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SMITHSONIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE.

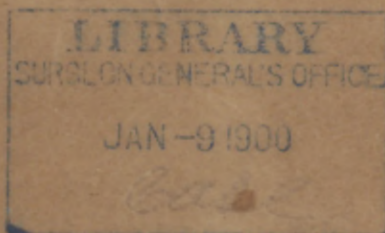
VOCAL SOUNDS

OF

LAURA BRIDGEMAN,

BY

DR. FRANCIS LIEBER.





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A PAPER

ON THE

VOCAL SOUNDS OF LAURA BRIDGEMAN,

THE BLIND DEAF-MUTE AT BOSTON;

COMPARED WITH THE ELEMENTS OF PHONETIC LANGUAGE.

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VOL. II.

ART. 2.

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THE NAMES

OF THE COMMISSION TO WHOM THIS MEMOIR HAS BEEN REFERRED.

COL. W. W. S. BLISS,
D. L. DIX.

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LANGUAGE consists of signs, representing ideas. These signs are selected by the person who speaks in accordance with the ideas prevailing in his own mind, in order to produce the reversed process in the individual spoken to; that is, they are used for that process—the most wonderful and most important on this earth—of conveying ideas from one distinct individual to another; for the communion of mind with mind, through sensuous impressions, made in skilful succession, and in accordance with general laws. Why, then, do all languages consist of phonetic signs? There is no tribe known making exclusive use of ocular communion, or conveying ideas chiefly by visible signs. Yet the eye conveys to the mind perceptions far more varied and enriching than all the other senses, and is an organ which, bating the developed phonetic language itself, contributes infinitely more to the formation of the mind than the sense of hearing. If persons who do not understand each other's languages, nevertheless must commune, a wrecked sailor, for instance, with an inhabitant of a foreign shore, they generally take, first of all, refuge in ocular signs. The Rev. Mr. Gutzlaff tells us that the Chinese accompany their speech with a great many visible signs, without which the audible ones cannot be understood.* The orators of all nations accompany their spoken words with signs intended for the eye, in a greater or less degree, voluntarily or impulsively, naturally or artistically. Why, then, do we find nowhere a regularly, or logically developed ocular language? It is no sufficient answer that the phonetic signs uttered by the

* The Chinese have even the belief that there is a word expressive of all excellence, and so exquisite, that no one can pronounce it; but that it can only be written, or be perceived by the eyes. The sixth of Dr. Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters, may be read, with reference to this subject, not without profit.

infinitely pliable organs of the human voice present a greater variety than all those that can be produced by the other organs. We are, indeed, able to make this discovery now, when all the riches and infinite blessings of a phonetic language are spread before us; but how was man led to develop these riches, when, as we have seen, he first of all resorts to ocular signs, and stands in need of them even after he has been possessed of all the wealth of auricular language? Had God left it to the invention of man, before he could know to what amount of utility, enjoyment, refinement, affection, elevation, thought and devotion his phonetic communion, and its representative in writing, would lead, man could never have attained to the prizes of language and literature. But Providence, in this as in all other elements of civilization, has, by organic laws of our nature, forced men into that path by which alone their starting in the career of progress can be unfailingly secured—by laws which oblige man to set out in the right direction.

A clearer insight into the phonetic origin of human language is important both to the philosopher and the physiologist. Besides, all appreciation of truth conduces to a purer state of the mind, a wider spread of knowledge, and, ultimately, to an intenser devotion to God. It is my object to give in this paper a contribution to this great inquiry, for which the vocal sounds of Laura Bridgeman, a female endowed with a peculiarly active mind, but deprived from earliest infancy of sight and hearing, and nearly destitute of taste, seem to offer a singularly fit opportunity.

I have always read with attention the annual reports of Dr. Howe on the education of this most interesting being, by which he has already acquired imperishable renown in both hemispheres. From year to year I have been in the habit of visiting Laura and her sagacious teachers, who, as every one is aware, have succeeded in giving language, the power of verbal thought, and the means of intellectual and moral development, to a being who seemed to be shut up within the loneliest prison-house that our minds can conceive of; apparently walled up, without one means of communion with the world, and possessed only of one solitary channel of distinct perception—the confined sense of touch.

At length I passed three entire months in the immediate neighborhood of Laura, saw and observed her daily, while every possible facility was extended to me by Dr. Howe and his assistant teachers. Among other things, I paid attention to her vocal sounds.

In order to be better understood in the following pages, and to prevent misunderstanding on some material points, I would refer to a lecture of mine on the origin of the first constituents of civilization;* especially so far as the origin of language is concerned, to pages 14 to 18. To what has been said there I would add the following observations:

The origin of all utterance is emotional. This applies to man and brutes; but utterance soon acquires in man a very different character. With the animal

* Published in 1845.

it remains forever almost exclusively emotional; in some rare cases it approaches the character of language.

All emotion excites the nervous system, or consists in an excitement of the nervous system, which, so long as we remain in the body, is linked to the mind by such mysterious laws. This excitement becomes apparent by a variety of phenomena. A person in joyful surprize before a Correggio, exclaims "Ah!" and quickly brings both hands together: an irritable person says, "Come here, I say," rapping the table in quick succession, beating repeatedly the floor with his foot, and knitting his brows with the contraction of impatience: a frightened dog runs howling away, and drops the ears and tail; or, however lazily he may be lying on the ground, he slightly moves the tip of the tail at hearing his master's footsteps: an orator winds up by saying, "But the people will suffer it no longer," opening wide his eyes, shaking his lifted right hand, moving his head with an inclination of his whole person, and pronouncing his words slowly, solemnly, and in a deep tone: a hungry cat, sitting by the table, utters plaintive sounds, and looks steadily at the child who is in the habit of feeding it, moving one of the forepaws, as if in the act of grasping something. All these respective signs which accompany the utterances, and the utterances themselves, are phenomena arising in each case from one and the same cause. I would call them, therefore, symphenomena—a legitimate word, it seems, both in point of etymology and meaning. Our accent, our intonation, our gestures, the shrugging of the shoulders, the opening wide or half-shutting of the eyes, the curling of the lip, the pointing involuntarily at objects, the rubbing the head in cases of perplexity, the accompanying our words by depictive signs, laughing, blushing, smiling, weeping, moaning, with hundreds of other phenomena, are symphenomena of the idea or emotion prevailing at the time within us, and affecting the brain and nervous system. I would call, then, symphasis the manifestation of two or more phenomena conjointly produced by the same cause.

It will appear at once how important the whole subject of symphony is, when we consider that that which is originally the pure symphenomenon of an emotion, becomes, in the beholder, who cannot know of the emotion by direct communion from mind to mind, a *sign*, indicating or *conveying* the emotion from the original sentient to his fellow-creature. Crying, wringing the hands, and uttering plaintive sounds, are the spontaneous symphenomena of despair. He in whom they appear does not intentionally produce them. He, however, who beholds them, knows them, because they are spontaneous, and because he is endowed with the same nature and organization; and thus they become *signs* of despair. Henceforth rational beings may intentionally *produce* them, when they *desire* to *convey* the idea of despair. There is no invention in this case; no conventional agreement upon an arbitrary sign; but there is, nevertheless, a development of a sign by rational beings out of that which they, at first, produced involuntarily as sentient creatures. The latter man has in common with the brute. The animal world is full of symphenomena. The first, however—the transformation of the symphenomenon into an intentional sign—belongs to the

defining, generalizing, and combining power of reason. The nursery, that spot where the history of mankind is lived over again in more than one respect, furnishes us with many instances of this important process.

The theory of symphony finds a wide and, I conceive, a fruitful application in many different branches of moral and physical knowledge; but we have to deal with it here so far only as it affects the origin of phonetic language, and the vocal sounds of Laura Bridgeman.

Symphenomena show themselves in all of us. Art even cultivates them, and draws them within the sphere of studied elocution. But they are most observable with untutored beings—with children and uncivilized tribes; or with the educated adult, when deep emotion breaks through the tranquil repose which is the general characteristic of cultivated life. Every one knows how vehement the expressions of grief, joy, despondency, love or revenge, are with savages, or how a sudden calamity at sea produces all the symphenomena in their native and unrestrained variety in polished men or women. "Kiss me, Hardey—kiss me," exclaimed Lord Nelson, when Captain Hardey had told him that the shout which the admiral had heard was that of victory, and he felt his life rapidly ebbing away.

As a matter of course, these symphenomena appear strongly in Laura Bridgeman; and, if unrestrained, will show themselves at times so forcibly as to be distasteful to others. They were therefore restrained by her teachers, for the same reason that we often check them in children. The object of Laura's education was to make her fit for social intercourse; and the vehement demonstrations of symphenomena would have interfered with this noble and important object.

It is necessary here to guard against a possible misunderstanding of the preceding words. Some readers may suspect that it has been difficult to restrain this blind deaf-mute, on the score of decorum, because she can have conceived no idea of good breeding by constant and involuntary observation of the well-bred around her, as we do from our earliest infancy. Yet, remarkable as the fact may be, Laura has at no time of her life failed against the nicest delicacy. We have the word of all her teachers for this surprising fact; and every one who has had an opportunity of observing her will agree with me, that her conduct is marked throughout by a delicate feeling of propriety. I confess that this is very remarkable, when we consider the offensive conduct of many savage tribes; but it only shows that delicacy of behavior and propriety of demeanor are natural to man, though they may not be always primitive. They require development, like most things which are essentially natural to the mind and soul of man. This development may be individual, or it may belong to the tribe, the race, and yet may have become more or less inherent.

