is considered best to gratify her, if her enquiry has any bearing upon the word, and she often leads her teacher far away from the original subject. Once she picked up a nail during a lesson, and instantly asked its name;—when it was spelt to her she was dissatisfied, and thought a mistake had been made, for she knew *n-a-i-l* stood for her finger-nail, and she was very anxious to go to headquarters, to be sure her teacher was right. She often asks questions that cannot be satisfactorily answered. She once queried

with great eagerness, why one arrangement of letters was not as good as another to express the name of a thing,—as why ‘*t-a-c*’ should not express the idea of the animal, as well as ‘*c-a-t*.’

This she expressed partly by words, and partly by signs, but her meaning was perfectly clear ; she was puzzled, and wished explanation.

In her desire to communicate her ideas she coins words, and is always guided by analogy. Sometimes her process of word-making is very interesting : for instance, after some time spent in giving her an idea of the abstract meaning of the word *alone*, she appeared to obtain it, and understanding that being by *oneself*, was to be *alone*, or *al-one* ; she was told to go to her chamber and return *alone* ; she did so, but soon after, wishing to return with one of the little girls, she strove to express her meaning thus : *Laura go al-two*. The same desire is manifested in her attempts to define for the purpose of classification ; thus, some one giving her the word bachelor, she came to her teacher for a definition ; she was told

that men who had wives were *husbands*, and those who had none, *bachelors*: when asked if she understood, she said, "*Men have no wife,—bachelor; Tenny, bachelor,*"—referring to an old friend of hers. Being desired to define bachelor, she said, "*Bachelor no have wife, and smoke pipe!*"

She considered the individual peculiarity in one person, characteristic of the whole species. The word "widow" being explained to her,—a woman whose husband is dead, and she being called upon to define it, said, "*Widow is woman, man dead and cold;*" and eked out her meaning, by sinking down, and dropping her hand to signify in the ground. The last two words she added herself, they did not occur in the definition; but she always associates the idea of *coldness* and *burial* with death. Her having acquired any idea of death, was not by Dr. Howe's wish; it had been his intention to reserve the subject until such a development of her reason should be attained as would enable him to give a correct idea of it. He hopes still, by aid of the analogy of the germination and growth of plants, to give her a consoling hope

of resurrection, to counterbalance the almost instinctive fear of death.

The knowledge and use of verbs, she easily acquired, especially those expressive of tangible action; as, to walk, run, sew, or shake.

At first, of course no distinction could be made of mood and tense; she used the words in a general sense, and according to her own ideas; thus in asking for bread she would say, "*Laura, bread, give.*" If she wanted water she would say, "*Water, drink, Laura,*" first using the word expressing the leading idea. She soon learned to use the auxiliary verbs, and the difference between the past, present, and future tense; thus she said, "*Keller is sick, when will Keller well?*"

Having acquired the use of substantives, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, it was considered time to commence teaching her to write, and to shew her she might communicate with persons at a distance. It was amusing to witness the mute amazement with which she submitted to the process, the docility with which she imitated every motion, and the persever-

ance with which she moved her pencil in a grooved line, over and over again in the same track, until she could form the letter; but when at last the idea dawned upon her mind that by means of it she could convey intelligence to her mother, her joy was unbounded.

Never did a child apply more earnestly and heartily than she did to this mysterious process; and in a few months she could make every letter distinctly, and actually wrote a legible letter to her mother, in which she sent information of her being well, and of her coming home in ten weeks. It was indeed only a skeleton of a letter, but still it expressed in readable characters a vague outline of the ideas which were passing in her mind. She was very impatient to have the man carry this letter, for she supposed that the utmost limit of the post-office department was to employ a man to run backward and forward, between our institution and the different towns where the friends of the pupils reside, to fetch and carry letters.

In giving her a knowledge of numbers it was difficult to teach her to subtract one

sum from a larger ; but by the help of objects she accomplished it, and can count and conceive objects to about one hundred in number ; to express an indefinitely great number, or more than she can count, she says, "*hundred.*" If she thought a friend was to be absent many years, she would say, "*———— will come hundred Sundays,*" meaning weeks. She is pretty accurate in measuring time, and seems to have an intuitive tendency to do it, unaided by the changes of night and day, or by the sound of any time-piece. She is perfectly familiar with the weeks as a whole, and its divisions ; if asked what day it will be in fifteen days more, she readily names the day of the week. She divides the day by the commencement and end of school, by the recesses, and by the arrival of meal-times.

She goes to bed punctually at seven o'clock, and of her own accord. For some time after she came to Boston she had some one to accompany her every night ; but soon it was thought best to send her alone ; and that she might not wait for any one she was left one evening, when she sat unti

quite late, a person watching her ; at last she seemed to form her resolution suddenly, she jumped up and groped her way to bed ; ever since this time she has gone by herself, at the appointed hour for retiring.

Those who hold that the capacity for perceiving and measuring the lapse of time is an innate and not distinct faculty of the mind, may deem it an important fact, that Laura evidently can measure time so accurately as to distinguish between a half and a whole note of music.

It is interesting in a physiological point of view to know the effect of the deprivation of three senses upon the remaining two.

The sense of smell being destroyed, it seems a curious question whether the effect upon the organ of taste is blunted generally or particularly. Acids seem to make a vivid and distinct impression upon the taste, and she apparently distinguishes the different degrees of acidity, better than of sweetness and bitterness. She can distinguish between wine, cider, and vinegar, better than between manna, liquorice, or sugar. Of bitter she seems to have less perception,

for on putting powdered rhubarb into her mouth she called it tea, and on some one saying, *no*, and telling her to taste *close*, she evidently did try to taste it, but still called it tea, and put it out of her mouth; but without any indication of its being particularly disagreeable. On the whole she seems to care less for eating than most children of her age. Her sense of touch is very acute, even for a blind person. It is shown by the readiness with which she distinguishes people. There are forty inmates in the female wing, with all of whom Laura is of course acquainted; when even she is walking through the passages, she perceives by the jar of the floor, or the agitation of the air striking her face, that some one is near her, and it is exceedingly difficult to pass without being recognised. Her little arms are stretched out, and the instant she grasps a hand, a sleeve, or other part of the dress, she knows who it is, and makes some sign of recognition.

The innate desire for knowledge, and the instinctive efforts which the human faculties make to exercise their functions, are shown

most remarkably in Laura. Her fingers are to her as eyes and nose and ears, and most incessantly does she keep them in motion; like the feelers of some insects which are continually agitated, and which touch every grain of sand in their path, so her arms and hands are continually at play; and when she is walking with any one, she not only recognises every thing she passes within touching distance, but by continually feeling her companion's hands, ascertains what he is doing.

A person walking across a room while she held his left arm, would find it difficult to take a pencil out of his waistcoat-pocket with his right hand without her knowing it.

Her judgment of distances and relations of places is very accurate; she will rise from her seat, go straight towards a door, put out her hand just at the right time, and grasp the handle with precision.

When she runs against a shut door which she expected to find open, she does not fret, but rubs her head and laughs, as though she perceived the ludicrous posi-

tion of a person flat against a door trying to walk through it.

She knows every thing about the house so accurately, that if a new article, or bandbox, or even a new book, be laid any where in the apartments she frequents, she would very soon find it, in her ceaseless rounds, and from something about it discover to whom it belonged.

Qualities and appearances unheeded by others are to her of great significance and value, and by means of these her knowledge of physical relations and external nature will in time become extensive.

Thus does her active mind commune by means of her one sense, with things external, and gratify its cravings for knowledge by close and untiring attention.

At table, if told to be still, she sits and conducts herself with propriety, handles her cup, spoon, and fork, like other children ; so that a stranger looking at her would take her for a very pretty child, with a green ribbon over her eyes. Indeed it would be difficult to find a child in the enjoyment

of every physical and temporal blessing, who is more contented, happy, and cheerful, than this bereaved creature, for whom the sun has no light, the air no sound, and the flowers no colour or scent.

To show that she has all the buoyancy and gaiety of youth, the following anecdote will give an idea of her fondness for innocent fun or mischief.

Her teacher looking one day unobserved into the girl's playroom, saw three blind girls playing with the rocking-horse. Laura was on the crupper, another on the saddle, and a third clinging on the neck ; they were all in high glee, swinging backwards and forwards as far as the rockers would roll. There was a peculiarly arch look in Laura's countenance, the natural language of sly fun. She seemed prepared to give a spring ; and suddenly, when her end was lowest and the others were perched high in the air, she sidled quickly on to the floor, and down went the other end so swiftly as to throw the two children off. This Laura evidently expected, for she stood for a moment convulsed with laughter, then ran forward with outstretch-

ed arms to find the girls, almost screaming with joy. As soon however as she had hold of one of them she perceived that she was hurt, and instantly her countenance changed, she seemed shocked and grieved, and after caressing and comforting her playmate, she found the other, and seemed to apologize by spelling the word "*wrong*," and caressing her.

Laura seems to have a perception of character, and to have no esteem for those who have little intellect. The following instance may be given significant of this perception, and shows that from her friends she requires 'something more than good-natured indulgence.

A new pupil entered the school, a girl about Laura's age. She was very helpless, and Laura took great pride and pains to show her the way about the house, assisting her to dress and undress, and doing many things for her.

In a few weeks it began to be apparent, even to Laura, that the child was not only helpless, but naturally very stupid, being almost an idiot. Then it was, that Laura

gave her up in despair and avoided her ; and has ever since shown an aversion to being with her, passing her by as if in contempt.

By a natural association of ideas, she attributes at once to this child all the countless deeds which *nobody* does in every house ; if a chair is broken or anything misplaced, and no one knows who did it, Laura attaches it to this child.

Laura has the same love of dress and finery as other girls of her age ; and as a proof that it is from a desire to please others, whenever she has a new bonnet or other article of dress, she is particularly desirous to go out in it ; and if it be not noticed, she directs attention to it by placing her hand upon it. Generally she indicates her preference for such visitors as are the best dressed.

She is so much in company with blind persons that she thinks blindness common ; and when first meeting a person she asks if they are blind, or she feels their eyes. She evidently knows that the blind differ from seeing persons, for when she shows the

former any thing, she invariably puts their fingers on it.

By the time Laura had been in the blind asylum two years and two months, the history of her education is brought down to the year 1840. She had then attained about the same command of language as common children of three years old. Her intellectual improvement was truly satisfactory and gratifying to her benevolent instructor, Dr. Howe, who thus continues :—

Her health has been very good ; she has not grown much in height, but her frame has filled out.

A perceptible change has taken place in the size and shape of her head ; and although the measurement taken two years ago has been mislaid, a marked increase is noticed in the size of her forehead. She is now just eleven years old ; her height is four feet, four inches, and seven-tenths. Her head measures twenty inches and eight-tenths in circumference, in a line drawn round it, and passing over the prominences of the parietal and those of the frontal bones ; above this line the head rises one

inch and one-tenth, and is broad and full. The measurement is four inches from one orifice of the ear to the other; and from the occipital spine to the root of the nose, it is seven inches.

Her sense of touch has evidently improved in acuteness; she distinguishes more rapidly, and her mental perception of the qualities and conditions of things is so quick, that probably if fifty individuals were standing in a row, she would recognise each by merely extending a hand to her. Her memory of sensations is very vivid; should a person shaking hands with her, make a peculiar pressure with one finger, and repeat it on a second visit, after a lapse of many months, he would be instantly recognised. This is not more wonderful indeed, than that one should be able to recall impressions made upon the mind through the organ of sight, as when we know a person of whom we had but one glimpse a year before; but it evinces the exhaustless capacity of those organs of sense which the Creator has bestowed, as it were in reserve, against acci-

dents, and which we usually allow to lie unused and unvalued.

Her improvement is evident by her greater command of language; and by her increased comprehension of the force of different parts of speech; she has used pronouns for the last six months. Returning fatigued from her journey home last spring, she complained of a pain in her side, and on her being asked the cause, she used these words: "*Laura did go to see mother, ride did make Laura side ache, horse was wrong, did not go softly.*" Now she would say, "*I did go to see mother, ride did make my side ache,*" &c. Her teacher says in her diary of last month, December 18:—*To-day Laura asked me, "What is voice?" I told her as well as I could that it was an impression made upon another when people talk with their mouth. She then said, "I do not voice." I said, "Can you talk with your mouth?" "No." Why? "Because I am very deaf and dumb." "Can you see?" "No, because I am blind. I did not talk with fingers when I came with my mother. Doctor did teach me on fork;—what was on fork?"*

I told her paper was fixed on forks. She then said, "*I did learn to read much with types. Doctor did teach me in nursery ;—Drusilla was very sick all over.*"

The words are given precisely as she used them, for great care was taken to note them at the time. She is now so alive to the impropriety of her former method, that upon my recently saying, "Doctor will teach Laura," she eagerly shook my arm to correct me, and told me to say, "*I will teach you.*" She is delighted when she can catch any one in an error like this, shows her sense of the ludicrous by laughter, and gratifies her innocent self-esteem by showing her knowledge.

