

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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FLYING FISH.

WE associate flying with wings, but several animals that have no wings can fly a little way in the air. There is the flying squirrel, for instance; and the bat, that flies so well in the dusk of the evening, has no real wings such as a bird has, but a thin sort of web or membrane, with which the mouse-like little creature can support itself well in the air.

The fish that can fly has its upper fins like broad wings. The web of the fin is stretched out on fine ribs of bone that are fixed on the neck of the fish, and extend as long as the tail. With these flying fins, the fish can leap from wave to wave. It has been known to leap high enough to reach the deck of a sailing vessel; but it either could not fly across the deck or struck a boom or sail, and so fell down dead.

The flying fish are plentiful in the West Indies and warm seas of the torrid regions. They are much like a mackerel in shape and colour. Their flesh is sweet and tender, and of great use to the people of the West India Islands for food. Most of the eatable kinds of fish like the cold of the north seas better than the warmer waters near the equator; and, on account of good fish being somewhat scarce, the flying fish is the more valuable in the West Indies.

The flying fish fly or leap into the air to escape from the dolphin and other enemies. They cannot fly for more than a hundred yards or so. After such a long leap, they wet their wings or fins, and can then make another spring into the air. But the poor flying fish has enemies in the air as well as in the water. Gulls, pelicans, and other seabirds are on the watch to seize them as they fly over the waves.

Of course, the poor flying fish darts into the water as quickly as it can to escape from the birds, and darts out again to get clear of the fierce dolphin. The under part of this pretty fish is white, and from a ship they may often be seen like a little flock of swallows, their white sides gleaming in the bright sunlight like silver.

BLESSED are those children who are favoured with kind and generous, but at the same time firm and straightforward parents.

LAURA BRIDGMAN.

MISS LAURA DEWEY BRIDGMAN, the celebrated deaf, dumb and blind subject, whose death took place recently at the Perkins Institution for the Blind, was born in Hanover, N.H., December 21, 1829. When she was two years old scarlet fever deprived her of sight and hearing, and consequently of speech. Her sense of smell was also destroyed,

she could feel the label on it, and the sign indicating likeness, which was made by placing side by side the forefinger of each hand, was conveyed to her. By repeating the process with other articles she was led to understand that the words represented the objects to which they were affixed. To form words from letters she was supplied with sets of metal types, and in less than three days she learned the order of all the letters of the alphabet. In about two months she began to use alphabetical signs as made by the fingers, examining an object and learning its name by placing her right hand over that of her teacher, who spelled it with her fingers. Then she learned the words herself.

After she had learned about a hundred common nouns she was taught the use of verbs, then of adjectives. She learned to write slowly, and later to talk by means of the mysterious finger alphabet, and used it frequently in animated conversation. In walking through a passage-way, with her hands spread before her, she knew every one she met and gave them a passing sign of recognition, but she embraced affectionately her favourites, and expressed the varied language of the emotions by the lips as well as by the fingers. She also learned grammar, arithmetic and a little of music. Later on she studied algebra, geometry, philosophy and history.

A remarkable faculty was her ability to read character, and this she did literally at her fingers' ends. She was very thoughtful of her friends and liked to aid the poor. At the time of the famine in Ireland she bought, with money which she had earned by her work, a barrel of flour, which was sent to the sufferers. In the summer of 1852, when she was twenty-three years old, she undertook to make her permanent home in her

father's house in Hanover, but she became so homesick that at last she was confined to her bed, and Dr. Howe, who went to see her, found that she was almost at death's-door. She was brought back to the institution, where she remained, up to the time of her death, fifty-two years. On January 29, 1842, Laura was visited by Charles Dickens, who was so much interested in her that he remained several hours. His visit is described in his "Notes on America."



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and that of taste much impaired, leaving only that of touch intact. At the age of eight years she was placed in the Perkins Institution, where the Superintendent, Dr. Samuel G. Howe, undertook the difficult task of instructing her.

Dr. Howe, assisted by Miss Drew, began her first lesson by giving her the word "knife," which was printed in raised letters on a slip of paper, and read by moving her fingers over it, as the blind do in reading. Then she was given the knife so that