

formed. In this way she is able to write to her friends and can read letters that are written to her with a pin. She also learned the braille point system, which, in its various modified forms, is of more practical value to the blind than any other system ever invented. She learned to read books written in raised characters with remarkable rapidity, and in time she acquired a large vocabulary. After she had obtained the means of communicating with those about her, it was comparatively easy for her to grasp the meaning of concrete words, but it was more difficult for her to comprehend the real significance of words denoting abstract or moral qualities. To illustrate the way in which she was taught the meaning of such words, we will quote an instance related by Dr. Howe. "She knew that some girls and women of her acquaintance were very sweet and amiable in their tempers, because they treated her so kindly, and caressed her so constantly. She knew also that others were quite different in their deportment; that they avoided or repelled her, and were abrupt in their motions and gestures while in contact with her, and might be called therefore sour in their tempers. By a little skill she was made to associate in her mind, the first person with a sweet apple, the other with a sour apple, and so there was a sign for a moral quality."

In addition to her studies she was taught to sew and knit, and to do many kinds of fancy work, such as crocheting and making bead baskets, etc. A part of her time was also spent in learning to do various kinds of house-work, so that she is now capable of performing a large portion of the work, devolving upon a good house keeper.

The process of educating her was long and tedious, extending over a period of twenty years, but the result attained was surely worth more than the time and labor expended. Laura, by her natural shrewdness and intense craving for knowledge, aided much in her own development, and the cultivation of her intellect, has brought to light several psychological phenomena, none of which is more worthy of note than the fact that it is possible to think without language. When she placed her hand upon the face of a play-mate who had died, and was told that her friend was dead, she inquired if a companion whose cold face she had touched, before she had acquired the use of language was also dead, thus showing that she had carried the remembrance of that circumstance in her mind for several years.

Since then it is possible for a person, without sight or hearing, or the power of speech, to learn so much, may we not conclude, that an all-wise creator has endowed each of us, with almost unlimited latent powers, that will not be developed under ordinary circumstances, but which may be cultivated when they are required.

E. P. F.

WIT AND BUFFOONERY.

LIFE is sober and serious enough. Its responsibilities and its reverses conjoin to render man's earthly course one of suffering rather than enjoyment, of gloom rather than of cheer. Whatever institutions or practices are capable of diminishing the causes of the one, and adapted to increase and strengthen the other, provided their influence is in no respect injurious, and always conformable to the principles of right and equity, should be approved and supported by the benevolent. It is a gross error to imagine that mirth is necessarily hostile to piety; for merriment may and does frequently prevail among those whose morals remain sound and untainted. True wit is a most effective factor for evil or for good, according as it is directed by malicious motives, or employed for the harmless purpose of provoking laughter and amusement. Genuine humor then, properly exercised should be cherished as among the most useful forms of talent. But there is a vast deal of so-called wit extant with no claim whatever to that name, and which is rightly designated by the expressive term buffoonery. Now, it is tolerably certain that a sterile field sown thick with grain, will here and there erect a fair and fruitful stalk; but the seeds can never make the field fertile; it is probable that a pig rooting in the gold region may occasionally display the glitter of precious dust upon his snout, but this does not prove that he is a huge nugget of gold; and the man with brain as devoid of acumen as a leaden bullet, perpetually toiling and straining to be facetious, may at intervals achieve a passable jest, but is not thereby constituted a humorist. Such a subject is the chronic buffoon. His capital consists of an unmeasured stock of insolence, coupled with the conviction on his own part, that the chattering, snickering, giggling, winking, nodding, acrobatic, clownish, nonentity, is in truth a sharp fellow. He it is whom we frequently discover conning almanacs in quest of the decrepid puns and mild pleasantries which these works sometimes contain in oases mid the dismal wastes of laudatory falsehood, concerning the nostrums concocted by their philanthropic authors. It is he, who under the settled assurance of his own jocular superiority, with consequent popularity and extraordinary privileges, defies every law of common civility and considerateness, evidently regarding life as a broad field for incessant practical jokings; satisfied meanwhile that every imposition and negligence is piteously