It will be observed that her words are all spelt correctly, and indeed her accuracy in this respect is remarkable. She requires to have a word spelt to her only once or twice. I will contrast some sentences she was accustomed to use last year with those of a later date. Sitting at breakfast she said, "*Who did make egg?*" Hen. "*With foot?*" No. "*Laura do love egg, hen will make more.*" Being surprised

lately that I had not examined her for some time, she stopped short in her lesson and said to her teacher, "*Doctor is not glad that I can cypher good.*" Being asked, Why? she said, "*Because he does not want me to show him sum.*" She was told I was busy, and had gone into the city; she said, "*Horse will be much tired to go to Boston all days.*"

She easily learned the difference between the singular and the plural form, but was inclined for some time to apply the rule of adding *s* universally.

At her first lesson she had the word *arm*—*arms*, *hand*—*hands*, &c.; then being asked the plural of *box*, she said *boxes*, &c.

One of the girls had the mumps; Laura learned the name of the complaint, and soon after she had it herself, but the swelling was only on one side. Some one saying, "You have the mumps," she replied quickly, "*No, no, I have mump.*" She was a long while learning the degrees of comparison; indeed her teacher quite despaired of making her comprehend the difference between good, better, best. By perseverance, however, and by giving her an idea of

comparative sizes, she was at last enabled to use comparisons pretty well.

She seemed to attach to the word *large* when connected with an object, a substantive meaning, and to consider it a specific name for the particular thing. And the signification of the word *or*, has been a great stumbling-block to her to this day. In learning the difference between the present and past tense, her perfect simplicity rebuked the clumsy irregularity of our language. She was taught *jump, jumped; walk, walked*; until she had an idea of the mode of forming the imperfect tense; but when she came to the word *see*, she insisted that it should be *seed* in the imperfect. And after this, upon going down to dinner, she asked if it was *eat, eated*; on being told it was *ate* she tried to express the idea that this transposition of letters was not only wrong, but ludicrous, for she laughed heartily.

The zeal with which she followed up these exercises was very delightful. The pupil teasing the teacher for more words, is in pleasing contrast with the old method, where all the work was on one side, and

where the coaxing, and scolding, and birching appliances to boot, often failed to force an idea into the mind in a proper shape.

Laura is always ready for a lesson, and generally prepared beforehand with a number of questions. One morning when she was learning her past tenses, she came with fourteen verbs, the present form of which she knew, to ask the imperfect.

Greater difficulties were experienced in exercising her on such words as *remember*, *forget*, *hope*, *expect*, &c., but she can employ many words of this kind correctly. The day after her first lesson on the words, *I remember*, and *I forget*, this memorandum was made.

Teacher.—What do you remember doing on Monday?

Laura.—To walk in streets on snow.

This was true.

Teacher.—What is vacation?

This was a new word to her; she was accustomed to say, “When is no school; or when girls go home.”

The word being explained, she said, “I remember to go to Halifax;” which was also right.

Teacher.—What do you remember doing the vacation before?

Laura.—To play with Olive, Maria, and Lydia.

These girls had been her companions.

Wishing to make her use the word *forget*, I questioned her back to periods which she could not recall. I said, "What did you do when a little baby?" She replied laughing, "*I did cry*," and made the sign of tears running down her cheeks. What did you say? (No answer.) Did you talk with fingers?

Laura.—No. (Very decidedly.)

Teacher.—Did you talk with mouth? (A pause.) What did you say with mouth?

Laura.—I forget.

I then quickly informed her that this was the proper word, and of the same force as I do not remember. Thinking this a good opportunity of testing her recollection of her infancy, many questions were put to her; but all that could be satisfactorily elicited, was, that she could recollect lying on her back in her mother's arms, who poured medicine down her throat. or in her own

words, "*I remember mother to give me medicines ;*" making the signs of lying down and pouring liquid down her throat. It was not till after she had learned a few words of this kind that it was possible to carry her mind back to her infancy, and it is apprehended that she has no recollection of any thing at an earlier period than the long and painful illness in which she lost her senses. It seems that her notion of oral conversation is, that people make signs with the mouth and lips, as she does with her fingers.

Thus far her progress in the acquisition of language has been such as one would infer, *à priori*, from philosophical considerations, and it clearly shows how valuable language is, not only for the expression of thought, but for aiding mental development, and exercising the higher intellectual faculties. When Laura first began to use words, she evidently had no idea of any other use than to express the individual existence of things ; as book, spoon, &c. The sense of touch had of course given her an idea of their existence, and of their individual characteristics ; but it might be supposed that specific differences would

have been suggested to her also, that she would have reflected upon the comparative weight and size of substances, and have used words to express their specific, or generic character.

But it has not appeared to be so. Her first use of the words *great*, *small*, *heavy*, &c., was to convey merely individual peculiarities ; *great book*, was to her the double name of a particular book ; *heavy stone*, of a particular stone. She did not consider these terms expressive of any difference of quality ; for *great* and *heavy* were blended in her mind with the name of the objects : when she learned that persons had both individual and family names, she supposed that the same rule must apply to inanimate things, and asked the other name for chair, table, &c. Laura's knowledge of language, however, is no criterion of her knowledge of things, nor has she been taught mere words.

She is like a child placed in a foreign country where one or two persons only know her language, and she is constantly asking them the names of the objects around her.

The moral qualities of her nature have de-

veloped. She is remarkably correct in her deportment; never by any possibility is she seen out of her room with her dress disordered; and if by any chance a spot of dirt is pointed out to her on her person, or any little rent in her clothes, she discovers a sense of shame and hastens to remove it.

She is never found in an attitude or action at which the most fastidious would revolt, but is remarkable for neatness, order, and propriety. There is one fact, which is hard to explain in any way; it is her different deportment to persons of different sex. This was observable when she was only seven years old. She is very affectionate, and when with her female friends, she is constantly clinging to them, and often kissing and caressing them; and when she meets with strange ladies, she very soon becomes familiar, freely examines their dress, and readily allows them to notice her. But with those of the other sex it is entirely different, and she repels every approach to familiarity.

She is attached indeed to some, and fond of being with them; but she will not sit upon their knee, or allow them to take her round

the waist, or submit to those innocent familiarities which it is common to take with children of her age.

Laura seems to have a remarkable degree of conscientiousness for her years; she respects the rights of others, and will insist upon her own.

She is fond of acquiring property, and seems to understand the ownership of things which she has long since laid aside. She was never known to take any thing belonging to another; and never but in one or two instances to tell a falsehood, and then only under strong temptation. Great care indeed has been taken not to terrify her by punishment, or to ~~make~~ make it so severe as to tempt her to avoid it by duplicity, as children so often do. When she has done any thing wrong and grieved her teacher, she does not strive to conceal it from her companions, but communicates it to them; "*It is wrong, — cannot love wrong girl.*" When any nice thing is given her, she is particularly desirous that those who are ill, or otherwise afflicted, should share with her, although they may not be those of whom she is very fond; nay,

even if it be one she dislikes. She loves to be employed in attending the sick, and is most assiduous in her simple way, whilst she is tender and endearing in her demeanour. It has been before remarked that she can distinguish different degrees of intellect in others, and despises weakness of mind. This unamiable part of her character has been more clearly evinced. She chooses for her friends and companions those children who are intelligent and can best talk to her; and is inclined to make those who are deficient serve her purposes; if she associates with them she takes advantage of them, makes them wait upon her, in a manner she could not exact of others, and in various ways shows her Saxon blood.

She likes to have other children noticed by the teachers, and those whom she respects, to a certain point; but if this be carried too far she becomes jealous; she wants to have her share, which, if not the lion's, is the greater part, and if she does not obtain it, she says, "*My mother will love me.*"

Her tendency to imitation is so strong that it leads her to actions which must

be quite incomprehensible to herself, and which can give no other gratification than that of an internal faculty.

She one day pretended that her doll was ill, and went through all the motions of tending it, and giving it medicine ; she then put it carefully to bed, and placed a bottle of hot water to its feet, laughing all the time most heartily. When I saw her she insisted on my going to it to feel its pulse, and when I told her to put a blister to its back, she seemed to enjoy it amazingly, and almost screamed with delight. Her social feelings and affections are very strong, and when she is sitting at work, or at her studies, by the side of one of her young companions, she will break off from her task every few minutes to hug and kiss them, with an earnestness and warmth that is touching to behold. It is only when alone that she is quiet ; for if she become sensible of the presence of any one near her, she is restless until she can sit close beside them, hold their hand, and converse with them by signs.

She does not cry from vexation and dis-

appointment like other children, but only from grief. If she receive a blow by accident, or hurt herself, she laughs and jumps about as if to numb the pain by muscular action. If the pain be severe, she does not go to any one for sympathy, but tries to get away by herself, and then seems to give vent to a feeling of spite, by throwing herself about violently, and roughly handling whatever she takes hold of. Twice only have tears been drawn from her by severity of pain, and then she ran away as if ashamed of crying for an accidental injury.

But the fountain of her tears is by no means dried up, as is seen when her little friends are in pain, or her teacher grieved.

It is delightful to behold her continual gladness, her keen enjoyment of existence, her expansive love, her unhesitating confidence, her sympathy with suffering, her conscientiousness, truthfulness and hopefulness.

No religious feeling, properly so called, has yet been observed, but she has shown a

disposition to respect those who have power and knowledge, and to love those who have goodness ; and when her perceptive faculties shall have taken cognizance of the operations of nature, and she shall be accustomed to trace effects to their causes, then may her veneration be turned to Him who is almighty, her respect to Him who is omniscient, and her love to Him who is all goodness and love.

I trust that she can be made to conceive of future existence, and to lean upon the hope of it, as an anchor to her soul, in those hours when sickness and approaching death shall arouse to fearful activity the instinctive love of life which is possessed by her in common with all.

The next extract, taken from an American periodical, contains a lively account of a public meeting held at Salem in 1841, in which Laura is particularly described. It is interesting as a proof of the accuracy of the foregoing statements, and for the valuable testimony it bears to the successful efforts of her benefactor, Dr. Howe :—

Many of the pupils were quite young, and

their happy faces and cheerful demeanour made one almost cease to regret their deprivation of sight. Not the least interesting object among them was little Laura Bridgman, whose extraordinary case is now extensively known. She is very animated, has all the marks of fine intellectual faculties, and her countenance is exceedingly pleasing, I might say almost beautiful, for she has nothing of that repulsive appearance often manifested in those deprived of sight.

During the first part of the exhibition she was seated before a little desk in front of the platform, knitting with great assiduity and of course (being deaf, dumb, and blind,) during the whole time unobservant of what was going on around, unless some one touched her. Towards Dr. Howe she evinced the most unbounded attachment, clinging to his arm whenever he approached, and seeming unwilling to leave him. To her blind companions also she seemed tenderly attached, and would pass round among them, recognising each one by the touch, and giving some joyful manifestation

of recognition. In fact her fingers are her eyes, ears, tongue, and voice. By means of them she converses with, and understands her companions very readily, and it is astonishing to see with what wonderful rapidity ideas are communicated by the finger alphabet. In the course of the afternoon an incident occurred which showed Laura's power of recognition. Dr. Fisher, an intimate friend of Dr. Howe, whom Laura formerly knew, but whom she had not seen for some time, as he had only recently returned from Europe, was sitting by the stage when she passed near him. He reached out his arm and touched her hand; scarcely had Laura passed her hand over his, when she immediately knew him; her countenance brightened, and clapping her hands as if delighted, she communicated his name to Dr. Howe; although she had no idea that the gentleman was at the present time in this part of the world. In order to show the manner in which communications were made to her, one of her companions was desired to hold a conversation with her, which was done with great ease

and fluency, so to speak, by means of the manual signs; one ascertaining by the touch the letters which were made by the fingers of the other. Laura was asked where she was? The reply was, she did not know; but she presently answered, "*In a hall,*" and enquired, *Why she came there?* Her affectionate disposition has been often remarked, and she had hardly stood a moment by the side of the other girl, who was considerably taller than herself, when she reached up her arms, clasped her round the neck and kissed her in so touching and tender a manner as to call forth an irresistible burst of applause from the audience.

The exercises commenced with singing, the children were then examined in reading arithmetic, algebra, geography, and writing, in all of which the pupils evinced a praiseworthy proficiency.

Some of them were also advanced in natural philosophy and astronomy, but there was not time to examine them in these studies.

Dr. Howe stated in conclusion, that no

Institution in the world, not even the royal ones of Paris and Vienna, were better endowed than this ; and that the state of Massachusetts alone paid as much for the education of the blind as France with her thirty million !

Towards the end of the year 1841, Laura was taken on a visit to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum at Hartford, Connecticut, which is thus noticed by an eye-witness at the time.

November 1841.—“ I was at the school for the deaf and dumb this morning, when that interesting little creature Laura Bridgman, who has but one sense, (that of touch,) arrived from Boston, and made her first visit. She was accompanied by Dr. Howe, L. H. Sigourney, and some other persons, and her coming seemed to be quite unexpected. It is probable that there is hardly another person in the United States, whose appearance at the school would create such a sensation among the hundred and fifty inmates. Her name was familiar to all the pupils, who had doubtless marvelled much, how a dumb child, deprived also of

the sense of sight, by which they themselves learn every thing, should be able to read, write, and talk.