Laura not only blushes and weeps, laughs and smiles, which may be called absolute or direct symphenomena, requiring no more an act of aiding volition than the throbbing of the heart does; but I have seen her stamping with joy—an impulsive phenomenon which we observe in a more regulated form, brought

under the influence of volition (as the original impulsive tone is at a later period voluntarily pronounced as a word) in the form of applause in large assemblies. When Laura was speaking to me* of a cold bath, the idea prevailing at the time in her mind produced the motion of shivering. This was, for her, purely symphenomenal; but it became to me, who was looking at her, a sign, or symbol, because it expressed the effect which the cold water had produced on her system.

When Laura is astonished, or amazed, she rounds and protrudes her lips, opens them, breathes strongly, spreads her arms, and turns her hands with extended fingers upwards, just as we do when wondering at something very uncommon. I have seen her biting her lips with an upward contraction of the facial muscles when roguishly listening at the account of some ludicrous mishap, precisely as lively persons among us would do. She has not perceived these phenomena in others; she has not learned them by unconscious imitation; nor does she know that they can be perceived by the by-stander. I have frequently seen her, while speaking of a person, pointing at the spot where he had been sitting when Laura last conversed with him, and where she still believed him to be, as we naturally turn our eye to the object of which we are speaking. She frequently does these things with one hand, while the other receives or conveys words. When Laura once spoke to me of her own crying, when a little child, she accompanied her words with a long face, drawing her fingers down the face, indicating the copious flow of tears; and when, on New Year's day of 1844, she wished in her mind a happy new year to her benefactor, Dr. Howe, then in Europe, she involuntarily turned toward the east, and made with both her outstretched arms a waving and blessing motion, as natural to her as it was to those who first accompanied a benediction with this symphenomenon of the idea, that God's love and protection might descend in the fulness of a stream upon the beloved fellow-being. This movement, though solemn, was as spontaneous with Laura as another of a ludicrous character was to a lively Italian, who told me, at Rome, that a friend on whom I called had just left the house on horseback, and accompanied the words by putting two fingers of the right hand astride on the digit of the left. He had no fear that I might not understand him, for he was freely conversing with me. With both, the gestures were simply symphenomena of the ideas entirely occupying their minds at the time.

A young lady to whom Laura is affectionately attached has a short, delicate, and quick step, which Laura has perceived by the jar "going through the feet

* For those wholly unacquainted with Laura's case I will simply state, that Dr. Howe has succeeded in imparting to her a finger-language, or, to speak more correctly, finger-writing. She knows the value of words, and freely communes with every one who knows her finger-alphabet, which is formed in each other's hand. Her alphabet corresponds to our phonetic alphabet, although it represents no sound to her, but consists of signs of the touch, as the letters which the deaf-mute learns and reads are exclusively ocular signs, and have no phonetic value for him.

up to the head," as she very justly describes it. One day she entered the room, affecting the same step; and when asked by the young lady why she did so, she promptly replied, "You walk thus, and I thought of you." Here the question made her conscious that her imitative step was a symphenomenon, and nothing more, of the idea of that young friend of hers, then uppermost in her mind.

On page 37 of Dr. Howe's tenth report, we find the account of a conversation between Laura and one of her teachers on an insect. Laura asked, "Has he think?" touching at the same time her forehead—(for a reason similar to that by which Dr. Spurzheim explained the fact, that Sterne's portrait represents him pointing unconsciously to the spot which the phrenologists believe to correspond to the organ of wit.) Laura continued to ask, "Does he breathe much?" at the same time putting her hand on her chest and breathing hard. On page 44 of the thirteenth report, an account is given of Laura's relation of a dream. She said, "I dreamed that God took away my breath to heaven," accompanying her words with a sign of taking something away from her mouth. Who can help remembering here the fresco paintings of the Campo Santo, at Pisa, where, with an equally infantine conception of the removal of human souls, angels are represented drawing the souls out of the mouths of the dead? Or who does not at once recollect the many languages, ancient and modern, in which breath and spirit are designated by the same word?

In none of these cases does the remarkable girl, blind, deaf and dumb, as she is, intend to illustrate by gesture, or any other sign, the meaning of her words, no more than we do by most of our gesticulations, frowns, smiles, or other expressions, which, indeed, we often show unconsciously; so much so, that they actually betray us. In one word, they are, as has been repeatedly said, symphenomena.

But the symphenomena of an agitated mind, or of strong affections, show themselves most readily, and in the greatest variety, as effects of the respiratory organs, because these are most easily affected, being of a peculiarly delicate character; because the voice can be modulated almost without end; and because, in fact, comparatively few affections suggest images to be imitated by ocular signs. Strong emotion requires exterior manifestation: it will out, to use a colloquial term, and utterance of some sort is the consequence. We have this process in common with the brutes; but the affections of the latter are circumscribed, and their organs of utterance infinitely more limited than those of man. Uncouth, or, at any rate, inarticulate sounds are uttered by man before his lip is blessed with the rational word, or his mind with verbal thought, and man falls back upon the inarticulate sounds when his emotion overflows the usual channels of expression—when unspeakable love or convulsive wrath, stunning fear or transcending admiration, overpowers him. A parent who clasps his lost child again within his arms; a person who beholds the sea for the first time; a man suddenly insulted to the quick by stupendous falsehood; a maiden to whom, unwarned, a hideous death presents itself—these are not apt to give utterance in words, but they breathe forth their emotions in primitive and inar-

ticulate sounds. I once heard a colored preacher describing the torments of future punishment. He rose, not ineloquently, from the description of one anguish to another, when at last, carried away by uncontrollable excitement, he merely uttered, for more than a minute, a succession of inarticulate sounds or cries.

Where, however, is the limit between articulate and inarticulate sounds? What is articulation?

I believe that, unconsciously, we generally consider sounds articulate when, while we hear them, the mind can spell or trace them with our accustomed alphabet. The clucking tones of some savages, the pure guttural sounds of others, and those sounds which we cannot even indicate by a name, appear to the missionary, who first hears them, as inarticulate, because he does not hear in them the elements, called letters, to which he is accustomed. Yet these sounds belong to languages, and are undoubtedly articulate. William von Humboldt, on the other hand, says that we cannot give any other definition of articulate sounds than that they are those sounds which man intentionally utters in order to convey something thought. This seems to me equally erroneous. Thoughts and feelings may be expressed, though intentionally, without articulate sounds; and, however true it be, that we almost always express our thoughts by articulate sounds, still the meaning of the term *Articulation* must be sought first of all in the sound itself. Now we can give no other definition of an articulate sound than that it is an *unbroken* emission of a sound which is composed of those elements for which we have not even a befitting name when uttered, but which, when written, are called *letters*, and which are exclusively belonging to the human organs of speech. Such sounds are called articulate, because their succession divides or articulates the human speech into one-sounded parts—into joints or single emissions, called syllables. These distinct sounds, their combinations and repetitions, make it possible for man to have a phonetic language, or a system of sounds by which he can convey ideas, and, so far, there exists the closest connexion between *Reflection* and *Articulation*, between *Thought* and *Word*; but there can be articulation without distinct thought or intended conveyance of ideas, as was the case in that remarkable instance of the sound *Titnoss*, of which mention will be made in a future note.

Neither these, nor any remarks contained in the present memoir, have been made to deny the close connexion between thought and word. So soon as man has a distinct idea, he feels the yearning to speak it out, and if he has a distinct idea of a single thing he longs to name it. This seems to be the chief meaning of the 19th verse of the second chapter of Genesis. The necessity and longing to name animals is placed thus early in the history of the creation, and this implanted yearning is expressed in the remarkable line which says that the Creator led the animals to Adam "*to see what he would call them.*" By a natural transposition, words are ascribed to animals so soon as we imagine them with distinct thoughts similar to our own, as the early fable shows. I was looking lately at a negro who was occupied in feeding young mocking birds by

the hand. "Would they eat worms?" I asked. The negro replied: "Surely not; they are too young; *they would not know what to call them.*" A singular commentary, almost touching in its simplicity, on the passage in Genesis to which allusion has been made.

Observation shows us that every emotion quickens the respiration, or causes an oppression of the chest, which seeks relief by violent inhaling. This is the origin of our sighs, laughter, moaning, and those exclamations of Ah, Eh, Oh, which are gradually cast into articulate sounds, and many of which become regular words, classified according to systematic grammar, such as alas, helas, pooh, bah, umph, pshaw, ototoi, ecco, ecce, halloo, huzzah, and of which we have so remarkable an instance in Sophocles, who makes Philoctete exclaim—

"Attatai, otottotoi apappapai, papa, papa, papa, papai!"

And in Dante's:

"Pape Satan, pape Satan, alleppe!"

Laura utters a loud sound of *o*, with a strong aspirate, inclining almost to the sound *f*, which might be written somewhat in this manner, "Ho-o-ph-ph!" when she is highly excited by wonder. We do the same when the laws of propriety do not prevent us from giving vent to our feeling of amazement. And the actor of the broad farce accompanies his assumption of stupid surprise with the same exclamation, because, in his endeavor to caricature, he stands in need of the imitation of strongly marked symphenomena.

