

But is not this a time for the student to exercise his power of will? Application to study under difficulties is one of the most supreme functions of the mind of man. The power of concentrating the attention upon a chosen theme, *in the midst of distracting turbulence and in spite of a hot and restless soul* is the seal of a successful student and one of the richest achievements in college life. That self-control and self-denial which *sacrifice pleasure and quell impulse* to the duty of the hour are manifestations of that true strength of character which every man and woman needs in order to buffet the soul-storms and heart-struggles of life. While he who lets himself drift with the rush of his passions,—leaving reason and conscience asleep,—is sure to make a wreck of life and himself turn out to be only the poor wreck of what he might have been. So then, intrusive, welcome, disturbing May, may prove the most educative month in the college year,—opening up with its verdant meadows the richest field for self-culture, giving opportunities for the development of a character, that will retain its strength and beauty long after the blossoms of spring are crumbled and brown at our feet.

#### LAURA BRIDGEMAN.

The 21st of December, 1887, marked the 58th. birth-day anniversary of Miss Laura Bridgeman, whose history affords one of the most remarkable and interesting instances of education, under extreme difficulties, which has ever been recorded.

She was born in a little village among the mountains in the state of New Hampshire. At the age of two years, she suffered from a severe attack of scarlet fever, which entirely deprived her of the senses of sight and hearing, and left her with but an imperfect sense of smell. When she was about six years old her home was visited by Dr. S. G. Howe, Superintendent of the Perkins Institution for the Blind, who became very much interested in her case. Perceiving that the child possessed much natural intelligence, he became convinced of the possibility of educating her. and with his characteristic determination he concluded to undertake the task of her instruction. He persuaded her parents to allow him to take her to Boston, in order that he might at once commence to give her regular instruction. Being constitutionally weak, it was at first necessary, that by a suitable course of gymnastic training her strength might be increased, and especially the muscles of her fingers developed, as it was only by means of these members that the little girl student could hope to become possessed, even of the most elementary principles of knowledge.

She was at first taught by means of signs to move her hands in various ways, in order that the muscles might become properly developed. When this had been accomplished the real work of education was begun. A pin was placed before her on the table and her fingers were placed by her teacher in the positions which represent *p-i-n*, in the manual alphabet used by deaf mutes. After this process had been repeated several hundred times, she began to connect these signs with the object, so that when a pin was given to her she would make the associated signs with her fingers, and when the signs were made by the hand of her teacher, in contact with one of her hands, she would pick up the pin.

A pen was then given to her, and a similar method was followed until an equally satisfactory result was reached. Then both articles were placed before her, and in time she learned that the complex sign composed of the three letters, contained in the word *pin*, was used as a symbol for the object, and that the complex sign comprising the three letters, in the word "*pen*" was used to denote that object, so that when a pin or a pen was given her she would make its symbol, or when the symbol for either article was made by her teacher she would immediately pick it up. As she thus advanced in the process of training, she seemed conscious that she had achieved something worthy of praise, and when the name of an article was spelled for her, she would take it from the table and hold it up triumphantly, while a smile of intense satisfaction would light up her beautiful face. Well might she rejoice for she had found the magic key, which was to unlock her prison house, and bring her into direct communication with the rest of mankind.

She soon learned many monosyllabic words, and in time became familiar with the twenty six letters, the ten digits, and all the punctuations, contained in the manual alphabet used by deaf mutes. She was next taught the ordinary alphabet, by means of types having the letters embossed upon their ends, and when she had learned to spell words by placing these side by side in a frame, she was provided with a set of types, having the letters formed upon their ends by pin points. By pressing these into stiff paper, a dotted outline of the letters was raised on the opposite side of the page, which she could feel with her fingers, and so read what she had written or what others had written for her.

Her desire to obtain knowledge now became almost a passion, and she eagerly enquired the name of every object that came within her reach. At times when she had overcome some difficulty, or acquired a knowledge of some new subject she seemed to be quite overjoyed. She was taught to write with a lead pencil, which she was able to do quite legibly by using the French writing card. This card is about as large as a sheet of common note paper, and contains a number of parallel grooves, one inch apart, and about one eighth of an inch in depth. The paper is pressed into these grooves, and the letters are made in the channels thus