When the news was passed *from hand to hand* that Laura Bridgman was in the office, the teachers and pupils came thronging round her, and filled the room and passage, while all the way up the stair-case stood scores of little girls, with sparkling eyes and animated faces, eagerly gesticulating to each other and conversing rapidly in dumb show.

It was a beautiful sight, to see so much life and happiness among these unfortunates; but the principal attraction was little Laura, who having taken off her bonnet and cloak, appeared one of the most interesting children you ever saw. Slender and delicately formed, with beautiful features and fair complexion, so graceful were her motions, so animated her gesticulation, and so full of life was her countenance, that but for the green ribbon bound over her sightless orbs, you would have called her one of nature's most gifted children. Such is the power of the soul, such its inde-

pendence of sense. There stood this child, in a crowd, without one ray of light to pierce her ever-during darkness, without a sound to break the dreary stillness, without an odour even to show the presence of others, yet joyous as a bird, yet conscious of every thing that was going on, yet eager to shake hands with all, and to learn their names, delighted to find that every one could talk in her finger language, and evidently enjoying the boon of existence, and speaking in dumb but expressive language, the praise of Him who willeth the happiness of all whom He createth.

She was very impatient to meet Julia Brace, the only person in the world, perhaps, whose privation of sense approaches in degree to hers, and about whom it seems much had been told her.

At last Julia was brought down, and the two met and felt of each other. But what a difference between them ! Julia is a woman grown, and unprepossessing in her appearance, because she is without animation, without vivacity, without any expression of face. She was made to understand by

placing her fingers on Laura's eyes and on her ears, that she was blind and deaf like herself, but her countenance changed not, she manifested little interest, and in a moment or two began to withdraw from the child, who clung to her, put around her neck a chain of her own braiding, and kissed her. Vain impulse of affection! Julia coolly put into her pocket the present which Laura had brought her, and was making off from the child, whose distress now seemed evident, and who eagerly asked the others "*Why does she push me?—why does she not love me?*"

What a contrast in their character! Laura desired her affection and sympathy, and would not be satisfied without them; while Julia, having obtained her present, was desirous of terminating the interview, and carrying off her possession.

The kind and good people who have the charge of Julia Brace, * seem to do for her all they can; but this is little, for they have no means of communicating with her. I learn that they think of sending her to

* For a history of Julia Brace, see "Visitor," 1838.

the school for the blind in Boston, in the hope that the method by which Laura has been taught, may be successful with her.

I would gladly tell you more about this admirable institution, did I not know that it is familiar to you and most people; but none can ever become *too familiar* with the reflections which a sight of the deaf and dumb, or of any who are afflicted, naturally suggests. God in His goodness places means of enjoyment within the reach of the most desolate; how then should we, upon whom He absolutely showers down His gifts, to whom are open all the myriad sources of enjoyment in the world, of sight, sound, odours, and tastes; how should we soar above petty annoyances, and rejoicing in our existence, so live as most to praise its Giver.— *From the Massachusetts Spy.*

But to proceed with Dr. Howe's report of her in 1842:—

This interesting child has continued through the past year to make rapid progress in the acquisition of knowledge. She seems, indeed, to advance in a geometrical ratio, for every step which she takes aids

her in that which is to follow. She can now comprehend and use all the parts of speech ; and although her vocabulary is still very small, it is so perfectly familiar, as to be to her exactly what speech is to others—the vehicle for thought.

She laboured for a long time under a difficulty, like that experienced by persons learning a foreign language ; she had to make an effort to recall the sign with which she was to associate an idea ; but now the association is not only spontaneous and immediate, but, as with others, apparently necessary. As when we see an object,—a house, a dog,—we invariably think of the words *house*, *dog*,—so every thing with which Laura comes in contact, is instantly suggestive of its name in her finger language.

A person, looking earnestly for any thing that is lost, on suddenly finding it, will think of the words, “I have found it,” or, “Here it is,” and perhaps he may utter them aloud. So with Laura ; doubtless every thought instantly and spontaneously suggests the finger language ; for if she be intently engaged by herself, her fingers are

moving, and, as it were, mechanically forming the letters, though so swift and fleeting are the motions that no eye can trace them. She has often been arrested when thus soliloquising, and when asked to tell distinctly what she had been saying to herself, she has laughed, and sometimes said, "*I cannot remember*;" at other times, by a strong mental effort, she has recalled the fleeting thoughts, and repeated them slowly.

Visitors are sometimes amazed that her teachers can read the words as she forms them on her fingers; for so swift and varied are the motions, that they can perceive them only as they see indistinctly the spokes of a wheel in rapid motion; but, as by increase of motion these separate spokes disappear, or are seen but as one, so do the motions of Laura's fingers, when she is talking rapidly to herself, become confused and illegible, even to those most conversant with them. Another proof of the spontaneous connexion between her thoughts and these arbitrary signs, is the fact that, when asleep, and disturbed by dreams, her fingers are at work, as if uttering her thoughts irregularly, as

we murmur them indistinctly in broken slumbers.

So strong seems the tendency to utter vocal sounds, that Laura uses them for different persons of her acquaintance, having a distinct sound for each one. When after a short absence she returns into the sitting-room, where there are a dozen blind girls, she embraces them by turns, uttering rapidly, and in a high key, the peculiar sound which designates each ; and so different are they, that any of the blind girls can tell whom she is with. Now if she were talking about any of these blind girls to another person, she would make the sign for them on her fingers without hesitation ; but it seems probable that the thought of their vocal sign occurs first, and is translated into the finger language, because when she is alone, she sometimes utters these sounds, or names of persons. She said, in answer to a question why she uttered a certain sound rather than spell the name, “ *I think of Jennette’s* noise,—many times, when I think how she give me good things ; I do not think to spell her name.*” At

* Dr. Howe’s sister.

another time, she was heard in the room adjoining, making the peculiar sound for Jennette, and was asked why she made it ;
“ Because I think how she do love me much, and I love her very much.”

Laura has now almost uninterrupted health, and is tall of her age, well-proportioned, very strong, and active. The acuteness of her touch, and of the sense of feeling generally, has sensibly increased. She can perceive when any one touches a piano in the same room with her ; she says,
“ Sound comes through the floor to my feet, and up to my head.”

She recognises her friends by the slightest touch of their hands, or of their dress. For instance she never fails to notice when I have changed my coat, though it be for one of the same color, cut, and cloth ;—if it be only a little more or less worn than the usual one she perceives it, and asks, *“ Why ? ”* It would appear that in these perceptions she employs not only a sense of touch, but derives great assistance from what might be called a sixth sense,—the sense of muscular resistance. Aided by both of these, she has

acquired surprising facility in ascertaining the situation and relation of things around her. Especially is it curious to see how accurate is her perception of the direction or bearing of objects from her : for by much practice and observation she has attained, to some extent, what the bee and some other insects have in such perfection by instinct—the power of going straight towards a given point without any guide or landmark. When she is desired to go from any part of the room to a particular door or window, she walks directly and confidently on, not groping, or feeling the walls ; she stops at the right instant, raises her hand in the right direction, and places it upon the door-handle, or whatever point she may have aimed it. Of course, it is not supposed that she can exercise this power in a new place, but that she has attained great facility in ascertaining her actual position in regard to external things.

In walking in the street, she endeavours to learn all she can of the nature of the ground she is treading on ; but she gives herself up generally to her leader, clinging

very closely. I have sometimes, in play, or to note the effect, suddenly dropped her hand, when she was in a strange place, and started out of her reach, at which she manifested not fear, but bewilderment and perplexity. In order to ascertain her mode of estimating distance, length, &c., hard substances have been drawn through her hand. When a cane has thus been passed through her hand, she says it is long or short *somewhat* according as it is moved with more or less rapidity, that is, according to the duration of the impression: but she appears to obtain some idea of the rapidity of the motion even of the smoothest substances, and modifies her judgment thereby. I have tried to excite the dormant senses, or to create impressions, by electricity and galvanism, but with only partial success. When a galvanic circuit is made by pressing one piece of metal against the mucous membrane of the nose, and another against the tongue, the nerves of taste are affected, and she says it is like medicine.

The subject of dreaming has been attended to, to ascertain whether there is any spon-

taneous activity of the brain, or any part of it, which would give her sensations resembling those arising from the action of light, sound, &c., upon other persons, but without obtaining positive evidence. At present, it seems that her dreams are only the spontaneous production of sensations similar to those which she experiences while awake. She often relates her dreams, and says, "*I dreamed to talk;*" if asked if she talked with her mouth, she says "*No,*" very emphatically,—"*I do not dream to talk with mouth; I dream to talk with fingers.*" She came one morning with a disturbed look, and said, "*I cried much in the night, because I did dream you said good bye, to go over the water.*"

Experiments have been tried, so far as they were deemed perfectly innocent and unobjectionable, to ascertain whether strong magnets, magnetic tractors, or animal magnetism, have any effect upon her, without any apparent result.

In the development of her intellectual powers, and in the acquisition of knowledge, not only of language, but of external things

and their relations, she has been progressing. The principal labour has, of course, been upon the mere vehicle of thought—language ; and if, as has been remarked, it is well for children that they do not know what a task is before them when they begin to learn language, how much more strongly does this apply to Laura ! They hear these words on every side, and learn them without effort ; they see them in books, and every day scores of them are recorded in their minds ; the mountain of their difficulty vanishes fast, and they finish their labour, thinking in the innocence of their hearts, that it is only play ; but she, poor thing ! in darkness and silence must attack and weigh and measure every grain of which it is composed ; and it is a rebuke to those who find so many lions in the path of knowledge, to see how incessantly and devotedly she labours on from morn till night of every day, and laughs as if her task were the pleasantest thing in the world.

She can now converse with any person who knows how to make the letters of the manual alphabet for mutes. Most of the

members of our large household, and many of our friends can do this, so that she has a pretty wide circle to commune with. She can read understandingly in very simple introductory books for the blind ; and she takes delight in doing so, provided some one is near her, to explain the new words ; for she will never, as children are often allowed to do, pass over a new word, and guess the meaning from the others, but she is very uneasy, and runs round shaking her hands, until she finds some one to explain it.

Discoursing one day with her teacher about animals, she said, “ *Why do dog not live with pig ?* ” Being told that pigs live in a sty, and were dirty, while dogs love to be clean, she asked, “ *What do make the dog clean ? When he has washed him where do he wipe ?—on grass ?* ” She is very curious to know all about animals, and it is necessary to satisfy her upon every point.

A hundred conversations like the following might be recorded.

After hearing an account of worms, she said :—

Laura.—Has your mother got some worms ?

Teacher.—No, worms do not live in the house.

L.—Why ?

T.—They live out of doors, that they may get things to eat.

L.—And to play ? Did you see worm ?

T.—Yes.

L.—Had he eyes ?

T.—Yes.

L.—Had he ears ?

T.—I did not see any.

L.—Had he think ? (Touching her forehead.)

T.—No.

L.—Does he breathe ?

T.—Yes.

L.—Much ? (At the same time putting her hand on her chest, and breathing hard.)

T.—No.

L.—When he is tired ?

T.—Not very hard.

L.—Do worm know you ? Is he afraid when hens eat him ?

After a visit to a barn, she asked many

questions, as, "*Can cow push horse with horns? Do horse and cow sleep in barn? Do horse sit up late?*" She was told that horses did not sit up. She laughed, and said, "*Do horses stand up late?*"

One day her lesson was upon the materials of which knives are made; being told that the handles were made of horn, she became very much interested in learning all about horns, their dimensions, use, &c. &c. "*Why do cows have horns?*" said she. To keep bad cows off, when they trouble them. "*Do bad cows know to go away, when good cow pushes them?*" After sitting some time in thought, she said, "*Why do cows have two horns? to push two cows?*" moving her hands in the direction in which she supposed the cows would go when pushed. Thus by cheerful toil and patient labour she gleans her scanty harvest of knowledge, and reproves those who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not.

She one day found a blank notice, printed in raised letters, running thus:—"Sir, There will be a meeting of Trustees, &c., Yours, respectfully, &c." She ran in haste to her

teacher, saying, "*What is Sir? What is Trustees? What is respectfully? What is Yrs.?*"

The journal says, "I defined *sir*, and *yours*; she received my explanation of *sir* without comment; and when I told her *yrs.* meant *yours*, she remarked, '*Like thine.*' I could not decide how to explain *respectfully*, but told her she must wait till after dinner. After more thought, I decided it was best not to attempt it, and said, I would teach her when she was tall, or she might ask the doctor. She seemed very sad, and said, '*I will ask Doctor, for I must know.*'"

When I had been absent from home a month, she was told I should come back in a month more; she said, "*Doctor will not come for four weeks; four weeks and four weeks make eight weeks; he is going to make many schools.*" She then asked, "*Will there be deaf boys and girls too in the schools?*" "*Will doctor be very tired; does he stay to take care of many little blind girls?*"

Laura is interested in conversation of a general nature; talking of vacation, she made an unusually long sentence:—"I must go

to Hanover, to see my mother ; but no, I shall be very weak to go far ; I will go to Halifax if I can go with you. If Doctor is gone, I think I will go with Jennette ; if Doctor is at home, I cannot go, because he does not like to be left alone ; and if Jennette is gone, he cannot mend his clothes and fix all things alone."