Frequently I have heard Laura expressing a feeling of satisfaction by a subdued tone, somewhat between chuckling and a slight groaning.*

Utterance, produced by increased activity of the respiring organs, and varied by the pliable vocal organism, and the great moveability of the lips and tongue, is so direct and natural an effect of the excited nervous substance, that sounds of grief, pain, affection, disgust, contempt, despair, pity, fear, attention, admiration, mockery, surprise, wrath, entreaty, delight, approval, caution, or submission, are as natural even to us, tutored and trained as we are from early infancy, both by positive instruction and the ever active imitative principle, as are the wholly spontaneous symphenomena of growing pale or wringing the hands. Laura actually once, when reminded by one of her teachers that she ought not to indulge in her uncouth sounds, which resemble those made by deaf-mutes, answered, "I do not always try not to make them." The teacher urged the reasons why it is desirable she should restrain them, and was answered, "But I have very much voice." Laura went farther, and added, "God gave me much voice;" thus strikingly pointing out a truth of elemental importance to the philosopher. Yielding, however, to the arguments against this "voice," she

* I would have said *grunting*, as more accurately expressing the sound, had I not felt reluctant to use this word in connexion with that amiable and delicate being.

will at times go into her closet, and shutting her door, "indulge herself in a surfeit of sounds." (Page 27 of thirteenth report.) This seems to me not only very interesting and instructive, but also deeply touching.*

A missionary of my acquaintance, whose word I noways doubt, informed me that one day he was travelling in the distant West of our Union with a young man who was greatly pleased with something that had been said. Becoming excited, the young traveller asked his friend to excuse him for a moment, whereupon he uttered a tremendous yelling. This done, he declared that the indulgence had done him much good, and the thread of the conversation was resumed. Nor will any one feel disposed to doubt the truth of this account, who is acquainted with the shouts which the less educated of the thinly peopled parts of the West and South set up on all occasions of any excitement; not only at barbecues, but even when a few persons are met, and something considered peculiarly laughable or "smart" has been said. When poor Laura retires into her closet, freely to revel in her sounds, she only does what we ourselves do when we have checked our desire to laugh, but indulge in it so soon as we find ourselves alone, or in presence of those persons only before whom we do not feel obliged to repress the symphenomenon. Indeed, Laura does no more, although in inarticulate sounds, than we do when, thoroughly impressed with some feeling, we speak to ourselves where no one can hear us. And it may be remarked, that the least tutored are most given to these soliloquies. There are many negroes in the South upon whom it is utterly impossible to impose silence when they are in a state of excitement, though they may not speak to any one, and may not be actuated by any feeling of opposition.

I ask permission to mention here a fact, which has always appeared to me very remarkable, although I own it does not relate to Laura's vocal sounds. I may not have another opportunity to place it on record, and am convinced that it deserves being known. Laura constantly accompanies her *yes* with the common affirmative nod, and her *no* with our negative shake of the head. Both are with her in the strictest sense primitive symphenomena of the ideas of affirmation and negation, and not symphenomena which have gradually become such by unconscious imitation, as frequently may be the case with us. The nodding forward for assent, and the shaking of the head or hand from side to side for dissent, seem to be genuine symphenomena accompanying these two ideas. Assent and dissent are closely allied to the ideas of favor and disfavor, which are naturally accompanied by an inclination toward, or a turning from, the real or ideal object. The very word *aversion* points to this symphenomenal fact. When we signify assent or dissent with the hand, a similar sign is observed.

The Italians move repeatedly the lifted digit from right to left, as a sign of negation, while the modern Greeks throw back the head, producing at the same time a clucking noise with the tongue. Laura makes at present these signs, even without writing a Yes or No in the hand of the person with whom she

*She will also, when deeply grieving, shut herself up, and seek comfort in unrestrained weeping.

converses, having learned, but not having been told, that somehow or other we perceive this sign, or that it produces upon us the desired effect, although she is unable to solve the great riddle of the process by which this is done. Laura, far below our domestic animals, so far as the senses are concerned, but infinitely above them because she is endowed with a human mind, has attained to the abstractions of affirmation and negation at a very early age, while no dog or elephant, however sagacious, has been known to rise to these simple ideas, for which every moment even of animal existence calls, wherever reflection sways over the naked fact.

Laura, then, independently of sight and hearing—the two most suggestive senses in every thing that appertains to language—felt an impulsive urgency to utter sounds as symphenomena of emotions, or vivid ideas, in common with all those human beings who have not attained to a language properly so called; but at the very outset she met with the following obstacles:

Laura cannot hear her own voice; nor can she perceive the tones of others. She could not, therefore, learn to modify, vary, and articulate them according to a developed language, which is the successive work of many and long periods of civilization. How much our tones, in their infinite and significant modulations, owe to the fact that we move in a speaking society from earliest infancy, becomes manifest, when we consider the uncouth, broken, and animal sounds of the lowest savages, and, on the other hand, that even the utterances of the brute are modified by their intercourse with man. Mr. Jesse, in his *Anecdotes of Dogs*, London, 1846, ascribes this effect of the never-ceasing and ever-varying hum of civilization to these animals. "It is," he says, "I believe, a fact, and if so a curious one, that the dog in a wild state only howls; but when he becomes the friend and companion of man, he has, then, wants and wishes, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, to which in his wilder state he appears to have been a stranger. His vocabulary, if it may be so called, then increases, in order to express his enlarged and varied emotions." Of course Mr. Jesse cannot mean by the words "in order to express," anything like inventive purpose on the part of the dog, but he must mean a combined effect of the widened circle of emotions in the animal, and the multiplied sounds of civilization which surround it, especially of the master's language or other tones addressed to it.

The second great obstacle for Laura was, that she did not perceive the effect produced, in each case, by her sounds upon others. The idea of a specific force and value of a certain sound, which directly leads to the conception of the name or word, and facilitates all the means of designation, and of combining these means, could not easily, and never perfectly, appear to her. I shall presently dwell more at length upon this point.

Lastly, Laura was positively interrupted in the formation even of her imperfect and elementary phonetic language, as I have stated before, in order to make her a being of intercourse in our society—in order to attach her as a living member to the community of civilization. This could not have been done had she been allowed freely to indulge in the harsh and grating sounds which

excited souls utter forth through a throat, untaught and unbred, so to say, by the harmony of developed civilization in which we move.

I have already alluded to the distinction which we ought to make between merely spontaneous symphenomena and those which may be called secondary; that is, such as have become involuntary symphenomena by habit. If there was such a word as *habital*, I would use it as a more appropriate term for secondary symphenomena.

The exclamation of sudden pain is one of the first class; speaking loudly with ourselves, when there is no one in our hearing, and when, perhaps, we would not wish to be overheard, and the speaking in our dreams, are instances of the second class. These secondary, or *habital* symphenomena, are also observed in Laura. She does not only frequently talk to herself with one hand in the other, waking or in her dreams, which is likewise seen with deaf-mutes who have been taught the finger alphabet; but Laura, who has, as will be presently shown, certain particular sounds for distinct persons—names, or nouns proper, if we choose to call them so—utters these name-sounds for herself when she vividly thinks of these individuals. Dr. Howe's tenth report, page 30, contains the following passage:

“Laura said to me, in answer to a question why she uttered a certain sound, rather than spelled the name, ‘I think of Janet’s noise; many times when I think how she give me good things I do not think to spell her name.’ And at another time, hearing her in the next room make the peculiar sound for Janet, I hastened to her, and asked her why she made it. She said, ‘Because I think how she do love me much, and I love her much.’ ”*

It cannot be fairly objected that, if all that I have stated be true, it would lead to the inference that the deaf-mutes, and even the blind deaf-mutes, must be able to attain to a complete phonetic language. For, I have spoken only of the impulsive utterances which form the incipient elements of language, natural to the deaf and blind as they are to the hearing and seeing, and out of which words proper, with all their changes, combinations, and inflections, can be evolved only by constantly repeated and enduring vocal intercourse. Yet, it will be interesting carefully to inquire how far Laura Bridgeman—blind and deaf, indeed, but endowed with a sprightly and delicate mind, and an affectionate soul—actually possesses the elements of our vocal language.

For this purpose we may classify the verbal elements of all phonetic language in the following manner:

Interjections, that is, primary phonetic symphenomena of the inner state of man. We have seen that Laura possesses them as a matter of course. If she has not the distinctly articulate interjections of developed languages, it is because her state excludes her from a share in our stock of articulate sounds

* The tenth report was published in 1842. Laura speaks now far more correctly. The damsel has, even by this time, acquired a great relish for what we would call high-sounding words. *C'est tout comme chez nous!*

and words. For, articulation is the combined result of a reflecting mind; of an acute ear, which hears the sounds of others and our own; of vocal organs, trained for many years; of the effect of continued traditional utterance; and of a skill, gradually acquired, unconsciously to analyze sounds which we perceive.

As the second class may be mentioned positive imitations, or copies of sound—the onomatopy of the grammarians. Man resorts to it at the earliest periods, partly led to it by the inherent imitative principle; partly because sound, wherever it is produced at all, is the most distinctive characteristic, and becomes the readiest sign for the being that utters it, inasmuch as the ear perceives a sound, and nothing more; while the eye perceives at once an object in all its visual relations, as an image which must be analyzed in order to be described. The eye perceives totalities, the ear single characteristics. It is incomparably easier to designate a sheep or a cataract, by imitating the bleating of the one or the rumbling noise of the other, than to describe them by words already existing, or by drawing outlines of these objects. All languages, therefore, are full of such words as *Sibilare*, *Mutter*, *Whiz*, *Splash*, *Boan*, *Bronte*, *Claqueur*, *Knarren*, *Lachen*.

Men, naturally, take refuge in the onomatopy, when they must commune with one another without mutually knowing their languages. There is a very interesting paper by the late Mr. Gallatin in the second volume of the *Transactions of the New York Ethnological Society*, on the "Jargon," or Trade Language of Oregon. The reader will find there a long list of onomatopies, such as are frequently formed in our nurseries, where the dog is called *bow-wow*, or the cow *moo-moo*. Thus the words *tingting*, *he-he*, *mash*, *tumtum*, *poo*, signify in that Oregon Jargon, respectively, bell, to laugh, crushed or broken, the heart, to shoot.

Laura not hearing any tones, cannot, of course, originate onomatopies.

