

A Wonderful Little Girl

Much has been written in educational papers of a little girl Helen Keller, now at the Lyman School for the Blind in Boston. A correspondent recently visited her and as furnished the following account of what he saw and heard. It is, as the phrase goes, an interesting as a novel, and gives an excellent idea of the almost miraculous progress of this girl of 10 years.

"It was my privilege a few days ago to call on Helen Keller, the deaf and blind girl who has attracted so much attention among philanthropists and scientific people for the last three or four years. Much has been written of this marvelous child, much that judged by all ordinary standards of attainment of deaf mutes, or even by the attainments of the occasional brilliant exceptions, seemed almost incredible. I must confess that before I saw her for the first time a little more than a year ago I could not believe that the reports concerning her progress in language were not grossly exaggerated, but after seeing her and talking to her myself through the manual alphabet I was prepared to believe almost anything regarding her progress in that direction. I never knew of a child deaf at so early an age as was Helen (sight and hearing were both lost at the age of 19 months through disease) who made such rapid progress in the knowledge of the English language. It was simply phenomenal.

"The greatest wonder was yet to come. Soon we heard that Helen was trying to learn to talk. That seemed the most absurd thing in the world. To think of teaching speech to a child totally deaf and blind was preposterous. Yet that seemingly impossible thing has been done. The age of miracles is not yet past.

"Last Monday morning, I sat down beside her and carried on a running conversation concerning a great variety of subjects for nearly half an hour, and during all that time her part of the conversation, which was animate and sprightly and full of fun, was conducted entirely by speech, and speech so distinct that I failed to understand very little of what she said. She seemed never at a loss for language to express an idea nor even to hesitate to orally. It was an intelligible speech in a pleasant voice and it was wonderful. In the course of our conversation Helen informed me that she could play on the piano and when I asked her to play for me she sat down and played the air of a little song with her right hand, playing the same part with her left hand an octave below. It would hardly pass for first-class music; the time not being very accurate, but it was music. Then at my request she sang for me a line of the song she had just played, and the singing was more accurate in time, though less so in tune than the playing.

"Her memory is as remarkable as her grasp of language and her power of speech, and probably is the chief source of her success in both these. She grasps an idea almost before it is given her, and once hers it seems to be ineradicably fixed in her memory. A few days ago a book of poems printed in raised letters was presented to her. She opened it and read the first poem over twice, reading it aloud as she passed her finger over the lines. Then the book was laid away, and not referred to again until the next day, when it was found that she could repeat the whole poem of seven stanzas of four lines each without missing a word.

"Laura Bridgeman was a brilliant example of what may be accomplished under great difficulties. Helen Keller is a prodigy. There is no one, nor ever was any one, to be compared with her.

A Bank of Wheels

New Zealand has set an example which might advantageously be followed in certain parts of this country. In the same way as we have "cathedral cars" it has "traveling banks." A clerk, representing the bank, travels up and down a railway line for the transaction of the ordinary business of the bank with those who have not sufficient facilities for coming into the city. Laden with a satchel containing his supply of bank notes and provided with a teller's usual precautions against robbery, the clerk makes the rounds of his headquarters, and there receives visits from customers at the way, sometimes changing checks or taking deposits as occasion may require. The plan is said to have proved profitable to the bank and a great convenience to the settlers. It is not difficult, however, to see that the New Zealanders are not properly educated in the matter of bank robbery.

Japan is a country well shaken. No less than four hundred and fifty-six earthquake shocks were felt there in 1890.

The Home

If one's home is fair and fine, with soft carpets, rug, pictures, marble, china, with gentle services, luxurious living, loving children, gracious wife, should all the blessings that these things give, even if one is the apparent source of them himself, has gathered and secured them by close effort and self denial, he kept to one's self alone like the bone the dog gnaws and buries till he can come back to it. It is not privacy or seclusion that give a home its sacredness. Far from it. It is its happiness, its healthiness, its helpfulness, its capacity to do good, to impart that happiness and healthiness, its power of lifting all the rest of the world into its own atmosphere.