If this dear child's life be spared, she will furnish argument stronger than cold philosophy can bring to refute materialism, and to assert the native powers of the human soul, which can struggle against such obstacles, and from such utter darkness, until it sports joyously in the light of knowledge.

She has kept a little diary during the last year, and writes down an account of what she has done, learned, or said, during the day. She writes a legible hand, and some of her remarks are very interesting.

She is fond of writing letters ; and the following, which is entirely of her own composition, will give an idea of her style :—

“ Dear Mrs. Morton,—I was glad to have letter from you. You were very good to write to me. I want you to write to

me soon. Miss Rogers sends her love to you very much. I send love and kiss to you. I am well now. Miss Rogers and Swift are very well. Oliver can talk fast than me do. Laurena is very much better now ; she will have standing stool to walk in, if she can learn good. Dr. Howe went away and came again. Miss Pilly is sick in her head bad. I do not forget to think of you many times. I walk in street all day, to make me well and strong. Miss J—— sends her love to you. I told Caroline to come and see you ; she would come with me soon, in vacation, to see you long. All girls and dolls are well. I will write to you again soon. I want to see you very much. I came to Halifax to see you, with Miss J. and Swift. I was very glad to know in new words. I do read in books. Miss Rogers teach me about it. Oliver knows all things good. J—— bought new two handkerchiefs for me, and she was good. Good bye.

“ LAURA BRIDGMAN.”

The following extracts will show her idea about the seat of sensation. “During the

lesson to-day, Laura stopped suddenly, and holding her forehead, said, '*I think very hard ; was I baby did I think ?*' "

Again, " Laura came to me to-day, saying, '*Doctor will come in fourteen days, I think in my head.*' I asked her if she did not think in her side and heart ? '*No,*' said she, '*I cannot think in heart, I think in head.*' '*Why ?*' '*I cannot know ; all little girls cannot know about heart.*' When she is disappointed, or a friend is sick, and she is at all sad, she says, '*My heart aches : when heart aches, does blood run ?*' She had been told about the blood circulating, but supposed it did so only when she could feel it. '*Does blood run in my eyes ? I cannot feel eyes blood run.*' One day, when probably her brain was fatigued, she said, '*Why cannot I stop to think ? I cannot help to think all days ; do you stop to think ? Does Harrison stop to think now he is dead ?*' " This was just after the President's death, an event about which the blind children had talked much among themselves, and to Laura.

And here, upon giving what seem to me the child's notions about death, it will be proper to remark that they are less curious

and valuable to the psychologist, than they would have been had she been more completely isolated. Within the last year, she has acquired great facility of conversing with other persons, and of course may have received notions from them. It would have been perfectly easy to isolate her by adopting an arbitrary system of signs, and not teaching it to others; but this would have been great injustice to the child, because the only possible way to make her familiar with language, was constant opportunity of exercising it as fast as she learned it.

Great caution, however, has been used with regard to the manner of her intercourse with others, and to the persons also. Latterly she has shown much less desire to be with children, than when she could use only a few words, and when she delighted to frolic and romp with them. She will now sit quietly alone by the hour, writing or sewing, and occasionally indulging in a soliloquy, or an imaginary dialogue.

But to return to her notion of death, which leads us rather from the intellectual to the moral part of her nature. The

attachment to life is such a strong and universal feeling, that if any thing deserves the name of an innate sense, this certainly does.

It acts, however, instinctively and blindly, and I doubt not influences Laura's feelings, and causes her to shrink from any thing which may alarm her love of existence by suggesting that it may cease. It appears she had been taken to a funeral before she came here, though no satisfactory account could ever be obtained from any one, of the impression it made upon her : indeed it was impossible then to do more than guess, from her appearance, what was passing in her mind. She can now herself describe the feeling which then agitated her on touching, for the first time, a corpse. She was acquainted with two little girls, sisters, in Cambridge, Adeline and Elizabeth. Adeline died in 1840. Not long since, in giving her a lesson in geography, her teacher began to describe Cambridge ; the mention of Cambridge brought up a new subject, and she asked, "*Did you see Adeline in box?*" "Yes." "*She was very cold, and not smooth ; ground*

made her rough." I tried to change the subject, but in vain ; she wished to know how long the box was, &c. ; she said, "*Drew told me about Adeline: did she feel? Did Elizabeth cry and feel sick? I did not cry, because I did not think much about it.*" She then drew her hands in shudderingly, as if cold. I asked her what was the matter: she said, "*I thought about how I was afraid to feel of dead man before I came here, when I was very little girl with my mother; I felt of dead heads, eyes, and nose; I thought it was man's; I did not know.*"

It is impossible that any one could have said any thing to her on the subject ; she could not know whether the state the man was in was temporary or lasting ; she knew only, that there was a human being, once moving and breathing like herself, but now confined in a coffin, cold, and still, and stiff, —in a state which she could not comprehend, but from which nature made her recoil. During the past year, she once refused to eat meat, and being asked why, she said, "*Because it is dead.*" I pushed the enquiry, and found she had been in the kitchen, and

felt a dead turkey, from which she suddenly recoiled. She continued disinclined to eat meat for some weeks, but gradually came to her appetite again ; and now, although she understands that fowls, sheep, calves, &c., are killed to furnish meat, she eats it with relish. Thus, it appears that, like other human beings, she has that instinctive attachment to life, which is necessary to its preservation, and which makes her shrink from any thing that reminds her of its possible extinction, without, nevertheless, its being so strong as seriously to mar her enjoyment of existence.

Laura is still so young, so child-like in appearance and action, that it is impossible to suppose she has yet any idea of sex ; nevertheless, no young lady can be more modest and proper in dress and deportment than she is. It has been suggested that, as her father was obliged, when she was young, to coerce her to many things which she was disinclined to do, she may have conceived a fear of every one in man's dress. But, on the other hand, she was much accustomed, from childhood, to the society of a simple,

kind-hearted man, who loved her tenderly, and with whom she was perfectly familiar : it was not, therefore, the dress that affected her.

I may add, moreover, that from the time she came here, she has never been accustomed to be in company with any man but myself; and that I have very carefully refrained from even those endearing caresses which are naturally bestowed upon a child of eight years old, to whom one is tenderly attached. But this will not account for such facts as the following :—during the last year, she received from a lady a present of a beautifully dressed doll, with a bed, bed-clothes, and chamber furniture of all kinds. Never was a child happier than she ; and a long time passed in examining and admiring the wardrobe and furniture. The wash-stand was arranged, towels were folded, the bureau was put in place, the linen was deposited in the little drawers ; at last, the bed was nicely made, the pillow smoothed, the top-sheet turned trimly over, and the bed half-opened, as if coquettishly inviting Miss Dolly to come in ; but here Laura began to

hesitate, and kept coming to my chair to see if I were still in the room, and going away again laughing when she found me. At last I went out, and as soon as she perceived the jar of the shutting door, she commenced undressing the doll, and putting it to bed, eagerly desiring her teacher to admire the operation.

When she meets with a man she shrinks back coyly ; but if it be a lady she is familiar, and will receive and return caresses ; nevertheless she has no manner of fear or awe of me. She plays with me as she would with a girl. Hardly a day passes without a game at romps between us ; yet never, even by inadvertence, does she transgress the most scrupulous propriety ; and would as instinctively and promptly correct any derangement of her dress as a girl of fourteen, trained to the strictest decorum. Perceiving one day that I had kissed a little girl, much younger than herself, she noticed it, and stood thinking a moment, and then asked me gravely, "*Why did you kiss Rebecca ?*" and some hours after she asked the same question again.

She had heard much of little Oliver Caswell, the deaf and blind boy, before he came, and was very desirous to know him. During their first interview, after she became familiar and playful, she suddenly snatched a kiss,—but drew back as quick as lightning, and by the expression of her countenance, and a little confusion of manner, showed that by a hasty impulse she had done something of the propriety of which she was doubtful. This is the only instance in which I have known her to show the sense of shame, or to have any occasion to show it, even if this can be considered as one.

The development of her moral nature, during the past year, has been such as her previous sweetness of temper, benevolence, and truthfulness, led me to expect.

Two or three instances are recorded in her teacher's journal, of apparent unkindness on Laura's part to other children, and one instance of some ill temper to a grown person ; but so contradictory are they to the whole tenor of her character and behaviour, that I must infer either a misunderstanding

of her motives by others, or ill-judged conduct on their part.

For instance, her teacher says, July 2nd :
“ A complaint was entered against Laura, that she pinched Lucy and made her cry. I talked with Laura about it. I told her, ‘ Laurena told Doctor you pinched Lucy’s nose, and made her cry : ’ before I had finished the sentence, she smiled, and seemed by the expression of her face to think that it was very ridiculous to pinch her nose, but when she was told that Lucy cried, she changed countenance, and was immediately sad ; she said, ‘ *When did I pinch Lucy’s nose ?* ’ I said, ‘ Laurena said yesterday. ’ ‘ *After how many schools ?* ’ I told her I did not know. She thought a moment, and then said eagerly, ‘ *I pinched Lucy’s nose after one school to play.* ’ (She computes the time of day by the hours of school ; ‘ *after one school* ’ means after seven o’clock, the first morning recess.) ‘ *I did not mean to make her cry, because I played. Did Lucy know I was wrong ?* ’ I told her Lucy did not know when she played, and she must play softly. I asked her if she loved

Lucy ; she replied, ‘ *Yes, but Lucy does not hug me.* ’ ‘ *Why does she not ?* ’ ‘ *Because she is very deaf and blind, and does not know how to love me ; she is very weak to hug.* ’ ”

I will now give some extracts from my diary, showing her conscientiousness.

“ September 17. I tested Laura’s conscientiousness by relating a simple story.—A little boy went to see a lady, and the lady gave him two birds, one for himself and one for his sister ; she put them in a basket for him to carry home, and told him not to open the basket until he got home ; the boy went into the street, and met another boy, who said, ‘ *Open the basket, and let me feel the birds ;* ’ and the boy said, ‘ *No, no ;* ’ but the other boy said ‘ *Yes, yes ;* ’ and then the boy opened the basket, and they felt the birds. Did he do right ? She paused, and said, ‘ *Yes.* ’ I said, *Why ?* She replied, ‘ *He did not remember.* ’ If he did remember, did he do right ? She answered, ‘ *Little wrong to forget.* ’ I then continued,—When the boys did feel the birds, one bird was killed. Here she became very much excited, and manifested the greatest anxiety and distress,

saying, '*Why did boy feel hard?*' '*Why did bird not fly?*' I went on:—He carried the basket and birds home, and gave the dead bird to his sister; did he do right or wrong? she said, '*Wrong.*' Why? '*To kill bird.*' I said, Who must have the live bird, the boy, or the girl? She said, '*Girl.*' Why? '*Because boy was careless, and girl was not careless.*' She was at first a little confused about the persons, but decided promptly the question of right and wrong, both in respect to opening the basket, and about who ought to possess the bird.

She supposed it was all reality, and I could not well make her conceive the object of the fable, much less give her an idea of the ingenious author of it.

Her mind was for some time entirely occupied with this story, and she afterwards asked, '*Did man knock boy because he kill bird?*' I said, No, the boy's heart did knock him; does your heart knock you, when you do wrong?

She inquired about the beating of the heart, and said, '*My heart did knock little when I did do wrong.*' She asked, '*Why blood come*

in face? I said, When wrong is done: she paused, and said, '*Blood did come in Olive's face, when she did tell lie; do blood come in your face when you do wrong?*'"

It is most pleasing to observe that beautiful spirit of charity which prompts her to extenuate the faults of others, and which, when any story of the kind is related to her, leads her to apologise for the person who appears to be in the wrong, and to say, "*He did forget,*" or, "*He did not mean to do wrong.*" The same may be said of that spirit of truthfulness which makes all children believe implicitly what is told them, how extravagant soever it may be, but which Laura has preserved long after the age at which others have thrown it aside.

I have already made this report so long, that I must leave unnoticed many subjects which I would gladly touch upon; and even upon that which will interest so many,—her ideas of God,—I must be brief.

During the past year she has shown very great inquisitiveness in relation to the origin of things. She knows that men made houses, furniture, &c., but of her own accord

seemed to infer, that they did not make themselves, or natural objects.

She therefore asks, "*Who made dogs, horses, and sheep ?*"

She has learnt from books, and perhaps from other children, the word *God*, but has formed no definite idea on the subject. Not long since, when her teacher was explaining the structure of a house, she was puzzled to know "*how the masons piled up bricks before floor was made to stand on.*"

When this was explained, she asked, "*When did masons make Jennette's parlour ? —before all Gods made all folks ?*"

I am now occupied in devising various ways of giving her an idea of immaterial power by means of the attraction of magnets, the pushing of vegetation, &c., and intend attempting to convey to her some adequate idea of the great Creator and Ruler of all things.