Two other classes of words are at once formed from the two preceding ones. Interjections themselves are used at an early period as words, (as I have heard children say, "This is fie," for this is naughty;) but what is more important, interjections soon form the roots of other words. Thus the feeling of wonder seeks vent from every human breast in the symphenomenal sound of *o*, or one between *o* and *a*, (the latter as in *father*.) The ideas of admiration and wonder again, and more of height, tallness, power, are closely connected in the human intellect; so that we find in original languages words designating height, elevation, derived from this interjection, as the German *Hoch*, for high, which is nothing but the interjection *o*, wrapt as it were in strong aspirates. Everywhere men cast shame upon others by an interjection sounding *Aih*; and *αἰδῶς* means, in Greek, actions of which we ought to be ashamed; and *Aetschen*, in German, means to call *aih* at a person, or strongly to deride him. Disgust, mingled with contempt, is expressed by all men by a symphenomenon, which consists of a sharp exhalation of the sound *f*, which is the combined effect of the lower lip being somewhat protruded, while the upper one is contemptuously drawn up, and the breath is strongly uttered—all, the effects of the prevailing

feeling of disgust. This *f* sound leads to the universal interjection of *fie*, *pfui*, *fi*, or $\phi\acute{\epsilon}\tilde{v}$ —the vowel, the most liquid element of speech, changing in the different languages, as it would with different individuals, before usage has settled one vowel as the adopted one. This *fie*, or *fi* (in French,) is the root of the word *Fien*, to hate, in Low-German and ancient Franconian, and of *Fian* in Anglo-Saxon; whence again the noun *Fiend*, in English, is derived, as likewise *Fijend* in Low-German, *Feind* in German, *Fient* in Swedish, *Fiant* in ancient Franconian, and *Vejant* in Dutch, for hateful enemy, a malignant being. The Greek $\phi\acute{\epsilon}\tilde{v}$ indicates more an interjection of pain; but that which is the utterance of pain becomes that of dislike if exclaimed *at* an object. The two ideas are near akin. We have, therefore, $\phi\acute{\epsilon}\tilde{v}\zeta\omega$ to indulge in sounds of woe, or to call $\phi\acute{\epsilon}\tilde{v}$; and is not $\phi\acute{\epsilon}\tilde{v}\gamma\omega$, to flee, (from that which makes us exclaim $\phi\acute{\epsilon}\tilde{v}$, that is, from that which is painful, disagreeable to us,) derived from the same root? *Ototoi* was the Greek articulated exclamation of grief, and $\delta\tau\omicron\tau\acute{\upsilon}\zeta\omega$ is to moan, to give vent to grief. The Greek language requires the addition of a termination which indicates the verb. The same would be the case in German. In English this necessity does not exist; and a leading article of a distinguished London paper* lately said of the Secretary for foreign affairs, "He will pooh-pooh such particularity;" that is to say, he will dismiss such particulars disdainfully as trifles, while uttering the interjection pooh! pooh!

A member of my own family showed, in early infancy, a peculiar tendency to form new words, partly from sounds which the child caught, as *to woh* for *to stop*, from the interjection *woh!* used by wagoners when they wish to stop their horses; partly from symphenomenal emissions of sounds. Thus when the boy was a little above a year old he had made and established in the nursery the word *Nim* for every thing fit to eat. I had watched the growth of this word. First, he expressed his satisfaction at seeing his meal, when hungry, by the natural humming sound, which all of us are apt to produce when approving or pleased with things of a common character, and which we might express thus, *hm*. Gradually, as his organs of speech became more skilful, and repetition made the sound more familiar and clearer, it changed into the more articulate *um* and *im*. Finally an *N* was placed before it, *nim* being much easier to pronounce than *im*, when the mouth has been closed. But soon the growing mind began to generalize, and *nim* came to signify every thing edible; so that the boy would add the words *good* or *bad*, which he had learned in the mean time. He now would say *good nim*, *bad nim*, his nurse adopting the word with him. On one occasion he said, *Fie nim*, for *bad, repulsive to eat*. There is no doubt but that a verb *to nim*, for to eat, would have developed itself, had not the ripening mind adopted the vernacular language, which was offered to it ready made. We have, then, here the origin and history of a word which commenced in a symphenomenal sound, and gradually became articulate in sound and general in its meaning, as the organs of speech, as well as the mind of the utterer,

* London Spectator of the 27th July, 1850.

became more perfect. And is not the history of this word a representative of many thousands in every language, now settled and acknowledged as a legitimate tongue?*

We meet with articulated sounds which are yet in a middle state between a pure interjection and a distinct word, as the German sweet expression, *Eiapopeia*, pronounced i-a-po-pi-a—the endearing and lulling sound with which the German mother sings her babe to sleep. *Ei* and *Eia* (the *ei* pronounced *i*, as in fire) is the German symphenomenal sound of endearment which accompanies the patting of the rosy cheek of a child, and the maternal desire to bring down slumber upon the infant has drawn out this primitive sound into *eiapopeia*. Now, many cradle songs, as the Germans call the rhymes sung by the cradle side, begin with this—what must it be called, interjection or word? It is neither. At times, indeed, a “cradle song” is called an *Eiapopeia*. In this case it is a perfect noun. And is not the English lullaby much the same? The syllable *by* is the same sound *by*, which, in the gentle nursery idiom, means sleep, when the mother sings *by, by*, and *lull* is depictive of the act it designates. The French, when they desire to imitate the sound of the drum, say *rattaplan*, for which we say *rub-a-dub*, and the Germans have *brumberum*. They are imitative sounds, articulated, yet in an undefined state, so far as grammatical classification is concerned, while *drum* has become a distinct noun.† It may be observed,

* This child made other remarkable words. Every one who has studied the languages of our Indians, and some other tribes, as, for instance, that of the natives of Burmah, is struck with their words which express a number of ideas, indicated in our analytical tongues by a series of words. William von Humboldt called this process *agglutination*; but as this term would indicate a joining of what has been separate before, which is by no means always the case, I preferred the term *holophrastic* words, in a paper on this subject which I published in the March number, of 1837, of the Southern Literary Messenger. It is for the same reason that I preferred the term to that of polysynthetic words, which Mr. Du Ponceau had proposed.

The child in question had become most impressed with the word *Good*, when in connection with the noun *Boy*; that is to say, when he himself had been called a good boy, which he pronounced *Goobboy*. It formed one word for him, so much so that his infantine mind could not separate the two parts, in this case actually agglutinated, to use the term of William von Humboldt. When the child, therefore, one day desired to express the idea Good Cow, he said *Goobboy Cow*. He found the same difficulty of expressing *good cow*, which many of our missionaries have to contend with, when they desire to express Christian ideas by words which carry along with them numerous associated ideas of different things and relations. Father Sangermano, if I recollect aright, says in his work on Burmah, published by the Oriental Translation Fund, that he could not simply translate the passage in which it is related that a woman washed the feet of the Saviour; for, although there are ever so many words for washing in the Burmese language, yet each word carries along with it many conditions and relations of washing inapplicable in this case.

Similar, so far as the connexion of ideas is concerned, was the case of a little girl who, in my hearing, said to a man, *Doctor naughty girl*, because he had teased her. Her mind had received the idea of *bad* chiefly in conjunction with *girl*, that is, herself, when rebuked for some fault or other. “Bad girl” was, in her mind, one term, or a holophrastic word.

† Thus I wrote; but one of the greatest orators of the age, or any age, has since said in the Senate, (Mr. Webster, on July 17, 1850,) “They have been beaten incessantly, every month, and every day, and every hour, by the din, and roll, and rub-a-dub of the abolition presses.” He uses rub-a-

in passing, that this latter instance shows, in a striking manner, how different tribes view or perceive the same phonetic phenomenon (hear the sound of the drum) differently, according to the different genius of the nation; yet all may be equally correct in their own way.

Out of the second class, or purely imitative words, arises another very large one. It consists of those words which, so far as their sound goes, are derived from onomatopies, but have come to mean something which is only occasionally accompanied by the originally imitated sound, or is not so any longer at all. Such, for instance, is the English word *grumbling*, which originally indicated the physical sound of grumbling, but now frequently means the mental act of petty dissatisfaction. A man may grumble in a clear voice. To the same class belong the French *gronder*, the German *krazen*, (to scratch, and pronounced *krat-sen*,) the Greek *χράω*, from which is derived *γράφειν*, to grave, to engrave, and, ultimately to write, as if we used *scratching* for writing; and, by a farther extension of the meaning, for composing, corresponding, and other significations, which the expansive word *writing* has received in the course of time. The German word *Schmecken*, (of the same root with the English to smack,) which now means to taste, both as an active and a neuter verb, is here in point. It is derived from the sound which is produced by a person eagerly tasting some substance—an action expressed by the French *claquer*, and the English *smacking*; the latter of which also signifies to savour of something. For, the active and the passive, the cause and the effect, the state of a thing and the action resulting from it, the perceiving and the causing of the perception, are ideas constantly passing over into one another in the human mind, and produce corresponding results in language.* But the German word extends its meaning still farther, for *Geschmack* is the term for taste, in all its meanings, as if the English *smacking* were used for the sense of taste and the cultivated æsthetical perception and judgment, or as if the French used *claquement* for their word *gout*, in the fine arts, though the very words *gout* and *gouter* are derived from the Latin *gustus*, which, with its guttural sound, belongs likewise to the present class. It was, originally, an imitation of the sound produced by the act of swallowing, or the reversed sound of *gulping* (also a word to be mentioned here.) The German *plump*, now meaning clumsy, was suggested by the sound which the fall of a heavy and unelastic body produces. The Greek *pneuma*, meaning mind, but originally breath, is derived from the sound of breathing forth. The Chinese word *gong* means the instrument which produces the sound

dub as a noun, as *din* had been used by others before him, and as *eiapopeia* has been used by the Germans as a substantive. What are the Latin *clangor*, *clamor*, the German *Klang*, but words of this sort? We might imagine a Hudibrastic writer using the expression, “*They rub-a-dubbed it all about.*” No dictionary, however, in my possession, has *Rub-a-dub*; by and by the lexicographer will admit this, as yet, half-wild word.

