

the hearers, led only to harsh, and seemingly aimless sounds. Her teachers accordingly, while imparting to her a finger-utterance, arrested her in the effort to form a phonetic language, and taught her to restrain her desire for vocal expression. Yet even now the sense of enjoyment survives; and she will at times, when alone, indulge herself in giving free utterance to her voice.

But while the process of developing a vocal language was arrested in Laura Bridgeman by the very means which brought her into intelligent intercourse with her fellow-beings, there is one important exception. Abstract ideas are now represented solely by her acquired finger-language, or by writing; but the persons she comes in contact with receive from her an audible designation. She has a sound, generally a monosyllable, for every individual in whom she takes an interest. Dr. Lieber, who, some years since, devoted considerable time to the study of her vocal sounds, ascertained that she then used nearly sixty as signs of individuals.¹ It is thus apparent that while she lacks all means of vocal intercourse, by which alone organic utterances are matured into the recognized symbols of thought, she nevertheless has the innate idea of language, and makes sound supply the representatives of impersonations. The names moreover, are not arbitrarily given; but appear to have some association of specific ideas with certain sounds. Miss Wright, one of her teachers, remarks: "Before learning language, Laura used many signs to make known her wants, and for a long time gave to many of her friends names, which in some way were associated in her mind with the variety of their characters. She produces still the same sound for me that she made eight years ago, with this difference, that originally it was very soft and gentle; now it is louder and fuller, to correspond, as she says, with the change in myself." In another case she deliberately altered the associated sound. "One of her teachers," says Dr. Lieber, "told me that Laura once omitted to produce the accustomed sound indicating the person who related the incident, for a whole week; after which she uttered an entirely different name-sound, and said: this is your name;—which name, the teacher retained at the time the account was given to me." Here we perceive a deliberate selection and change of sounds to express certain associated ideas, and probably altered opinions.

Familiarity with the use of the finger-alphabet, and intercourse by

¹ *Smithsonian Contributions*, vol ii.