I am fully aware of the immeasurable importance of the subject, and of my own inadequacy ; I am aware, too, that pursue what course I may, I shall incur more of human censure than of approbation : but

incited by the warmest affection for the child, and guided by the best exercise of the humble abilities which God has given me, I shall go on in the attempt to give her a faint idea of the power and love of that Being, whose praise she is every day so clearly proclaiming, by her glad enjoyment of the existence which He has given her.

S. J. HOWE.

A recent traveller in North America has given an animated account of Laura, whom he saw during a visit to the Blind Institution in Boston, last year, which forms an interesting conclusion to the report of 1842.

* * * * * “I sat down in another room, before a girl, blind, deaf, and dumb; destitute of smell; and nearly so of taste: a fair young creature, with every human faculty, and hope, and power of goodness and affection, inclosed within a delicate frame, and with but one outward sense,—the sense of touch. There she was before me; built up as it were in a marble cell, imper-

vious to any ray of light, 'or particle of sound ; with her poor white hand peeping through a chink in the wall, beckoning to some good man for help, that the immortal soul might be awakened. Long before I looked upon her, the help had come. Her face was radiant with intelligence and pleasure. Her hair, braided by her own hands, was bound about a head whose intellectual capacity and development were beautifully expressed in its graceful outline, and its broad open brow ; her dress, arranged by herself, was a pattern of neatness and simplicity ; the work she had knitted lay beside her ; her writing-book was on the desk she leaned upon. From the mournful ruin of such bereavement, there had slowly risen up this' gentle, tender, guileless, grateful-hearted being.

“ Like other inmates of that house, she had a green ribbon bound round her eye-lids. A doll she had dressed lay near upon the ground. I took it up, and saw that she had made a green fillet, such as she wore herself, and fastened it about its mimic eyes. She was seated in a little enclosure, made by

school-desks and forms, writing her daily journal. But soon finishing this pursuit, she engaged in an animated communication with a teacher who sat beside her. This was a favorite mistress with the poor pupil."

(An extract from the report on her case, already quoted, is then introduced, to which the writer adds :—)

"Such are a few fragments from the simple but most interesting history of Laura Bridgman. The name of her great benefactor and friend who writes it, is Doctor Howe. There are not many persons, I hope and believe, who after reading these passages, can ever hear that name with indifference.

"I turned over the leaves of her diary, and found it written in a fair legible square hand, and expressed in terms which were quite intelligible without any explanation. On my saying that I should like to see her write again, the teacher who sat beside her bade her, in their language, sign her name upon a slip of paper, twice or thrice. In doing so, I observed that she kept her left hand always touching and following up her

right, in which, of course, she held the pen. No line was indicated by any contrivance, but she wrote straight and freely.

“She had, until now, been unconscious of the presence of visitors; but having her hand placed in that of the gentleman who accompanied me, she immediately expressed his name upon her teacher’s palm. Indeed, her sense of touch is now so exquisite, that having been acquainted with a person once, she can recognise him after almost any interval. This gentleman had been in her company, I believe, very seldom, and certainly had not seen her for many months. My hand she rejected at once; as she does that of any man who is a stranger to her. But she retained my wife’s with evident pleasure, kissed her, and examined her dress, with a girl’s curiosity and interest.

“She was merry and cheerful, and showed much innocent playfulness in her intercourse with her teacher. Her delight on recognising a favorite playfellow and companion—herself a blind girl—who silently, and with an equal enjoyment of the coming surprise, took a seat beside her, was beautiful

to witness. It elicited from her at first, as other slight circumstances did, twice or thrice during my visit, an uncouth noise, which was rather painful to hear; but on her teacher touching her lips she immediately desisted, and embraced her laughingly and affectionately." *

The report dated "Boston, 1843," having just come to hand through the kindness of a friend, with a neat specimen of Laura's knitting, her history is brought very nearly to the present time, and is thus continued:—

In drawing up an account of the progress of our interesting pupil, during the past year, I shall rather aim to give information to the general readers of our annual report, and to those numerous persons who watch with interest the progress of the experiment of her education, than to detail any new facts.

Her health has been excellent during the

* From American Notes; by Charles Dickens. Vol. i. p. 73. 1842.

year, uninterrupted indeed by a single day's illness. Several medical gentlemen have expressed their fears that the continual mental excitement which she manifests, and the restless activity of her mind, must affect her health, and perhaps endanger the soundness of her mental faculties ; but any such tendency has been effectually counteracted, by causing her to practise callisthenic exercises, and to take long walks daily in the open air, which sometimes extend to six miles. Besides, she has a safeguard in the nature of her emotions, which are always joyful, pleasant, and hopeful ; and there is no doubt that the flow of spirits she constantly enjoys, contributes not only to her physical health, but to the development of her mind. Laura generally appears, by the quickness of her motions and the eagerness of her gestures, to be in a state of mind which in another would be called unnatural excitement.

Her spirit, apparently impatient of its narrow bounds, is, as it were, continually pressing against the bars of its cage, and

struggling, if not to escape, at least to obtain more of the sights and sounds of the outer world.

The signs by which she expresses her ideas are slow and tedious; her thoughts outstrip their tardy vehicle, and fly forward to the goal; she evidently feels desirous of talking faster than she can, and she loves best to converse with those who best interpret the motion of her fingers, when they are so rapid as to be unintelligible to a common eye. But with all this activity of the mental machinery, there is none of the wear and tear produced by the grit of discontent; every thing is made smooth by the oil of gladness. She rises uncalled at an early hour, she begins the day as merrily as the lark, she is laughing as she attires herself, and comes dancing out of her chamber as though every morn were that of a gala-day. She goes to her lesson, but knows not the word *task*; she gaily assists others in what they call house-work, but which she deems play; she is delighted with society, and clings to others as though she would grow to them.

The general course of instruction pursued during the past year, corresponding as it does with that detailed in former reports, needs not here to be repeated.

Laura goes on joyously, using her single small talent, patiently piling up her little heap of knowledge, and rejoicing as much over it as if it were a pyramid. It may be well to explain here what was before said about Laura's making a peculiar sound whenever she meets any person, which she calls that person's noise. When she meets me, one of the pupils, or any intimate friend, she instantly makes a noise with the vocal organs ; for one a chuckle, for another a cluck, for the third a nasal sound, &c. These to her are names affixed to each person. They are known by those well acquainted with her ; when they speak to her of such an one, she makes his "*noise*," and these names have become so associated with the parties, that sometimes when she is sitting by herself, and the thought of a friend comes in her mind, she utters his "*noise*," as she calls it, meaning his name.

Now as she cannot hear a sound—as she

never attempts, like deaf and dumb persons, to attract the attention of others by making a noise, it follows that impelled by the natural tendency of the human mind to attach signs to every thought, she selects the natural vehicle for the expression of it, and exercises the vocal organs, but without any definite view of producing an effect. This would seem to prove that men did not select vocal sounds for a colloquial medium from among other possible media, but that it is the natural one. It may be remarked, that Laura laughs aloud, and more naturally than most deaf persons, and that she is almost constantly doing so. This is not checked at all, although it is not always an agreeable sound, because there is some danger that her pulmonary organs may suffer for want of that natural and healthy exercise which other persons have from speaking aloud.

In romping she becomes quite noisy, and thus obtains some exercise for her lungs.

Much attention has been paid to improve her in the use of language, and at the same

time to increase her stock of knowledge. A useful exercise for this purpose has been to tell her some story, and to require her to repeat it in her own language, after she has forgotten the precise words in which it was related to her.

The following story was related to her one day :—

JOHN AND THE PLUMS.

1. An old man had a plum-tree, and when the plums were ripe, he said to his boy, John,

2. I want you to pick the plums off my tree, for I am an old man, and I cannot get up into my tree, to pick them.

3. Then John said, Yes, sir, I will get up into the tree, and pick them for you.

4. So the boy got up, and the old man gave him a pail to put the plums in, and he hung it up in the tree near him.

5. And then he put the plums into the pail, one by one, till the pail was full.

6. When the boy saw that the pail was full, he said to the old man, Let me give you the pail, for it is full.

7. Then the man held up his hand and took the pail of plums, and put them in his cart.

8. For, said he, I am to take them to town in my cart, to sell them ; and he gave the pail back to the boy, to fill with more plums.

9. At last the boy said, I am tired and hot ; will you give me a plum to eat ?

10. Yes, said the old man, for you are a good boy, and have worked well ; so I will give you ten plums, for you have earned them.

11. The boy was glad to hear him say so, and said, I do not want to eat them all now. I will eat five, and take five home to my sister.

12. You may get down now, said the old man, for it will soon be dark, and then you will lose your way home.

13. So the boy got down and ran home, and felt glad that he had been kind to the old man.

14. And when he got home he was glad he had been kind to his sister, and kept half his plums for her.

The next day she was requested to recall it to memory, and to write it down in her journal, which she did in the following words :—

“An old man had a large plum-tree,—he had a little boy, John ; the man asked John to please to go up on the tree, to pick many plums, because he was very old and lame. The man gave John a pail for plums. John put them in till it was very full ; he said to the man, It is very full of plums. He took the pail up in his cart to sell them. John was tired and hot ; he asked the man if he might take one plum. The man said he might take ten plums, because he was a good boy to earn them hard. The man told him to hurry home. He ate five plums ; he gave his sister five plums : he felt very happy because he helped the old man much, and made his sister happy. John was kind to help the old man ; he was very generous to give his sister part of his plums. The old man loved John very much. If John did not hurry home he would have lost the way. John liked to help the old man well.”

It will be seen that she made some moral reflections of her own, which were not expressed in the original story. The following

extract from the journal of Miss Swift, her teacher, is interesting.

February 27th.—When I went to Laura after recess, she said, “*I was very much frightened ;*” Why ? “*I thought I felt some one make a great noise, and I trembled, and my heart ached very quick.*” She asked me if I knew any “*crazy persons,*” then altered it to “*crazy,*” then to “*crazy ;*” I asked her who gave her the new word, “*crazy.*” She said, “*Laurena told me about crazy persons, and said she was (once) crazy ; what is crazy ?*” I told her that crazy persons could not think what they were doing, and attempted to change the subject ; but she immediately returned to it, and repeated the question, “*Have you seen crazy people ?*” and would not be satisfied until I answered it. I told her I saw a crazy woman walking about ; she said, “*Why did she walk—how could she think to walk ?*” (She detected here the imperfection of her teacher’s definition.) I told her they were sometimes sick, and became crazy ; she said, “*Who will take care of me if I am crazy ?*” I laughed at her, and told her she would not be crazy. She replied, “*I said if.*” I told

her I would take care of her if she would be kind and gentle to me. She then asked, "*Can I talk with my fingers?—did you ever see a dizzy lady?—how do you dizzy?*"

Laura said she dreamed last night about her mother and the baby, and talked with her fingers, as in the day-time. I questioned her particularly on what she dreamed, but could not get a satisfactory answer.

She wrote a letter to her father and her mother of her own accord; that to her mother was as follows:—

"My dear, my mother,—I want to see you very much. I send much love to you. I send ten kisses to my sister Mary. My one pair of stockings are done. Can Mary walk with her feet? Do stockings fit her? I want you to write a letter to me sometime. Miss Swift teaches me. I want you to come to South Boston with my sister, to stay few days, and see me exercising the callisthenics. Oliver can talk with his fingers very faster about words. I will write a letter to you again. Miss J. and Dr. send love to you. Miss Davis is married, Mrs, Davis. She has gone to live

with her husband in Dudley. Is Mary well? Is my aunt well? I send love to her. I will write letter to you soon some-time. Why did you not write letter to me? I go to meeting every Sunday. I am gentle in church with Miss Rogers. I am happy there. Good bye.

“LAURA BRIDGMAN.”

She has commenced the study of geography during the past year, and made fair progress. Having first acquired an idea of the points of the compass, and taken some preliminary lessons by bounding her school-room, the chambers, entries, &c., and then going out into the premises, bounding the house and yard, she was then put to a map. It will be more interesting to give some extracts from her teacher's journal to show how she passes her time of study, though no words can describe adequately the eagerness of her manner, and the pleasurable expression of her countenance when she gets a new idea, and turns to hug her teacher in her glee.

February 2nd—She asked me if she

was good yesterday ; I told her yes, she had been good all the week ; she said, "*Did I do any little thing wrong ?*"

Continued the conversation on trades, and taught her the word *furniture*. When I was telling her what work milliners did, she said, "*Do milliners make stockings?—milliners make stockings that have flowers on them.*"

At the geography hour she asked me to teach her "*above,*" meaning the chambers ; she bounded to-day all the rooms on the second story, and remembered all of yesterday's lesson, without going to the rooms.