Those homes that are open to the homeless are the sacred ones; the homes where there is always a yellow for the weary, always a spare place at the table for the wanderer; the homes whose beauty is shared abroad like the gracious dew from heaven that Portia talked about. There may be many mansions in heaven, but he who thinks they are mansions from which every other heavenly habitant is excluded has made a mistake in the place; it would not be heaven then.

However we may dispute and declare that a man has a right to be undisturbed in his own house, yet we know in our inner consciousness that we all regard the man who brings another home to dinner sure of a cordial greeting for him there; who will not let the stranger find his welcome in an inn on a holiday when homes are dearest; who throws open his house to the parish, whose lights are always shining and inviting as you pass his windows, across whose doorstep guests are often coming and going; who loves his home so much and finds it so complete that he must have other people to love it, too, and if they have nothing half so choice, then share some brief portion of it with them—that man we all know to be a good citizen, a husband honoring his wife, a Christian to do whatever he may be in faith, and withal a gentleman.

Solid Uses of Milk

"The first food of man" has been put to many uses, and converted into many forms by human ingenuity, but its latest application is perhaps the most remarkable. An inventor has just taken out a patent to protect a substitute for bone or celluloid, and the material which is to substitute these substances is produced from milk. Casein—the solids in milk—are in the first place reduced to a partly gelatinous condition by means of borax or ammoniac, and then it is mixed with mineral salt dissolved in acid or water, which liquid is subsequently evaporated. The method of procedure is to place the casein in a suitable vessel and incorporate under heat the borax with it, the proportions being ten kilograms of casein to three kilograms of borax, dissolved in six litres of water. When the casein becomes changed in appearance the water is drawn off, and to the residue, while still of the consistency of melted gelatine, one kilogram of mineral salt, held in solution of three litres of water, is added. Almost any of the salts of iron, lead, tin, zinc, copper or other minerals which are soluble in acid may be used. When the mixture is effected the solid matter is found separated from the greater portion of the acid and water and is then drawn off. Next, the solid matter is first subjected to great pressure to drive out all possible moisture; and then to evaporation under great heat to remove any remaining moisture. The resulting product is called "lactites," and can be moulded into any desired form. By the admixture of pigments or dyes, any color may be imparted to it, but the creamy white color natural to the substance is the most beautiful, being a very close imitation of ivory. Combs, billiard balls, brush backs, knife handles, and all other articles for which ivory, bone, or celluloid are employed, can be made of this new product of milk.

March

Light footed March, wild maid of spring,
Your frolic footsteps hither stray,
Smiles blent with tears will April bring—
Thy April's sentimental way—
But your wild winds with laughter ring,
While young and old you will obey:
A moment's been, then on the wing,
Coquetical March, what games you play!
I knew a maid as blithe as you—
Child of the low king and the sun—
At her fair feet fond lovers woo:
She dote and dance them, every one,
And then she smote—oh, more they use,
Than blows the cane—they cry amance;
O then, I could see if she were true,
When all were gone, to you were true.
—[Ladies' Quarterly Monthly.]

Calicut barber to man of pulloine: "No shampoo I just a plain cut please."

Ways of the Wankonds

In a new book of African adventure L. M. Fotheringham tells of a two years' struggle with Arab slave-dealers in Central Africa. In speaking of the Wankonde he says: You could see the people in their element any forenoon you chose to walk among the bananas. You would be greeted on all sides with "Sawira, sawira!" "Good morning, have you slept well?" "Possibly some of the natives might be at their toilet, some washing and others shaving. Both women and men above of their eyebrows and pull out their eyelashes—a practice which does not enhance their appearance. They also shave the head. A bit of iron with a good edge does duty as a razor. In the matter of dress the man simply wear a brass loincloth made out of brass wire imported from Britain. The wire, on its arrival is a little thicker than a common lead-pencil, and is bartered to the natives in exchange for cattle, ivory, etc. The process of drawing out the wire is very interesting.