* One of the most striking instances is our “*I am told*,” for “*It has been told to me*,” as if the Latin *narror* (they say of me) were used for “*they tell me*,” or as if the English “*I am reported*” did not mean “*It is reported of me*,” but “*It has been reported to me.*”

gong. The English *sly* means cunning, but is derived from the root of the word sliding, which, like the German *schlupfen*, is an imitation of the sound made by nimble bodies moving quickly on smooth surfaces. To clip, now meaning to cut off the tender ends of bodies, is derived from the noise made by the act of clipping. So is the English word to nip derived from a sound. In German *nip-pen* means to sip; both are, originally, of phonetic imitation.

The following is one of the most striking and interesting instances of words belonging to this class:

The Latin *vivere* and the Greek $\beta\iota\omega\upsilon$ are of the same root with the Gothic *quivan*, which, etymologically, is the same with our *weave*, that is, to move to and fro, as the German *weben* actually means to weave, and to move as a living body or entity—a sense which *move* has in the great passage of the Bible: In Him we live and move and have our being. The German is, “*In ihm leben und weben wir.*” Of the Gothic *quivan* was formed our *quick*, which means both living and rapid, for the ideas of life and motion are closely united, so much so that we cannot imagine unalterable sameness without the idea of death, or lifelessness; while *quivering* has the meaning of trembling motion. But this original root is probably the same which we find in *live*, the German *Leben*; and these words originally mean to utter a loud noise, to cry. They are etymologically the same with the low-German *Leuen*, the English to low. Hence the German *Leu* and *Lowe*, and the Latin *Leo*, for lion, that is, the *roarer*. *To low* is a clear imitation of the sound, while the idea of tone, of utterance, is as closely connected with that of life as the idea of motion. Indeed, wherever life surrounds us we see motion and hear sounds—be it utterance or noise caused by motion. It is not maintained that men reflected on this close connexion, but a noise, a cry, an utterance naturally suggested the idea of life, and the word or verbal sound indicating the one was necessarily taken for the other; as an anxious father, doubting the life of a new-born infant, will exultingly exclaim, *It cries!* meaning it lives. The Hebrew *Lēv*, for heart, because it pulsates, moves, or *lives*, probably descends from the same root. It is not useless to remark here that, in common German parlance, the word *Leben* (life) has to this day the meaning of uproar or noise. Many a German schoolmaster says, admonishingly, to his pupils: “Boys, do not make so much *life*,” when he suddenly breaks in upon them in the midst of a youthful tumult. We have, then, here again a word which is originally an imitation or a sound evoked by sound, but which gradually comes to designate various, very different and vast ideas.

I have given a sufficient number of instances to illustrate this class of words. Whoever will direct his attention to it will no doubt be as much surprised as the writer has been, at the immense number of words reducible to this class.

Laura, of course, could not attain to these classes of designating sounds, because she could not even attain to those whence they are derived.

Under the fifth class of words may be comprehended those which have never designated a sound, but whose sound, nevertheless, stands in a direct psychological connexion with the object to be designated, or the idea to be expressed—

as much so as interjections do. There is, indeed, a close affinity between the two. The words of this class are of a symphenomenal origin, and, for this reason, are easily understood when first uttered; almost as much so as the mere cry of pain or joy is. These peculiar words always form a most enlivening and spirited part of human speech; I mean such as the English *Flash*. Every one feels at once that there is an affinity between the sound *flash* and the impression which sudden, vivid, and passing light produces upon our visual organ. The high sound, we might almost say the *brightness* of the sound *a*, as it is pronounced in this word; the impression which the sound *sh*, at the end of the word, produces in this case, reminding us of *splash* and *dash*; the quickness expressed by the sound of *fl*, associated, as it is in our minds, with the words *fleet*, *flicker*, *flight*—all these contribute to make the word *Flash* one which accurately paints with sounds (I cannot otherwise express it) the flashing light. How close the affinity of impressions is, made by sound and light, and, indeed, by many other causes, appears clearly from the fact that the same root has often produced in one language a word designating a phenomenon of sound, and in a cognate language a term for a phenomenon perceived by the eye. We have in English to Titter, and in German *Zittern*, both derived from the same root. Every etymologist well knows that *T*, *Z*, and *S* frequently pass over into one another. But the German word *Zittern* means to tremble, while the English Tittering means to laugh in an under-tone, with a tremulous voice. There is a close affinity between the two phenomena, which is indicated by the fact that the expression just used of *tremulous* voice is intelligible and legitimate.*

The Greek *Lampas*, the German *Bliz*, the Latin *Clarus*, seem to me to belong to this class; so the English *Whirl*, if it does not belong to those words which originally have actually indicated a sound, as the German *Schwirren*, which is of the same root, but means a sound similar to the word itself, seems almost to prove. Most original words designating phenomena of light belong to this class.

* This is not a confusion of ideas, as little as there was confusion in the mind of the blind man, who was asked how he imagined, from all he had heard, red color, when he answered: "Like a trumpet sound for the eye;" or as there is confusion in the poet's mind when he boldly transposes words which belong to one sensuous sphere to another; Dante speaks of a *silent* sun—that is, of a sun not shining. In this poetic temerity lies often Shakespeare's greatest beauty and Milton's highest sublimity. If this transposition were not intelligible, human speech would hardly be possible; and if the mind did not perceive things and evolve thoughts in its oneness, they would not be intelligible. Expressions such as space of time, strong sound, cold or warm coloring, sweet voice, waving music, crying red, a clear tone, a dull sound, high-minded, sharp taste, a flat fellow, an itching desire, and a thousand others, would convey no ideas. The whole meaning of the metaphor and the trope must be explained upon the same ground. There is but one sensorium where all sensations center, no matter which sense may have been the channel of perception, and whence all the urgency to breathe out the word proceeds. A most curious instance of this transposition from one sensuous sphere to another was once afforded me by a little peasant boy in Thuringia. He said to me: "Dear sir, buy this nosegay; the violets taste very loud"—meaning they smell very strong. Yet this double transposition is perfectly intelligible, nor was it for the boy a transposition. The expression proceeded entire from *one* indivisible mind, and radiated, as it were, into different spheres of perceptible objects of the world without.

Properly speaking, the origin of these words must be referred to the first class—the primitive interjections, and so far we find them in the case of Laura; but we cannot expect to hear them from her lips as actual words, purposely and logically uttered, in order to convey distinct ideas, for the reasons of which we have already spoken.

There ought to be mentioned, in connexion with this class, those curious alliterations which have acquired a very distinct meaning, and are, consequently, universally understood, but are derived from no ordinary words; or, if they are so, use is made of the original words for their exclusively phonetic impression upon the ear, rather than for the meaning conveyed by them; or, lastly, the alliteration consists of syllables without any separate meaning of their own, added to existing words. Some of these alliterations are purely imitative, as the French *Din-don*, *ping-pang*, the German *klip-klap*. Others have a symphenomenal connexion with the idea they express; in English, for instance, *fiddle-faddle*, *rip-rap*, *slip-slop*, *hodge-podge*, *namby-pamby*, *tit for tat*, *higgledy-piggledy*, and *zig-zag*.* In others, as indicated before, a symphenomenal sound is added, to a word, as *chit-chat*, *see-saw*, *tit-bit*, *clap-trap*, the German *Misch-masch*, *schnick-schnack*, *holter-polter*, the French *pele-mele*. Others, again, seem to remind us of an original word, or do really so, but have relapsed into a symphenomenal state, *painting*, as I said before, with sounds the idea within us, as the English *nilly-willy* (in which the Latin *nolens volens*, and the English *will*, have curiously relapsed into a primitive symphenomenal state,) *flibberdy-gibberdy*, the American *teeter-tawter* (the English *tiller-toller*), *hurly-burly*, and a great many others. The American vulgar noun *slangwanger*, for a boisterous and arrogant fellow talking loudly and rudely in private or public, belongs to this class. †

* When the wife of Sir Thomas More exhorted him, in prison, to yield to Henry VIII, she replied to one of his noblest observations, "Tilly-valle, tilly-valle;" which Sir James Mackintosh, in his Life of that great man, calls "an exclamation of contempt, of which the origin or meaning cannot now be ascertained." The meaning is very plain; it is obviously the same with "fiddle-faddle," which means, "You talk stuff to no purpose; good enough on other occasions, but worth nothing on this." And as to the origin, it is purely symphenomenal; the sounds *paint* the impatient censure and low esteem in which the remark to which they apply was held by the worldly wife. The sounds *i* and *a* are taken, as generally prevailing in expressions of this, or a similar sort, in the English language. A noble member of the House of Commons, in the late debates on the admission of Mr. Rothschild, protested "against any farther *shilly-shallying*." He made a verb of the exclamation *shilly-shally*, which is quite as intelligible as Lady Moore's *tilly-valle*, *tilly-valle*.