In writing, gave her a lesson on the board ; she does not succeed so well on that as Oliver. At twelve, began to tell her about seeds, and told her I would talk to her about what her father did. (He is a farmer.) She said, "*How you know what my father does? Does your father do so ?*" No, my father is doctor. "*Why is not my father doctor? He gave me medicine once ; was he a doctor ?*" Did not succeed to-day in getting her much interested in seeds. P. M. She worked very industriously.

February 3rd.—Gave Laura examples in numeration, in hundreds and thousands, which she performed very well, and numerated correctly, until she had the number 8,500, which she wrote 805,0; she hesitated and said, "*I think it is wrong,*" and enumerated, but it took her a long time to find how to alter it; when she at length succeeded, she said, "*I was very sad not to know.*" Laura asked what cups and plates and saucers were; taught her the word crockery. "*What are rings?*" Taught her jewelry. "*What are knives and forks,*" &c. Next she got her work-box, for me to tell of what it was made; told her about the pearl with which it is inlaid, and the name of the wood, rose. She asked, of what the doors were made; told her pine; she asked, "*Why are pine apples, pine?*" She wanted to know who made the brass hinges. She talked about her locket, and wanted to know what colour it was under the glass; told her it was black. "*How can folks see through black?*" In geography she bounds any of the rooms now, after a moment's thought, and seems

to understand all about it ; she bounded the house with a little help ; talked with her about the *point*, but she did not quite understand it. In writing she does very well when practising her letters, but when she has her journal she is very careless ; she wrote to-day an account of the different trades. In the afternoon she went to the schoolroom an hour, while a number of gentlemen were there ; she amused herself by asking what the denominations were after millions ; at last she set down a row of types the whole length of her board, and enumerating it found it was eighty quintillions ; she asked, "*What people live eighty quintillions of miles off?*" and said, "*I think it would take ladies a year to go so very far.*"

February 17th. Laura succeeded in doing five or six questions this morning. One was to find the age of a man, in which I gave her the time he had lived in several places. She said, "*He lived in many places. I am not sure why,—why?*" She asked a great many questions about the party to which I went last evening, as how the

ladies knew when to come, &c.; taught her the word *invitation*. She asked, "*Why did I not go?*" told her she was a little girl; she said, "*Doctor says I am tall;*" but she was quite reconciled to it, when I told her the other blind girls did not go. She talked of her walk yesterday; she was much amused by walking on the snow that was crusted over, but not quite enough to bear; when she broke through she would scream with delight, and pull me after her. She was quite puzzled to find the reason, and I told her if she would remember to ask me, I would tell her this morning.

February 18th.—Found to my surprise that Laura could bound all the towns I had taught her, *without* the map; Roxbury, Brookline, Brighton, Watertown, and West Cambridge. I taught her to-day about Cambridge, Charlestown, Medford, and Malden. She was in excellent spirits, and takes more interest in this than in any other study. At twelve, took Laura to the stable, to show her oats and a half-peck measure; then to the store-room, to

teach her wine measure. Found a gallon measure, also a hogshead, tierce, and barrel. She readily learned their names, and how many gallons they would hold; and then as usual, she wanted to go round to examine other things; let her feel the coffee, in a bag, sugar, salt, &c., in barrels, ginger, pepper, &c., in boxes of twenty-five and fifty pounds; then starch, in papers, and lastly, she examined the tea-chest, box, lead, &c. I intended to have taken a part of this lesson on another day, but she was so much interested that I could not avoid her questions; deferred the review until another day.

The following are extracted from different parts of the journal.

Wednesday.—Laura practised some time in arithmetic, but did not succeed quite as well as yesterday. She was much interested in an algebra type, and was very anxious to be able to use it; told her I would teach her when she was sixteen, all about it; “*And can you kiss me then?*” She said, “*Can you kiss sixteen young ladies?*” meaning young ladies of sixteen. She talked

about it some time, and expressed much fear that she should have to give up kissing and being kissed, when she was older.

Thursday.—Commenced by telling her where Boston and Charles River were and then attempted to give her the idea that the map was small, and we had not room to put on it all that was on the other map; and then of the number of miles from Boston to the mouth of the Hudson River, moving her finger from one to the other. When I had told her the distance, she said, "*I think Miss W. lives there,*" and she was delighted that she had got so far from home.

At eleven, gave her for a writing lesson the story I read to her Friday noon. She said at first she could not remember it, because it was long ago that I read it, but she did very well. After writing it, she said, "*Is this truth?*" Told her I thought it was not. "*Is it lie?*" Tried to make her understand that it was not wrong to write it, but I doubt if I succeeded entirely. When writing she spelt the word bureau wrong,

and when I asked her why, she said, "*I was very unremembered;*" she knows the word forgetful, but wished to try to make one, and after she had done so, she turned to me for approbation.

It has been remarked that it was very difficult in the beginning to make her understand figures of speech, fables, or supposititious cases of any kind, and this difficulty is not yet entirely overcome. If any sum in arithmetic be given her, the first impression is, that what is supposed did actually happen; for instance, a few mornings ago when her teacher took an arithmetic to read a sum, she asked, "*How did the man who wrote that book know I was here?*" This was the sum: If you can buy a barrel of cider for four dollars, how much can you buy for one dollar? Upon which her first comment was, "*I cannot give much for cider, because it is very sour.*"

Her keen relish for knowledge, mingled with some self-esteem, would perhaps impel her to greater effort than would be consistent with health, if care were not taken to prevent it. One day she had

been left in my library while we were gone to church ; in the evening she appeared fatigued, and complained of being unwell ; she was asked where she had pain, and said, "*In my head. I slept one hour to-day, and then studied very much in books, and thought very hard.*" Upon enquiry it was found that she had taken hold of a *Latin* book, printed in raised letters, and had been puzzling over it.

She asked the meaning of several words she remembered, as *sed, non, est, &c.* It was explained to her that it was in the Latin language, upon which she asked if the "*Doctor knew Latin ;*" if "*Sophia knew Latin ;*" and finding that some others were as ignorant of it as herself, she was comforted. She understands that different nations use different languages, and was very much pleased to learn a few words of French.

Words are to her always signs of something definite, and are taken in their literal sense ; thus for some time after hearing the word *smith*, she supposed that black-

smiths were all *black* men, and silversmiths *white* men.

Like other blind persons, she forms a vague idea about colours ; she thinks black is a dirty colour, and that the ground is black ; another says, that black is rough, while white is smooth, &c. If she be told the name of a person, as Mr. Green, or Mr. Brown, it excites a smile, or an expression of surprise. So when she meets such a name as *Oxford*, or *Plymouth*, she discovers a sense of the ludicrous in the unwonted use of the term, *ox*, *mouth*, &c.

She continues to form words analogically ; having learned the word restless, she said one day when feeling weak, "*I am very strongless.*" Being told this was not right, she said, "*Why you say restless when I do not sit still ?*"

Then probably thinking of adjectives formed from nouns, by adding *ful*, she said, "*I am very weakful.*"

Her insatiable curiosity often leads her to discourse about things the full comprehension of which is far above her reach ;

and it is difficult to confine her mind to one point. If you are talking to her about lead, she will want to know about lead pencils, what would be the effect of eating it, or about shot; then about birds, why killed, &c. Talking about houses, she said, "*Where did men live before wood was made, and without floors?*" In caves and caverns. "*How many years did men live in caves?*" No precise answer could be given, and she continued, "*Where did they live before caverns?*"

This ignorance of many things causes her at times to appear childish in conversation. Once walking the streets, she felt the ground tremble as a fire-company rushed by, and being told that some one's house was on fire, and men were running to help him to put it out, she asked, "*How do they blow?*" thinking they blew it out as one does a lighted candle; and on an attempt being made to explain that the fire was quenched by water, she asked, "*Why do not man put it out himself?*"

At other times her home questions manifest shrewdness, and show that she will not

be put off with the simple affirmation of others. Her teacher talking with her one day about her doll, told her it could not feel ; that flesh and skin had feeling, but not kid and wax. “*But,*” said she, “*why cannot man make flesh doll ?*” Where would he get his flesh ? “*Take from cow,*” said she. Immediately talking of horses, she said, “*Did you ever pat your father’s horse on face ?*” Yes. “*Was he happy ?—Did he smile ?*” No. “*Then how did you know he was happy ?*”

It is a remarkable and gratifying fact, that she adopts and follows with greater readiness and facility any regulation founded upon what may be called natural minor morals, than one based upon mere arbitrary social conventionalism. She does not forget or violate any rule of conduct in which the feelings or rights of others are concerned ; indeed, she hardly seems to need them ; but she is apt to forget such a rule as that one should not rise from the table until others have done eating.

She eats heartily and often, but never over much, and drinks but very moderately

the simplest beverage. She sometimes seems to be so full of animal spirits that it is difficult for her to sit with quiet or decorum; and if the weather be bad, and she cannot work off her excitement by exercise, she becomes nervous, or as we call it to her, *rude*. The following is found in her teacher's journal. "Laura had a *nervous* day, and lost part of her lesson. Talking about some things she had done in the morning, she said, '*What made me very rude?*' I told her, I did not know. '*I think I did not feel good in heart;*' asked her why? She replied, '*Because I broke a door-knob this morning.*' I asked her if she felt good now? She replied, '*I cannot feel good, till I learn to be good.*'"

Here Dr. Howe gives an instance of her having 'once, under strong temptation, committed an act of deliberate deception, and the subsequent sorrow she evinced, and then proceeds:—

There is more fear of her becoming vain, than of Laura's losing her character for ingenuousness; for it is almost impossible to prevent her receiving such attentions,

and such caresses, as directly address her self-esteem. Some persons only feel, they never think; and they do a benevolent action to gratify some spontaneous impulse of their own, or to give momentary pleasure to another, rather than to promote his real welfare; and even some mothers seem to think more of the pleasurable gratification of their own blind feelings of attachment, than of the good of their children. Such persons coming in contact with Laura, will contrive in some way, by caresses or by gifts, to show their peculiar interest in her. She is very sagacious, she ascertains that such visitors to the school are more interested in her than in her blind companions, and that they remain near her most of the time. It is difficult to prevent them making her presents, and in various ways showing her marks of sympathy, which she may attribute to some peculiar excellence of her own. Then she must be allowed to visit, and to have acquaintances, and to converse with all people who come in her way, and who have learned the alphabet of deaf mutes;

in short, to run the risk of the disadvantages of society, in order to secure its obvious and indispensable advantages; and it will require constant care and vigilance to prevent her perceiving herself to be a lion, than which, hardly a greater misfortune can befall a woman. That she has been so effectually preserved from this, thus far, is owing to the watchful care and almost constant attendance of her teachers; and now that by the liberality of individuals she has the entire time and services of a young lady of great intelligence, who is devotedly attached to her, it is to be hoped that she may preserve her present amiable simplicity of character.

The various attempts which I have made during the year to lead her thoughts to God, and spiritual affairs, have been for the most part forced upon me by her questions, which I am sure were prompted by expressions dropped carelessly by others, as God, heaven, soul, &c.

The following conversation, taken from

my minutes made at the time, will illustrate the course of her thoughts on these subjects. During the past year one of our pupils died, after a severe illness, which caused much anxiety in our household. Laura of course knew it, and her enquiries after him were as frequent and as correct as those of any one. After his death, I proceeded to break it to her. I asked her if she knew that little Orin was very sick. She said, "Yes." "He was very ill yesterday forenoon," said I, "and I knew he could not live long." At this she looked much distressed, and seemed to ponder upon it deeply. I paused awhile, and then said to her, "Orin died last night." At the word *died*, she seemed to shrink within herself,—there was a contraction of the hands, a half-spasm, and her countenance indicated, not exactly grief, but rather pain and amazement; her lips quivered, and then she seemed about to cry, but restrained her tears. She had lost friends, and she knew about dead animals, but this was the only case

which had occurred in the house. She asked about death, and I said, When you are asleep does your body feel? "No, if I am very asleep." Why? "I do not know." I tried to explain, and used the word *soul*; she said, "What is soul?" That which thinks, and feels, and hopes, and loves, said I; to which she added interrogatively, "And aches?" Here I was perplexed at the threshold, at her enquiring spirit seizing upon and confounding material and immaterial processes.

I tried to explain to her that any injury of the body was perceived by the soul; but I was clearly beyond her depth, although she was all eagerness to go on. I think I made her comprehend the difference between material and spiritual operations. After a while she asked, "Where is Orin's think?" It has left his body and gone away. "Where?" To God in heaven. She replied, "Where, up?" (pointing up.) Yes. "Will it come back?" No. "Why?" said she. Because his body was very sick and died, and soul

cannot stay in dead body. After a minute she said, "*Is breath dead? is blood dead? Your horse died—where is his soul?*" I told her, that animals have no soul. She said, "*Cat does kill a mouse,—why?—has she got soul?*" "Animals do not know about souls, they do not think like us." At this moment a fly alighted upon her hand, and she said, "*Have flies souls?*" No. "*Why did God not give them souls?*" Alas for the poverty of her language, I could hardly make her understand how much of life and happiness God bestows even upon a little fly. Soon she said, "*Can God see?—has He eyes?*" I replied by asking her, "Can you see your mother in Hanover?" "No." But, said I, you can see her with your mind; you can think about her and love her. "Yes," said she. "So," replied I, "God can see you and all people, and know all they do, and He thinks about them, and loves them; and He will love you, and all people, if they are gentle, and kind, and good, and love one another." I tried to make her think of

her spiritual existence as separate from her bodily one ; but she seemed to dislike to do so, and said eagerly, "*I shall not die.*" Some would have said she referred to her soul, but she did not ; she was shrinking at the thought of physical death.