The men love to sit and smoke their morning pipes under the cool shade of the banana. The pipe is simply a gourd with a little hole at the bottom, into which the head or cup with the tobacco is put. Water is poured into the gourd. A hole at the top, about one inch in diameter, is the mouth-piece. The native puts his lips over this hole and takes a good pull, and then passes it on to his neighbor. Then they puff the smoke in the air and watch it, with their dreamy eyes, dissolve among the leaves. They know both how to grow tobacco and how to smoke it, as the luxury of the native pipe is uncommonly refreshing.

The Wankonde yield to none in hospitality. Whenever you enter a village you are presented to the chief and receive a present of a bullock or its equivalent in fruit, etc. There are only two regular meals in the day (I shall not say how many snacks they have in the interval), and these occur at midday and between 6 and 7 o'clock at night. Native etiquette prevents the men dining along with the women. The staple food is usima, a kind of porridge made out of the flour of Indian corn, mpemba, or cassava. By way of relish they have vegetables or stewed fowl or fish. On the whole, the Wankonde, as I found them, were a particularly prosperous and happy people, inoffensive and contented. I could not help thinking how much better they were than certain products of civilization at home.

Colors in Photography

I have had another conversation with Prof. Lippmann of the Sorbonne, in which I called his attention to the points raised on his discovery of how to photograph colors, says the Paris correspondent of the London News. The colors are permanent—he made use of the word "fixed"—and they are only seen by reflection in looking at the plate and not through it. One sees the colors well in day light or lamplight, but better in reflected than in direct artificial light. Thus the professor covered the back of a glass plate on which he photographed a spectrum and held the face toward the white side of a paper lamp-shade. In the light it threw back on them the colors took such a brightness as only to be comparable to the prismatic hues in a well-cut Golconda diamond. When he held the plate between my eye and the light I did not see a trace of color on it.

He said his method had nothing in common with the so-called chromo-lithograph photography invented by two Frenchmen, M. Charles Cros and M. Ducos, de-Hauron. Their coloring system is a printing process. If they wanted, for instance, to do a red robe, yellow turban, and green sash, they would have three different plates, one with the turban done in a yellow pigment, another with the robe in a red one, and the third with a sash in green. These would be successively stamped upon a photograph; but the coloration would not be due to the direct and sole action of light on the negative.

M. Lippmann thinks that he will be able to reproduce composite hues, such as are found in the human complexion or a landscape, but said he had never tried and therefore can assert nothing. Scientists, however, despaired more of getting the bright than the subdued colors, the former of which he has been able to catch and fix. I never saw any effects more neat and perfect than those he has obtained. M. Lippmann has been at the Sorbonne five years. He was thrown in the way of his discovery in preparing a lecture on Newton's theory of light.

"Why, hello, old boy, I haven't seen you since you were married. What are you doing now? Traveling for the house, I suppose?" "No, not exactly. Since the baby came I have become a footwalker."

A new method of preserving natural flowers has been discovered by an English lady, whose process is well worth considering. The flower buds were cut just as they were about to open and the ends of the stems covered with sealing wax. Each was then wrapped separately in paper and laid away in a box. When they were wanted she clipped the stems just above the wax and immersed them in water, to which a little nitre had been added; and, though the flowers had been gathered nearly a month before, on the morrow they opened with as much beauty and fragrance as if freshly plucked.

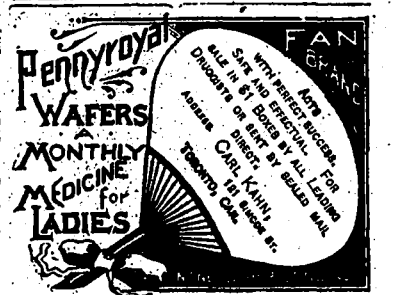
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Applause is the spur of noble minds; the end and aim of weak ones.—[C.C. Colton.]

ADVICE TO MOTHERS

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