† There are in all modern languages, but especially, it seems, in the Teutonic tongues, certain names and adjectives used merely for the purpose of emphasis. Originally they signify something strong, fearful, awful; and this general sense, without any reference to the particular object they designate, remains when they are used in the connexion here spoken of. The vulgar Germans thus use the word *murder*, merely to express the idea of *very much* in the strongest manner. They would say, for instance, "I like him murder well;" "I am murder busy." Thus we may hear in English, "He is a thundering fine fellow." The words *devil*, *devilish*, and *d—d*, are used in this emphasizing manner. Several times I have even heard the latter word used in the superlative, and as a noun, namely, in this connexion: "You may do your *d—dest*, you will not succeed;" or, "He has done his *d—dest*, but it's all useless;" that is, his very utmost. Now, in these cases, the *weight* of the

In the sixth class may be ranged those regular words which are formed by the addition of a syllable of symphenomenal character—syllables, as have been mentioned in the preceding paragraph, to some existing word. The German has the word *Bitten*, (to pray, i. e. of man, not of God;) of this he forms the frequentative *Betteln*, to beg, that is repeatedly praying, in a small way, for a small gift. It seems to be obvious that the affix *ln* has the same symphenomenal affinity to the ideas of diminutiveness and repetition that *flash* has to sudden, bright, and passing light. The Italian affix *accio*, or *one*, the one expressing badness to contemptibleness, the other indicating amplification, seem to me of the same sort. Whoever has heard an Italian using them, with his expressive enunciation, will at once understand their peculiar import. The Greek desiderative syllable *ω* is probably of a symphenomenal nature; so are all diminutives which are not originally independent, but now faded nouns. The intensive *S* of the Teutonic languages ought to be mentioned in this place.

What has been observed of Laura with reference to the fifth class applies likewise to this set of words.

words for which alone they are used is derived from their meaning; indeed, still more of them are unconsciously used because their sounds correspond to their weighty meaning. The German word for murder, for instance, is *mord*, (pronounced *mort*, with a strongly shaking *r*,) and the vulgar would not use it as a mere emphatic, did it not express the awful idea of murder by a heavy and strong sound. But it is found that the vulgar, especially in Ireland and our western regions, form entirely new words in a similar sense. The final syllable *acious*, in the English language, has a peculiarly emphatic sound. The vulgar, therefore, frequently attach it to adjectives, merely to add a heavy weight to the word. I have thus heard the words *gloriacious*, *curiacious*, for “very glorious” and “very curious.” The many Irish tales published in England contain numerous words of this sort. In one of them I lately found this expression: “You need not tossicate thus your head,” for, you need not thus violently toss your head. A remarkable slang word of this sort is the adjective *bodyacious*, vulgarly used in the South, and meaning total, root and branch; for instance: “The hogs have broke into my garden, and destroyed it bodyaciously.” Here the termination *acious* is made use of merely for its phonetic value, or weight; while the word *body* probably suggested the idea of totally—the entire body. The slang of the vulgar is interesting to the philosopher; because, in the uneducated, if they are of a sprightly mind, the same native, formative powers are at work, which are observed in the earliest tribes and in children. I think it is Lessing who, for a similar reason, says, that intoxicated people sometimes invent most characteristic words. The state of intoxication reduces the individual to a state of untrammelled savageness, in which the impulsive power of the mind, as far as it goes in that state of mental reduction, resumes a proportionate degree of original, formative vigor, unconcerned about that which is already existing and acknowledged.

I cannot forbear relating here a droll anecdote connected with the German word for murder in the sense which has been indicated above. Soon after the war against Napoleon, in the year 1815, the Prussian Government thought it proper to institute prosecutions against many persons who had fought for the country, on account of suspected liberalism. The writer of these pages, then a mere lad, was among them, and arrested on suspicion of having dabbled in liberal politics. All his papers were taken from him, and submitted to the searching eyes of the police. Among these papers was his journal, which contained, under the head of one day, this passage—expressed, it is now owned, in somewhat too familiar a style even for soliloquy—“All day murder lazy.” This grave line was marked with the serious red pencil, and the writer was repeatedly teased with the question whether he had not meant that he had been negligent in imagining (and compassing) the death of persons who, according to his opinion, stood in the way of establishing a constitutional government in Prussia—lazy in murderous thoughts! The inquiring judge considered himself, no doubt, very sagacious.

In the seventh class I would comprehend those words which, in the advanced state of a language, express a quality which is the cause of an effect that is accompanied by the sound which has suggested the word—a natural transposition or extension of the meaning. The following may serve as an example:

Mum is the English interjection for silence. How has it arisen? When we address erroneously a deaf-mute as a person able to hear and speak, and he desires to make us understand that he cannot speak, he compresses his lips and breathes strongly against the palate (so decidedly does thought or feeling animate the organs of respiration, and so phonetic or sound-seeking is the nature of man.) This produces a humming sound—*um*, or *mum*. The same is observed if children play the mute, or if the actor in the vaudeville wishes to impress others that he is mute, or ought to be silent. *Um* is the root of the word *Dumb*; but in German *Dumm* now means stupid, that is, the cause of silence; as we, also, say for a dull person, "He has little to say for himself." In ancient German poetry we find the expression, *Die Alten und die Dummen*; literally, the old ones and the stupid, and really meaning the old ones and the young, because the young ought to be silent, or have nothing important to say. This agrees with the views of all early nations, who, on the one hand, always connect the idea of old with wisdom and authority, and on the other, that of youth with the want of these qualities. We have changed all this, and have "young men's parties," "young England," "young France." But such was the view of those who made of the terms for old man, father, &c., the names of their highest offices—as *γερων*, senator, papa, abbot.

These words, as a matter of course, cannot be expected to belong to Laura.

As the eighth class of words, we may mention those which are derived from sounds which stand in an incidental, though natural, connexion with the objects which they designate, and which are not therefore of a strictly symphenomenal nature. The simplest of all vowel sounds is *A*, (pronounced as in Italian,) or *Ha*; for it is the mere breathing forth from a mouth opened before the breathing began. If the mouth is closed again before the breathing wholly ceases, the sound *Am* is heard; if the breathing begins before the lips are parted, we have the sound *Ma*; if the breathing precedes and succeeds the opening of the mouth, we have *Mam*. What wonder, then, that children articulate, at the earliest period, the sound *Am*, *Ma*? What wonder that this sound is uttered so soon as mere animal crying gives way to articulation, and that the only want felt by the infant, that of nourishment, urges it, according to the general organization of all human beings, to breathe forth its desire in the sound *Ma*? What wonder if this first articulate sound comes to be attached to the being who furnishes the nourishment, or the breast which yields it? Has not even the bleating of the lamb the sound of *ma* or *maih* in it? Whenever this sound of the lamb is imitated, it is done by the prolonged and tremulous sound of *maih*. What wonder, lastly, if the sound *ma* or *am*, once having come to signify the being that gave birth, is surrounded, by her affectionate care, with all the dearest associations of love and holy disregard of self?

In almost all languages the word for the female breast, the mother or the nurse, is derived from this sound. The Latin *mamma* and *mater*, the Greek *μάμμα*, the modern *mama*, the Hebrew *Emm*, the Persian and Hindoo *Ma* for breast, the Greek *μητηρ*, our mother, the German *Mutter* and *Amme*, (for nurse,) the Gaelic *mam*, the Swedish *mamma*, the Albanian *mam*, the Wallachian *mama*, and innumerable others, are all in point. We meet with it again in the Polynesian languages, as the philological part of Capt. Wilkes' Exploring Expedition shows.

I make no doubt but that Laura, too, has breathed forth this elementary and sacred sound, in her earliest infancy, but it could not ripen into a definite word.

All other words are, probably, formed by composition, contraction, expansion, repeated transformation, and certain changes which gradually come to designate a general or peculiar relationship subsisting between certain ideas, or between the forms of words themselves in a purely grammatical point of view, the whole being essentially affected by the peculiar formative spirit with which a tribe shapes its words, whether, for instance, it is analytical, whether monosyllabic, as with the Chinese, or holophrastic, as with the American Indians. While these changes are going on with the formed words, their meaning alters according to the endless association of ideas, real or imagined affinities, the gradual expansion of the mind, the constant generalization and abstraction, or a retrogressive degeneracy, and many other causes, mental and physical. It will have been observed that I have spoken only of the origin of words and of their phonetic formation. The meaning which they acquire constitutes a different subject, which demands attention to all the laws of psychology, of the gradual progress of civilization, to the laws of intellectual and philological degeneracy, (for this has its laws like all disintegration or corruption,) to the changes of history, and, in short, to all the altering conditions and relations which take place within, under, and around Man, individually and collectively, by tribes and nations, by concentration and tribal separation, by mixture, fusion, and by emigration—in politics, religion, the arts, and every advancement and debasement.*

* If, on the one hand, it is true that etymological inquiries may lead to very fanciful conclusions, if they are not conducted with the utmost caution, it is no less true, on the other hand, that etymological connexions may actually exist, which would appear as most extravagant could they not be proved; and no word, in its present state, can fairly be assumed to prove that its origin is not owing to one of the enumerated causes. Who would believe that the Hindostanee words, used by the native soldiers in the British dominions of the East, *Gourandile*, *Ordulram*, and *Tandellis*, are the corruptions of the words *grenadier*, *order arms*, and *stand at ease*? Yet such is the case. Many words change, in one transformation, their vowels, and in another their consonants, so that nothing of the original remains. The following is an instance. The Sard word for voice is *Boghe*, derived from the Latin, *vox*, *vocis*, of which the Italian word *voce* is formed. The *c* constantly changes into *g*, (having first a slightly guttural sound,) and *v* and *b* are equally related to each other, as every Spanish scholar well knows, so that at last the word *boghe* is formed. But in some parts of Sardinia the people pronounce this word very much like *baghe*; so that we have *baghe* from *vox*. Who but the sifting scholar would believe that the words *voice* and *baghe* are derived from the same original word *vox*, which, again, may be derived from an original sound, consisting merely in a strong breathing forth of *Ah*, or *Oh*; for *v* and *c* are but hardened aspirates, or solidified breathings. The history of many a word—both of its form and its meaning—is as significant and instructive as that of many institutions.