S .G. HOWE.

BRIEF NOTICES
OF
THREE OTHER BLIND MUTES,
PUPILS IN THE SAME INSTITUTION.

THE following accounts are extracted from the reports of 1842-3, of a girl of fourteen, and a boy of eleven years, both deaf, dumb, and blind, who were brought to the Asylum in 1841 ; with a short notice of Julia Brace.

LUCY REED.

LUCY REED was born in Danby, Vt., October, 1827.

Her eyes were weak from birth ; but her hearing was good, and nothing particular was remarked until in her third year, when a disease soon destroyed her hearing. She could talk as much as children usually do at her age. She was not considered totally blind until she was eight years old, when

she injured her eyes by a rose-bush, the consequence of which was total extinction of vision.

She was supposed to be deranged at times, and was often ungovernable, no one but a younger sister having any control over her.

She was brought to us on the 18th of February, 1841, being at that time fourteen years of age. She seemed unmanageable; nor was there any apparent mode of communication with her, for she had but very few of the natural signs common to deaf mutes, or even to blind deaf mutes. I hardly know how to express her appearance better, than by saying she seemed astonished at herself,—at her own situation; she was not at ease. She wore over her head a large handkerchief, with the folds of which she covered her face, as with a veil; it hung down as far as her mouth, and completely concealed her features: she had worn this for the last two years so continually that her father had seen her face but once during all that time, and then he only caught a glimpse of it. Her parents, humouring

her whim, provided for her a large number of handkerchiefs, which she changes in the night, or in a closet by herself.

She was slender, but apparently very active and strong; and, at home, moved about freely, both in the house and in its immediate neighbourhood. She had learned to sew, and was very handy with her needle, as well as ingenious in cutting and constructing various little articles. She was accompanied by her father, a very respectable farmer, and a younger sister, to whom she clung very closely—she would not, indeed, allow her to quit her for an instant; and when she perceived that she was inclined to do so, either grasped her dress with one hand, or, if using both, would pin their frocks together. I directed the sister to unpin the dress softly, and to slip away for a moment, so that Lucy might begin to feel accustomed to her absence, and to learn that she would return again; but whenever she had occasion to use both hands, she would not trust the pin any more, but held some part of the dress in her teeth.

As there was no way of separating them

without violence, and perhaps, without dangerous agitation to Lucy's feelings, and as it was desirable that the anxious parents should feel every assurance of their unfortunate child's proper treatment, I requested the sister to remain, which she did for several weeks. * * *

In a few weeks she became perfectly obedient and docile, and a change came over her whole manner ; she would submit to have her sister leave her for hours together, moaning, however, sometimes most piteously ; until at last she desired the society of others, and not only permitted them to caress her, but seemed to grow fond of them. She would sit quietly at her desk, and submit to what was to her the incomprehensible efforts of her teacher ; she began also to partake in the sports of the children, and to grow happy, showing but rarely any signs of discontent. She would not, however, remove the mysterious covering from her head, nor could we divine what manner of face she had, for a month ; at the end of which time she made a pair of shades, such as the blind children wear over their eyes ; and at bed-

time, made signs to one of the girls, that if she would sleep with her, she would remove the handkerchief ; the girl did so, and Lucy, having first stuffed cotton into the sockets of her eyes, and put on the shades, took it off.

The next morning she came down with her face exposed, but was evidently uneasy, and if any one approached her, she instantly covered it with her hands, or her apron.

She sat much of the time in a corner, with her face turned to the wall ; but soon all shyness went off, and in a few days she smiled, and looked happy. Her face presented a singular appearance, being perfectly etiolated, as white and as inexpressive as the unexposed part of a person's arm or chest : but her features were very good, and when she smiled, her countenance became expressive and pleasing.

For the first two months, the daily and patient efforts of her teachers were of no avail whatever. She sat passive and obedient, as far as she knew how to be so ; but gave no sign of intellectual activity, or the slightest indication that she comprehended

the strange movements she was obliged to make with her fingers.

The first indication of success is thus noticed by her teacher :—

“April 14th. I tried to teach Lucy to spell the word *fig*, with her fingers, and succeeded in doing so, after much trouble ; she would not do it, however, a second time, although she seemed very desirous of having the fig. 26th.—I took a fork and gave her the letters. She was very indifferent, and manifested unwillingness to do what I wished her, but she made the letters once ; as she was ill, I did not urge her. Presently Laura came in with some figs. I told her she must give Lucy one. She said, ‘*Lucy must spell fig, before I give it to her.*’ She went to her, therefore, and showed her the figs, and then spelled it very slowly on her own hand, and signed to her to make the letters ; this Lucy would not do at first, but Laura persevered, and motioned to her that she might have the fig if she would spell it, and made the letters again on her own hand, and signed again to her to make them herself ; at last, Lucy found that Laura was in earnest, and

she spelled the word *f-i-g*. Laura then patted her on the head and cheek, and seemed perfectly delighted that she had accomplished so much."

I had determined to persevere for six months at least, even if she should not manifest any improvement at all; but before that time the principal difficulty was vanquished, and it became perfectly clear to me, that she had hold of the clue which was to guide her mind out of its dark labyrinth. The following extracts from the journals of two different teachers, will show that I was not alone in this opinion. The first says :—

"June 11th. Took Lucy and Laura as usual in the morning,—made the letters *k-e-y*, and Lucy set them correctly, without assistance, twice; I then began again upon *ring*, and gave her a copy in the types. She selected the proper ones, but arranged them without order. I then gave her to understand that they must be as the copy, *r* first, &c.; this she finally followed, and selected the types a second time, arranging them herself. After she had done this, I mo-

tioned for her to go, but she took a nut out of her pocket, and showed, by signs, that she wished to know what types she must set up for that. Gave her a copy, and she followed it correctly, noticing the order also. Her lesson was nearly an hour long, and she was not inattentive a moment."

"July 13th. Lucy did unusually well in her lesson this morning. She spelt three words correctly, and succeeded better in finding the letters separately. When I asked her for *k*, she found it without hesitation, and also *e*. She has learned the places of most of her types, and can put them away very quickly.

"For several days I have been trying to teach Lucy to call for what she wants at table,—commenced with *cake*, and have tried three successive evenings, but without entire success until to-night: the first time she wanted it she only passed her plate as usual, but upon my touching her hand she spelled it alone; the second time she touched *my* hand, and waited till she perceived I was attending to her, and then, *without any sign*

from me, pointed to her plate, and spelled **CAKE!**”

This was, indeed, a most gratifying triumph; and should I describe the joy with which in common with her teachers I hailed it, many would deem me extravagant: they might say—“What! do you think it a great thing, that this girl should be removed far from home, that she should submit to restraint and contradiction, that five months of tedious labour should be bestowed upon the attempt to teach her so simple a thing as to ask for a piece of cake, by using the letters *c - a - k - e*, instead of using a natural sign, or of feeling around the table until she found it?” Such, I fear, were the reflections of the parents, for at this very time they concluded to take her home. But I am sure I was right; and happy indeed should I be, if all the hours of my life could be devoted to so useful a task, as were those in which I was trying to forge the first link in the chain of communication with a human being, so thrown without the pale of humanity as was poor Lucy Reed. I am not without hope

that her parents will conclude to forego for a season the natural desire of having their unfortunate child near them, in consideration of her future life.

They may be assured that, although she may not have all the luxuries and delicacies by which alone they can manifest their love for her, yet she will be receiving that food which nourisheth the soul, and which may be a source of enjoyment to her long after they are in their graves.

“On June 18th, (her teacher says,) Lucy’s mother came to see her. She was sitting in Laurena’s room, very busily occupied in working upon her twine-bag. I went in, took her hand, and motioned to her to come with me into the parlour; she came: her mother rose, went to her, put her arms around her neck, and kissed her; Lucy touched her hand, and then her cap and dress, as if she were trying to find out who it was:—presently she recognised her, her face grew red, and then pale again. She sat down upon the sofa. Her mother brought her several articles from home which she had known before. Lucy recollected them,

and seemed pleased, but did not give way to such strong expressions of joy as I had thought she would. She seemed gratified, however, particularly with the eatables she brought her. She did not cling to her mother, but frequently left her to go to her chest, to deposit some of the good things. She appeared several times to make signs to her mother, as if she would talk with her fingers : and after tea, when her twine-bag was brought, she wanted her mother to see her work upon it. Her mother was evidently pleased that Lucy had been able to learn so much, but was surprised and grieved to find her looking so thin and pale. She says, however, that she has known her to go with scarcely any nourishment except tea and coffee, for eighteen days.

“June 20th. This morning Mrs. Reed left Lucy for home. Lucy noticed that she had packed her trunk, and had on her cloak and bonnet ; she went to her drawer, took from it three little phials, and motioned to her mother to give them to her two little brothers and one sister. But Mrs. R. declined taking them ; she went to Lucy, shook

her hand, kissed her, and told her by signs that she was going away. Lucy then left her, went into her own room, took from her drawers some of the eatables which her mother had given her, and sat down composedly to eat them. After breakfast she took me to the room her mother had occupied, and told me by signs that she was gone, but did not *express* any sorrow. After dinner, however, I found her crying a little. I brought her to Laura, and said, Lucy is sorry because her mother has gone home; she replied, '*I will make her glad;*' and immediately took her to her drawers, and to walk, and tried in every possible way to amuse her; and I think she succeeded better than any one else would have done, for before night she was as cheerful and happy in appearance as Laura herself.

"July 12. Mr. Reed and daughter arrived; Lucy recognised them, but did not express much at seeing them. She staid with her sister about ten minutes, then left her, and did not return to her again for more than an hour; she was not at all excited, and perfectly indifferent to them. They

came to take her home : this was a severe trial to all of us, particularly to Laura, who loves her very dearly.

“This evening, while packing Lucy’s trunk, I carried her to it, and made signs to her that she would take it away, and she seemed distressed.

“It was very evident to me, that she did not want to go, although her friends interpreted her signs to the contrary. She made the same noise that she always has made when in trouble, and ran away from me and went to her room. After a little while, she became quiet, and went to bed ; but it was evident she was very much excited, and her excitement did not appear to her teachers and friends *here* to be joy at the idea of going away, but sorrow.

“July 13th. This morning, at half-past five, Lucy left us. I went to her, and put on her bonnet and shawl ; took her to Laura, and told her she was going. Laura put her arm round her neck, and kissed her affectionately, while Lucy, who seemed unmoved, remained passive. Laura said, ‘*Lucy do not hug me, sorry.*’ I then motioned to Lucy to

put her arms round Laura ; she did so, and the latter was very much affected. Lucy, however, did not show any outward marks of grief or sorrow this morning, that I could observe, although I watched her very closely. After she was ready to go, she went down into Lurena's room, and insisted on being galvanized ; she clung to the *tins*, and it was with great difficulty I could force her away. She went into the parlour, found Lurena, and shook hands with her, then turned and came down stairs with me very quietly, and left me and went to her father. She manifested but very little emotion all this time.

“ At twelve I gave Laura a lesson in arithmetic, for the first time this term. She asked me, ‘ *Why do you teach me to cypher ?* ’ I told her Lucy was gone, and I had more time. She replied, ‘ *Will you teach me to cypher all days ?* ’ Yes, if I have time. ‘ *I am very alone, because Lucy is all gone.* ’ I asked her, ‘ *What is all gone ?* ’—she said, ‘ *Lucy will not come back more.* ’ ”

I may add that Laura was not the only one to sorrow for Lucy's departure, and she

is not the only one who would hail her return with joy.

S. G. HOWE.

OLIVER CASWELL.

OLIVER CASWELL was born November 4th, 1829. He continued in health, and in the possession of his senses, until he was three years and four months old. He was considered a bright boy, and could prattle as freely as any child of his age.

He was then attacked by scarlet fever and *canker-rash*; at the end of four weeks it was perceived that he could not hear; in a few weeks more, his sight began to fail, and he soon became entirely blind.

He continued to articulate for some time, but with less and less distinctness, until at the end of six months he lost all power of articulation. He used then to feel his own lips and those of others, when talking, probably to ascertain whether he had them in the right position.

As soon as he had recovered his health, he recommenced the process of examining every thing about him. He became familiar with his chamber, then the rest of the rooms in the house, then ventured into the yard, and in the course of a few years explored the way into the neighbouring houses. He felt and smelt every thing that he could lay his hands upon. His father is a ferryman, and he often took the boy with him, in his boat, which greatly pleased him. He seemed to be a bold child, and would caress dogs and cats.

He had never seen a dead person. A horse which he had known, died, and he recognised it, and seemed much agitated; for several days he made signs about it, and lost his appetite, as his mother thinks, in consequence.

