

YOUTH'S COMPANION

DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE.

VOLUME XXIX., No. 3.

MONTREAL & NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 2, 1894.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.



some new joy, some fresh token of love from distant friends, until in the fullness of my glad heart, I cry: 'Love is everything! and God is Love!'

Helen Keller

Tuscumbia, Ala., Dec. 7th, 1892

HELEN KELLER'S STORY.

Mind, mind alone
Is light and hope and life and power!

The wonder child of the past generation was Laura Bridgman. Her spirit in seven fold measure has fallen on little Helen Keller. Helen is now only twelve years old, and since she was nineteen months old has had neither sight nor hearing. Yet the following sketch of her life was written for the *Youth's Companion* entirely by herself. With the exception of the paragraphing and the insertion of Tommy Stringer's surname, the article is exactly as she wrote it, and there was not a word misspelled nor a mistake of any sort on the manuscript.

The ending of the article, with Helen's signature, is the first she ever wrote with ink. The pencil is the ordinary writing

implement of the blind. In order that the page might be photographed, Helen kindly attempted the use of the pen, with excellent result.

Which of our twelve-year-old readers, asks the *Companion*, who has full use of both eyes and ears, could have composed and written, without the least assistance, such an article as this?

I was born twelve years ago, one bright June morning, in Tuscumbia, a pleasant little town in the northern part of Alabama. The beginning of my life was very simple, and very much like the beginning of every other little life; for I could see and hear when I first came to live in this beautiful world. But I did not notice anything in my new home for several days. Content in my mother's tender arms I lay, and smiled as if my little heart were filled with

sweetest memories of the world I just had left.

I like to think I lived with God in the beautiful Somewhere before I came here, and that is why I always knew God loved me, even when I had forgotten His name.

But when I did begin to notice things, my blue eyes were filled with wondering joy. I gazed long at the lovely, deep blue sky, and stretched out my tiny hands for the golden sunbeams that came to play hide-and-seek with me. So my happy baby hours went. I grew and cried and laughed, as all infants do.

In the meantime I had a name given to me; I was called Helen, because Helen means light, and my mother liked to think that my life would be full of the brightness of day.

Of course my recollections of my early childhood are very indistinct. I have confused memories of long summer days filled with light, and the voices of the birds singing in the clear sunshine. I seem to remember, as if it were yesterday, being lost in a great green place, where there were beautiful flowers and fragrant trees. I stood under one tall plant, and let its blossoms rest upon my curly head. I saw little flakes of light fitting among the flowers; I suppose they were birds, or perhaps butterflies. I heard a well-known voice calling me, but feeling roguish, I did not answer. I was glad, however, when my mother found me, and carried me away in her arms.

I discovered the true way to walk the day I was a year old, and during the radiant summer days that followed I was never still a minute. My mother watched me coming, going, laughing, playing, prattling, with proud, happy eyes. I was her only child, and she thought there never had been another baby quite so beautiful as her little Helen.

Then when my father came in the evening, I would run to the gate to meet him,

and he would take me up in his strong arms, and put back the tangled curls from my face and kiss me many times saying, 'What has my Little Woman been doing to-day?'

But the brightest summer has winter behind it. In the cold, dreary month of February, when I was nineteen months old, I had a serious illness. I still have confused memories of that illness. My mother sat beside my little bed and tried to soothe my feverish moans, while in her troubled heart she prayed: 'Father in Heaven, spare my baby's life!' But the fever grew and flamed in my eyes, and for several days my kind physician thought I would die.

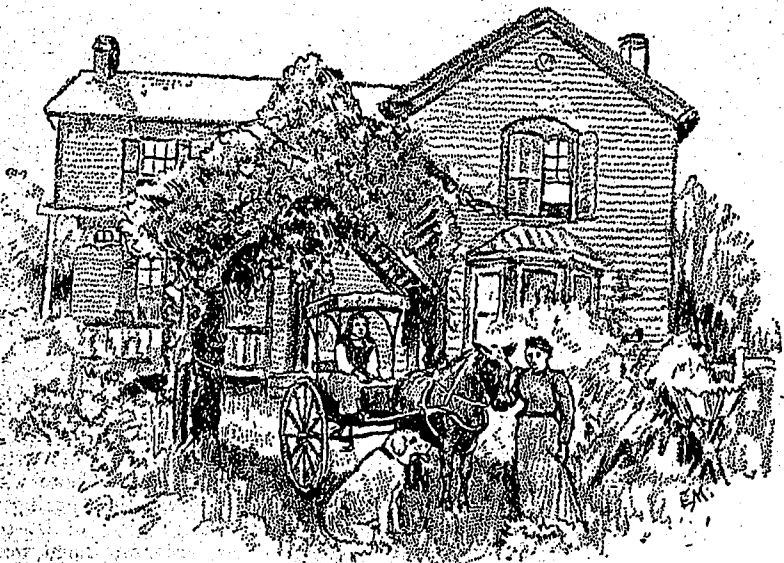
But early one morning the fever left me as mysteriously and unexpectedly as it had come, and I fell into a quiet sleep. Then my parents knew I would live, and they were very happy. They did not know for some time after my recovery that the cruel fever had taken my sight and hearing; taken all the light and music and gladness out of my little life.

By and by the sad truth dawned upon them, and the thought that their little daughter would never more see the beautiful light or hear the voices she loved filled their hearts with anguish.

But I was too young to realize what had happened. When I awoke and found that all was dark and still, I suppose I thought it was night, and I must have wondered why day was so long coming. Gradually, however, I got used to the silence and darkness that surrounded me, and forgot that it had ever been day.

I forgot everything that had been, except my mother's tender love. Soon even my childish voice was stilled, because I had ceased to hear any sound.

But all was not lost! After all, sight and hearing are but two of the beautiful blessings which God had given me. The most precious, the most wonderful of His



HELEN KELLER'S HOME.