In all inquiries into the origin of words and languages, we must remember this psychological fact of primary importance, that, in consequence of the force of the assimilation of ideas, the inquirer who sees a thing or institution in a defined and ordered state before him, is apt involuntarily to suppose a correspondingly definite and distinct origin from which it has sprung. Accordingly he seeks for this peculiar sort of origin, and is generally led into grave errors. When attention was first directed to the origin of governments, they existed already in a well defined state, and forthwith an origin corresponding in distinctness was sought for and imagined. People dreamed of governments voted into existence as laws are now made. Agriculture, when first it became a subject of reflection, presented itself as a complicated system, far too wise to be supposed to have been invented by man—and its *invention* was silently assumed. It was, therefore, ascribed to the gods, by the Chinese as well as by the Greeks. Even the *invention* of bread has been sought for in the inspiration of some benign deity. The origin of languages has naturally been exposed to the same error, and more so, perhaps, than any other subject.

Although we can trace in the case of Laura words appertaining to only a few of the enumerated classes, her vocal sounds are nevertheless interesting even in this respect. I shall proceed, then, to give as accurate an account of them as I am able to do, founded upon personal observation, whenever the nature of the case allowed it. Where this was impossible, my remarks are founded upon information obtained from persons who have been in daily intercourse with her for a long time.

It has been stated that most of the sounds which are the symphenomena of Laura's emotions have been studiously repressed, because, being impulsive, they are more or less vehement. But sounds vehemently produced by organs over which the regulative power of vocal intercourse has no influence, are necessarily disagreeable or repulsive to others.* Laura, however, was educated

* The admirable organs of speech, and the definiteness of thought, which is accompanied by an urgency to *name* the thing or utter the idea, lead men to articulate sounds; so much so, that articulation becomes natural to man, and will take place even where no definite thought exists and requires it. I knew a gentleman, bearing the name of one of our most distinguished men—both are now departed—who was in the habit of beginning every address of his, and every paragraph of speech, if I may use this expression, with the distinct word "*Titnoss*." For instance, "*Titnoss*, how do you do, Madam?" If he was somewhat embarrassed he used to begin every sentence with "*Titnoss*." Upon inquiry, I found that originally he stammered a great deal; indeed, he was always liable to have his speech impeded by this unwelcome disturber. Now, *titnoss* is nothing more than the sound which the perturbed organs produced in a stammering person, before the tongue assumes its proper enunciating function, viz., ti-ti-ti-ti-s-s-s, gradually subjected, however, to the articulating process, until a regular *word* (*titnoss*) was formed. This word had no meaning, indeed; at least no more meaning than the *ach*, *ja*, with which the Berlin people and Saxons begin almost every first sentence, or than the $\delta\epsilon$ of Homer; but if the original unarticulated sound had arisen from any specific emotion, e. g., from fear, love, hatred, pleasure, or kindness, and if the utterer had been a barbarian, living with kindred, yet speechless, barbarians, it is clear that this sound—and, later, the articulated sound, *titnoss*—would have become a *phonetic sign*, a *word* in our sense of the term, for that specific emotion,

for her own sake, and not as an experiment for the philosopher. Sounds which she produces for persons—and she has a sound for every individual in whom she takes a peculiar interest—are not subject to the same vehemence; indeed, they are not at all disagreeable. The question whether Laura has distinct sounds for those persons only whom she loves, but none for those she dislikes, is simply answered by the fact that never a being has been more exclusively surrounded by attentive solicitude than Laura.

How these sounds for persons, or names, originate is very difficult to say. I was unable to discover any agreement between the sound—for instance, its strength or softness—and the character which Laura may ascribe to the individual, or with the peculiar influence which a person may have exercised over her.* This apparent want of agreement cannot be wholly ascribed to a want on her part of an appreciation of the difference of character. Laura knows the character of those who surround her very well indeed. She quickly perceives whether a friend speaks to her with accustomed kindness, indifferently, or perhaps impatiently. For, as we readily perceive the temper of a person by his gentle intonation or hurried utterance, so is Laura perfectly able to feel any difference in the manner of imprinting words in her *listening* hand. Once she said in my presence to a friend of hers, "You are very sleepy; why don't you go to bed?" and when asked how she knew it, she replied: "You speak so sleepy." The fact was, that the person really was tired, and printed her converse slowly in Laura's hand, as our utterance becomes symphenomenally heavy when we feel drowsy. One day Laura expressed a desire to visit me; and when asked whether she liked to see me, she answered: "Yes, he speaks so funny"—imitating my slow and often incorrect spelling. I was then learning her finger alphabet, and used to spell as slowly and painfully as the urchin performs his first lessons in the primer. Now it is obvious that if Laura perceives single peculiarities, she likewise conceives the aggregate, especially as she is gifted with very keen perceptual powers. We have, indeed, her own sayings, which prove how well she appreciates those around her. But the reasons why there seems to be no natural agreement between her sounds and the persons designated, may be twofold. Laura has no ears to guide the modulations of her own voice, or, in fact, to evoke the proper sounds; and, which is perhaps the most important, Laura perceives that which to us is sound, as a common vibra-

and titness would stand in the dictionary of that tribe as the *noun*, or *verb*, as the case might have been, for fear or fearing, love or loving, &c. There are many perfectly articulate sounds used in our language, which, nevertheless, have neither a distinct word-meaning, nor are interjections; for instance, the sounds which are added to some stanzas in singing, as la-le-ra-la, foll-de-doll, or Sterne's lilli-bullero.

In the above case a human being was forced by his own organization to form an articulate bisyllable of a mere sound of embarrassment; while a Newfoundland dog, with a most definite idea, cannot rise to articulation. What an elemental difference!

*I must refer the reader to the letter of Miss Wight, which I received when these sheets were passing through the press, and which will be found at the end. It will be seen that Laura actually does connect some of these sounds at least with the character of the persons whom they designate.

tion of her organs only. It must be observed, also, that the loudest letters, for instance a loud *R*, (pronounced as in Italian,) are not necessarily *felt* by the organs of speech as strongly as some guttural tones, which are far from resembling them in strength. Possibly, then, there may yet be the agreement of which we have spoken, according to Laura's own perceptions and impulses. One of her teachers 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. It is clear that at the present advanced stage of Laura's education many causes which come into play when we make or give names must be active with her; but how her mind came first to settle upon the precise sounds which she has given to certain individuals may never be discovered.

I have given my view how the fact is to be accounted for, that she has sounds for persons, and none or very few for things and actions. I think one more reason may be adduced, proper to be stated at this stage of our remarks. Every word whatever, except nouns proper, is the representative of an abstract idea, because it is generic, and the idea of a genus is an abstraction. This process of abstraction, accompanied by sounds, which must at all events have been in her very limited and laborious, was wholly stopped by giving her a full and developed, a ready-made language. It operated upon her native development of language as the superinduction of the Roman law foreclosed the further development of the German common law; or as the introduction of a fully developed foreign architecture has cut short the native architecture of some countries, which happened to be yet in the process of formation; or as, indeed, the influx of the Latin language often operated in the middle ages.

An individual, however, is something concrete, and his noun proper, of whatever sound this may consist, means the concrete individual, and nothing else. The names of persons which were given to Laura were no sounds or representations of sounds, but spelled digital marks. There was, therefore, no forestalling possible by a ready-made language, and all the original formative impulses retained their primitive vigor. A name was given her, but she could freely invent another of her own kind, parallel with the first; or perhaps she had already given such a one.

Laura has near sixty sounds for persons.* When her teacher asked her, at my suggestion, how many sounds she recollected, she produced at once twenty-seven. Three of her teachers, Dr. Howe included, stated to me that she had certainly from fifty to sixty.

It may possibly excite surprise that I do not speak with greater certainty. But it ought to be observed that these inquiries must be carried on with some degree of caution, so as not to cultivate in Laura a feeling of vanity, from which this little

* Here I must again refer to the letter of Miss Wight, at the end, from which it appears that she has forgotten many, and now uses but few.

personage is by no means entirely free. She is already aware that she has attracted much observation and inquiry; and, being an object of uninterrupted solicitude, she might easily become selfish.

Her oral sounds indicate persons only. She never attempts to designate individuals by the clapping of her hands, or by stamping her feet. The reason seems clear. These sounds would be intentional in their origin; and how could she know that by bringing her hands violently together she would produce a sign? The uttered sounds were spontaneous in their origin; and finding that somehow or other they were perceived by others, they became signs or names.

Sometimes she produces these phonetic names involuntarily, as I have mentioned an instance when she affectionately thought of a friend. So, whenever she meets unexpectedly an acquaintance, I found that she repeatedly uttered the sound for that person before she began to speak. It was the utterance of pleasurable recognition. When she perceives, by the jar produced by the peculiar step of a person entering the room, who it is, she utters the sound for that person. At other times, when she is in search of somebody, she will enter a room uttering the sound belonging to the person; and receiving no answering touch, will pass on. In this case, the sound has become a complete word: that is, a sound to which a definite idea is attached, intentionally uttered to designate that idea.

All the sounds of Laura now designating persons are monosyllabic. Not one of the names thus bestowed by her consists of a composition of two syllables, each of which separately might designate another person. Nor does she use the same syllable differently uttered, in the Chinese manner, for different persons. But this monosyllabic name is repeated several times; for instance, Foo—Foo—Foo; or, Too—too—too. She has no name Foo-Too. All impulsive utterance is probably at first monosyllabic, and the aid of the ear, as well as phonetic intercourse, may be necessary to connect different syllables in order to designate one idea. In the constant repetition, Laura resembles children and uncivilized tribes. Most of our nursery names for animals consist of repetitions of the same syllable, while the languages of savages abound in reduplications of the same sound. I observed the same when the different armies entered France, and the soldiers of different nations came in frequent contact, so that a jargon was produced, intelligible, as far as it went, to all. In it repetitions, too, were frequent. When the paucity of language furnishes the speaker with but one meagre word, the idea, so to express it, is longer than the word, and an unconscious desire exists to make up for the want by repetition. We see a somewhat similar process in the orator, who repeats the same idea twice or three times in different words, when the thought to be uttered is too pregnant to be despatched in one short sentence, which might indeed be sufficient in reading, but is not so for mere hearing; or in dull men, who repeat the same thing over and over, because they lack the energy of finishing, and cannot detach themselves from a thought which has once got possession of their sluggish intellect.