He was fond of teasing cats, and generally inclined to fun. He could make many of his wants understood by signs.

He was, however, ungovernable; and when thwarted in any way, became violent, braying, kicking, and striking furiously.

I first saw the boy three years ago, but

could not then persuade his parents to part with him. But they finally committed him to my charge the 30th of September last. He was then a stout, thickset lad, rather short, with light hair, fair complexion, and a most pleasant expression of countenance. He seemed perfectly docile and confiding, and his intelligent look and eager gestures proclaimed that there was intellect enough within, could we but establish the means of communication with it. His thirst for knowledge proclaimed itself as soon as he entered the house ; treading upon the register of a furnace, he instantly stooped down, began to feel it, and soon discovered the way in which the upper plate moved upon the lower one ; but this was not enough for him, so laying down his face, he applied his tongue first to one and then to the other, and seemed to discover that they were different kinds of metal.

His signs were expressive, and the strictly natural language—laughing, crying, sighing, embracing, &c., was perfect.

He had contrived analogical signs by his faculty of imitation ; but the first object was

to break up these, and substitute in their place, purely arbitrary ones.

I commenced at once with the finger language, taking several articles having short names, such as key, cup, ring, &c., with Laura, for an auxiliary ; I sat down, and taking his hand placed it upon one of them, and then with my own made the letters *k - e - y*.

He felt my hands eagerly with both of his, and on repeating the process, he evidently tried to imitate the motions of my fingers.

In a few minutes he contrived to feel the motions of my fingers with one hand, and holding out the other he tried to imitate them, laughing most heartily when he succeeded. Laura was interested to agitation, and the two presented a singular sight ; her face was flushed and anxious, and her fingers twined in among ours so closely as to follow every motion, but so lightly as not to embarrass them ; while Oliver stood attentive, his head a little aside, his face turned up, his left hand grasping mine, and his right hand held out ; at every

motion of my fingers his countenance betokened keen attention—there was an expression of anxiety as he tried to imitate the motions—then a smile came stealing out as he thought he could do so, and spread into a joyous laugh the moment he succeeded, and felt me pat his head, and Laura clap him heartily upon the back, and jump up and down in her joy. He learned more than half-a-dozen letters in half an hour, and seemed delighted with his success. His attention then began to flag, and I commenced playing with him. It was evident that he had merely been imitating the motions of my fingers, and placing his hand upon the key, cup, &c., as part of the process, without any perception of the relation between the sign and the object.

When he was tired with play I took him back to the table, and he was quite ready to begin again his process of imitation. He soon learned to make the letters for *key*, *pen*, *pin*, and by having the object repeatedly placed in his hand, he at last perceived the relation I wished to establish between them. This was evident, because when I signed

the letters *p i n*, or *p e n*, he would select the article.

The perception of this relation was not accompanied by that radiant flash of intelligence, and that glow of joy, which marked the delightful moment when Laura first perceived it. I then placed all the articles on the table, and going away a little distance with the children, placed Oliver's fingers in the position to spell *k - e - y*, on which Laura brought him the article: the little fellow seemed to be much amused by this, and looked very attentive and smiling. I then caused him to make the letters *b - r - e - a - d*, and in an instant Laura brought him a piece; he smelled at it—put it to his lips—raised his head with a most knowing look—seemed to reflect a moment, and then laughed outright, as much as to say, "Aha! I understand now, how something may be made out of this."

It was now clear that he had the capacity and inclination to learn, that he was a proper subject for instruction, and needed only persevering attention. He was put into the hands of an intelligent teacher, and has

learned about a hundred nouns and some adjectives, which he uses with the nouns, making a sort of compound substantive.

Extracts from the Report for 1843 :—

Oliver Caswell is now thirteen years old, and his progress during the past year in the acquisition of language and of other knowledge, has been very gratifying. He has been perfectly docile and obedient ; and is one of the most sweet-tempered, affectionate boys I have ever known. He is a favorite throughout the house, and seems to have that enjoyment of existence which characterises Laura, though unaccompanied by the keen zest that makes her buoyant, while he is only calm.

A great deal of time has been spent, during the last year, in communicating to him a knowledge of that indispensable requisite for the development of mind, arbitrary language.

He acquires words slowly, and uses them slowly, but takes great pleasure in both processes, and has already made a considerable acquisition of words.

When taught that persons have two

names, he was much interested, and went on to ask the second name of all the members of his family, as, John Caswell, Richard Caswell, &c. ; but afterwards, asking the family name of one of his school-mates, which happened to be Caswell, he was sorely perplexed. One of his exercises, when alone, is to put down words and sentences, by inserting metallic types in the form of pegs, into a board pierced with holes to receive them. He can write well with a pencil, but his former method is better, because it enables his teacher to make him correct his own mistakes. He generally puts down the words in what is probably the most natural order, placing the one of leading import first, as '*Jacket, Oliver, give, mother,*'—that is, mother gave Oliver the jacket: the jacket—the principal object; to him—the second; given—the third; by his mother—the fourth.

One chilly day he perceived that the dog was wet, and trembling with cold; and on his teacher asking him to take a walk, he said, '*Walk, no, rain;*' and added, '*shake, cold,*

dog ;' the word significant of the leading idea coming first in each case.

Like Laura, and all children, he is fond of using new words ; his teacher having explained to him the word *hurry*, he amused himself during the rest of the day by saying "*hurry*," to every one he met, and pushing them along to show how to *hurry*.

Having learned a word, he easily and of his own accord makes various applications of it. Having learned the use of the verb *is*, when his teacher caused him to shut the door, and then to spell *door shut*, he added, '*door is shut.*' Having fallen over a sled, and hurt his leg, he said, '*Oliver, hit, fall, leg, sled, hurt ; leg sore ; Oliver blind.*'

He sometimes tries to excite laughter by saying extravagant things ; as '*House can laugh*'—and then laughing at it himself ; rolling a button on the floor, and saying, '*Button can walk.*'

He has learned to count pretty correctly as far as fifty, but he always *fives* ; that is, counts his fingers : if he be counting leaves, for instance, and finds eighteen, he will hold

up both hands with the fingers spread out : then one hand with the fingers ; then one with three fingers.

Oliver is especially fond of the odour of flowers ; and the pleasure he derives from visiting a green-house, seems almost equal to that obtained by persons with all their senses.

He has rarely shown marks of temper, and only when he had been teased or imposed upon, or thought he had been ; when he becomes passionate, and seems bold as a little lion.

There is much manliness about him ; he takes great delight in those exercises which require strength and activity. In our gymnasium he is one of the strongest and most expert performers ; leaping the bars, clambering the ropes, and swinging himself about in the air with entire fearlessness. When injured he bears it bravely ; he has a very strong frame, and is seldom ill.

Finally, without that remarkable degree of mental activity which makes Laura so apt a learner, he is, in every respect, a most interesting boy ; and it cannot be doubted

that by long and close perseverance in the course of his instruction, his mind will be developed, and he will become an intelligent and happy man.

JULIA BRACE.

JULIA BRACE arrived at the Perkins Institution, the 9th of April, 1842, being nearly thirty-five years of age. She seemed to understand perfectly the object of her coming, and to be desirous of learning something in the school with the blind girls.

But there was about her inexpressive face, her attitude, and demeanour, a certain passivity, denoting habitual inattention to external objects, which made her case a very unfavourable one; for long inactivity of the perceptive faculties not only prevents their attaining any vigour, but disinclines to mental activity, and incapacitates for its long continuance.

Besides, she is past the age for acquiring much knowledge; few people learn much

after they are thirty-five ; they may continue to grow wiser, but it is mainly by reflecting upon and digesting what they have learned. Not only must people reap in age as they have sown in youth, but if they have not sown at all neither can they reap. It was feared, therefore, that the time had gone by for the active operation of Julia's mental faculties and social affections. Dr. Howe adds, "Numerous, however, as are the odds against a successful issue, the stake is so precious and important, that a hearty and persevering attempt should be made to win it."

This year's report states that Julia has rather agreeably disappointed the fears formerly expressed on her case ;—she had kept up her interest in her new studies to the present time, being always pleased to learn a new word ; but she cannot remember the words for any length of time. She has learned to combine letters in various ways, and can ask for many things, as mug, cake, bread, &c., but she does not like to do so if she can make herself understood by her old and imperfect signs. She has learned to use

the metallic types, with letters on their ends, and can place many words.

She was out one day with the girls and her teacher, frolicking on the snow. The next day she was in high glee at the recollection of it, and seemed, by sign, to try to recapitulate the events, and spelt on her fingers, '*St. fall snow*;' *St.* being the abbreviation of a person's name who was with her, and to whose fall on the snow she evidently alluded.

It is perfectly obvious, then, that she has no incapacity for language; but from the long inactivity of her faculties it is doubtful, at her age, whether her guardian will consider it expedient to increase the necessary expense of the slow and tedious process of communicating knowledge to her.

“THE LONDON SOCIETY FOR TEACHING THE BLIND TO READ THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,” was established in 1838.

The pupils are taught on raised types, on Lucas' stenographic system. A considerable portion of the Scriptures is already embossed, and it is hoped that at no distant period the liberality of a benevolent public will provide the whole of the Bible for the use of the blind. Other embossed copies of the Scriptures have been invented, and have proved of great assistance and benefit to the blind; but Lucas' system is particularly recommended, as being the best adapted for all classes and ages, from the facility with which it is acquired.

The boys' and girls' schools are conducted at No. 38, Queen Square, Bloomsbury. They are open to all classes for instruction, free of expense. The books required are provided for the pupils, and upon their leaving the institution embossed copies of the Scriptures are presented to them.

In addition to the principal object of this society, to afford intellectual instruction to the blind, they are taught other useful branches of education ; and those scholars who are in indigent circumstances, are especially instructed in basket making, knitting, netting, and other fancy work.

Persons of all religious denominations are received into the day-schools, in which the Bible is constantly read and explained.

At the present time there are two Chinese children in the school, who have made excellent progress in reading, writing, geography, arithmetic, &c., and give great promise of usefulness if spared to return to their native land, by communicating the knowledge they have acquired, to their benighted fellow-countrymen.

Another object of this society is to supply grants of the embossed Scriptures to missionaries, or to any benevolent individuals in distant parts of the country, who may be willing to assist the blind to read ; and teachers are sent by the committee to give private lessons in London or in its vicinity.

In the spring of 1842, a blind young man from Nottingham was gratuitously received into the above excellent institution, to qualify himself for a teacher, on Lucas' stenographic system.

He learned to read with facility, and returned home in a few weeks, when a school was immediately established in the town, under the superintendence of an active committee, chiefly composed of members of the Nottingham Ladies' Branch Bible Society, who, encouraged by public support, have been enabled to bestow upon many of their blind neighbours the inestimable privilege of reading the Scriptures for themselves, which it is humbly hoped has been the means of leading their minds to Him who is the way, the truth, and the life. It will be seen by the following extracts from the first annual report, that they only wait for that Christian liberality which it is not doubted will be eventually afforded, to extend the instruction to other branches of education, as well as to teach the blind some manual occupations, which may assist them in providing for themselves.

“Your committee invite attention to a few details connected with this Institution. Twenty-one blind persons have been admitted into the school since its commencement, in May, last year. At the present time there are fourteen pupils, six males and eight females. Of that number ten are able to read the New Testament with tolerable facility, and the rest are making considerable progress. Great praise is also due to the skill and perseverance of their teacher, who is himself blind, and who was taught the system gratuitously, in the excellent Institution in Queen’s Square, London, to whose committee we owe lasting acknowledgments for repeated acts of kindness and assistance rendered to our infant establishment. Only one of the pupils has at present commenced writing, and we have great pleasure in inserting the copy of a letter addressed by him to the committee. It is as follows :—

“*Nottingham, May 11th, 1843.*

“Kind friends ; I now write to you to acknowledge my thanks and gratitude for all the kind favours you have conferred

upon me. I cannot express as I could wish, the gratitude of my heart to God and you, for the great blessings I now enjoy. I thought it was a privilege to read ; but now I can write also, it makes my feelings of thanks and gratitude such as words cannot express. I can never reward you, kind friends, but my fervent prayer to God for you is, that He would bless you, and that for ever. Amen. Praise the Lord.

“The Treasurer’s report will convey a gratifying proof of the kind interest excited in this cause, and of the liberal assistance so far rendered to it. And your committee acknowledges with especial gratitude, a very handsome grant of books, received from the British and Foreign Bible Society. Our earnest desire now is, to have the means of extending much more widely the opportunities of instruction to a class from whom the light of knowledge has been so long excluded, whilst we particularly wish to give them access to the Holy Scriptures ; and our prayer is, that the dayspring from on high may visit

those who have literally sat in darkness,
and that the glory of the Lord may rise
upon them.

‘ Lord ! to the blind thy love reveal,
Give them thy word of truth to feel ;
In double sense the boon impart,
And through the *fingers* touch the heart.’ ”

Nottingham, June 20th, 1843.

JOHN WRIGHT'S STEAM-PRESS, BRISTOL.