Very few of Laura's syllables can be written with our inadequate alphabet. This is natural. If missionaries among uncivilized tribes find the greatest difficulty in expressing words by alphabets which are even inadequate to their own languages—a difficulty of which the early christianizers of Germany complained—how much more unsuccessful must not be the attempt at writing many of Laura's unmodified and frequently inarticulate utterances. I think, however, I can say that the sounds of F, T, Pr, B, Ee, (German i,) and Oo, (French *ou*,) are prevailing, together with the sibilant S. The sound L, I discovered in one semi-guttural tone only, which might be approached by writing *Lull*. I also observed the sound Pa—pa—pa, (for one of her best female friends;) Fif—fif—fif, (for a very lovely friend of hers;) Pig—pig—pig, (for a female teacher of hers;) and Ts—ts—ts, (for Dr. Howe.) I have also frequently heard her utter a sound between F and T. When she did not like to be touched, for instance, by boys, who often did it in a sportive mood, she would repeatedly utter F—generally in an equally sportive spirit; for, Laura is very fond of a joke, and greatly enjoys good-natured teasing.

Many of her sounds are gurgling, though not disagreeably so; others consist of a chuckling, and in general I would say that the throat and the lips seem to be the organs which she chiefly uses. The tongue is often pressed against the palate, producing a full, round, yet dull sound, which I cannot write. Vowels are very little used, and if so, generally indistinctly. The clear sonorous vowel in speaking and singing requires the ear and long civilization. Savages do not make frequent use of fine open vowels; and a bold singing from the chest gives way to nasal singing at a very late period only. All Asiatics to this day sing in this twang-chant, and so do the modern Greeks.

While I am writing these words, a tuneful mocking bird is pouring out its melodious song before my window. Rich and strong and mellow as is the ever-varying music of this sprightliest of all songsters of the forest, compared to the feeble and untuned sounds which Laura utters in her isolated state, yet her sounds are symbols of far greater import. She, even without hearing her own sounds, and with the crudest organs of utterance, yet has risen to the great idea of the Word. She wills to designate by sound. In her a mind is struggling to manifest itself and to commune with mind, revealing a part of those elements which our Maker has ordained as the means to ensure the development of humanity. The bird, with all its power of varied voice, remains forever in mental singleness; Laura, in all her lasting darkness and stillness, and with that solitary thread which unites her with the world without—the sense of touch—still proves, in every movement of her mind and urgency of her soul, that she belongs to those beings who, each in a different indestructible individuality, are yet fashioned for a mutual life, for sacred reciprocal dependence and united efforts.

Oliver Caswell, the blind deaf-mute at the same institution with Laura, utters but very few sounds. He has the same opportunities which she enjoys; but, though of an amiable temper, he is not endowed with a sprightly mind. He has one distinct sound, which he always uses to attract attention. It might be translated by the French *tiens*, or the English *I say*.

Julia Brace, the blind deaf-mute at Hartford, in Connecticut, above forty years old, and to whom no idea of a word-language has ever been imparted, utters many disagreeable sounds, not unlike those of some wild fowl. When she is pleased, without being excited, she produces a humming sound.

Anne Temmermanns, whom I saw in the year 1844, at Ghent—she was then twenty-four years old—uttered some, not agreeable, sounds, but she has none for different persons or things. Her whole education is much inferior to that of Laura or Oliver Caswell. I am not aware that there is anything valuable on record regarding the vocal sounds which James Mitchell, the blind deaf-mute Scottish boy, may have been in the habit of uttering. All these individuals were or are very different from Laura Bridgeman, as well in natural endowments as in cultivation of mind and the developed state of the soul. I can never forget the contrast between the coarse and painful appearance of Anne Temmermanns and the intelligent Laura, as I have often seen her, seated by the side of a female friend, her left arm around the waist of her companion, and her right hand on the knee of the other, who was imprinting with rapidity in Laura's open hand what she was reading in a book before them. They thus formed the personification of the great achievement which Dr. Howe has gained over appalling difficulties, never overcome, and scarcely attempted to be overcome, by any one before him—the picture of a communion of minds in spite of the enduring night and deathlike silence which enwraps poor Laura—an example of the victories in store for a sincere love of our neighbor, combined with sagacity, patience, resolute will, and, what Locke calls, sound round-about common sense.

When the whole of this paper had been written many months, I read in the eighteenth report to the trustees of the Perkins Institution for the Blind, Boston, 1850, that Laura "often says, in the fulness of her heart, 'I am so glad I have been created.'" This psalm of gratitude, poured forth by her whom we pity as the loneliest of mortals—this hymnus of rejoicing in the possession of life—expresses infinitely more strongly and loudly what Dr. Howe has done for her than any praise of others could do.

The character of this paper does not permit us to pass from a scientific inquiry to moral reflections, which are forced upon us by this girl, grateful in her state, which appears to us one of overwhelming destitution; and thus we conclude the whole, leaving it to others to enlarge upon this remarkable and great text furnished by Laura: "I am so glad I have been created."

While the foregoing paper was passing through the press, the writer received a letter from the untiring and able female teacher of Laura, answering a number of questions which I had made free to put to her regarding her pupil's mind, dispositions, and developments; and also one from Laura herself. The latter I mean to put here on record, as a remarkable document. Of the former I will give a very few extracts, interesting in reference to the subjects which have occupied us in this paper. Miss Wight writes to me:

“Before learning language Laura used many signs to make known her wants, and, as you know, 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. She no longer uses many of these names, and has forgotten a part of them. Mine she retains for its use,” (calling, in the strict sense of the word, her teacher.) “She uses gestures expressive of different emotions. When she is merry, she often sings. When she says a humorous thing, she is not satisfied if the person addressed does not laugh heartily. She often talks with herself, sometimes holding long conversations, speaking with one hand and replying with the other.

“Laura is now in excellent health; very good and very happy. Your letters give her much pleasure. When I read your last to her the color mounted to her cheek, she laughed and clapped her hands.”

The letter gives an interesting account of Laura’s æsthetical feeling, her sense of symmetry, her conscientiousness, her affection for her mother, her religious state, sense of property, desire “to see this beautiful world,” her love of power and strong will, yet ready submission to what is shown to her to be right, her skill in calculation, and of other subjects, all highly instructive, but not in close connexion with the subject immediately in hand. It is to be hoped that a general account of Laura’s education will not much longer be withheld from the public.

I now shall give Laura’s letter, word for word. There is not one word misspelled in it. Indeed spelling is her whole language. Sound and its representation are not at eternal war in her mind as in all our school-boys, and in the minds of not a few who no longer wear the round jacket. The reader must know that Laura writes her own letters, and does by no means dictate them. A fac-simile of her handwriting will be found at the end.

“SUNNY HOME, *Aug. 15th*, 1850.

MY DEAR DR. LIEBER,

“I received your kindest letter with great pleasure last June in the P. M. I was very much interested in your account of the mocking bird. One very rainy tue. [for Tuesday] a very kind gentleman sent me 2 canary birds which looked very pretty and cunning. One bird died last June. The other bird seemed very quiet as if he missed his companion so sadly. He comforted himself by looking the glass, for he thought that he saw his companion there and used to sing to her. but at last he flew through the window which was opened a very short way, and left his cage desolate. A very kind friend promised me that he would send me a bird this week. I should be very glad to have you learn to talk with your fingers.

“I am highly delighted at the thought of going to Hanover to visit my dear Mother in Sept. Tell my dear Mrs. Lieber that I have got a little new Sister.

It has not received a name yet. My Mother writes that her babe resembles me very much. I am making a very nice white dress for the baby. I remember that Mrs. Lieber is very fond of children.

"Next Thursday will be 5 years since Miss W. commenced teaching me. I should like to get much better acquainted with you.

"Yours truly,

"L. BRIDGMAN."

I append to this Memoir a fac simile of a part of the following letter from Laura to Miss Dix, as an illustration of her writing. It should, however, be mentioned, that erasures, similar to the one which occurs in this letter, are very unusual in her manuscripts.

SUNNY HOME, *August 21, 1850.*

MY DEAR FRIEND, MISS DIX :

I was very glad to receive a long letter from you the 7th of August.

I thank you most sincerely for the card which you sent to me. I am very glad to think of your very pleasant acquaintance with Miss Bremer. I trust that she will meet with very good and pleasant people at Cape May. I prize my book very highly which Miss B. presented me with. I have not heard it all. I admire Franziska and her bear and Serena very much. I approve of Miss Bremer's taking her sea bath. I hope that it will be of benefit to her health. I do not doubt that the members of Congress would do much for the blind and deaf and dumb if they thought how much happier they are when they are educated.

I grieve very much to inform you that my lovely teacher was compelled to give up teaching. She went home for the purpose of regaining her strength. She planned some very pleasant visits for me before she left the Institution. I was rather home-sick occasionally during Miss W's absence. She is much better now ; I am very well and happy.

I hope that you will write a letter to me again.

I send my best love to you.

Yours, truly,

LAURA BRIDGMAN.

Sunny home Aug 21st 18. 50.

My dear friend Miss. B. B.

I was very glad to receive a long letter from you the 7th of Aug.

I thank you most sincerely for the card which you sent to me.

I am very glad to think of your very pleasant acquaintance with

Miss. Bremm. I trust that she will meet with ~~the~~ very good &

pleasant people at Lake May.

I prize my book very highly which Miss. B. presented me with.

Yours truly.

Wm. A. Bridgman.

