

CHAPTER V. LITERARY STYLE

No one can have read Miss Keller's autobiography without feeling that she writes unusually fine English. Any teacher of composition knows that he can bring his pupils to the point of writing without errors in syntax or in the choice of words. It is just this accuracy which Miss Keller's early education fixes as the point to which any healthy child can be brought, and which the analysis of that education accounts for. Those who try to make her an exception not to be explained by any such analysis of her early education, fortify their position by an appeal to the remarkable excellence of her use of language even when she was a child.

This appeal is to a certain degree valid; for, indeed, those additional harmonies of language and

beauties of thought which make style are the gifts of the gods. No teacher could have made Helen Keller sensitive to the beauties of language and to the finer interplay of thought which demands expression in melodious word groupings.

At the same time the inborn gift of style can be starved or stimulated. No innate genius can invent fine language. The stuff of which good style is made must be given to the mind from without and given skilfully. A child of the muses cannot write fine English unless fine English has been its nourishment. In this, as in all other things, Miss Sullivan has been the wise teacher. If she had not had taste and an enthusiasm for good English, Helen Keller might have been brought up on the "Juvenile Literature," which belittles the language under pretense of being simply phrased for children; as if a child's book could not, like "Treasure Island" or "Robinson Crusoe" or the "Jungle Book," be in good style.

If Miss Sullivan wrote fine English, the beauty of Helen Keller's style would, in part, be explicable at once. But the extracts from Miss Sullivan's letters and from her reports, although they are clear and accurate, have not the beauty which distinguishes Miss Keller's English. Her service as a teacher of English is not to be measured by her own skill in composition. The reason why she read to her pupil so many good books is due, in some measure, to the fact that she had so recently recovered her eyesight. When she became Helen Keller's teacher she was just awakening to the good things that are in books, from which she had been shut out during her years of blindness.

In Captain Keller's library she found excellent books, Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare," and better still Montaigne. After the first year or so of elementary work she met her pupil on equal terms, and they read and enjoyed good books together.

Besides the selection of good books, there is one other cause for Miss Keller's excellence in writing, for which Miss Sullivan deserves unlimited credit. That is her tireless and unrelenting discipline, which is evident in all her work. She never allowed her pupil to send off letters which contained offenses against taste, but made her write them over until they were not only correct, but charming and well phrased.

Any one who has tried to write knows what Miss Keller owes to the endless practice which Miss Sullivan demanded of her. Let a teacher with a liking for good style insist on a child's writing a paragraph over and over again until it is more than correct, and he will be training, even beyond his own power of expression, the power of expression in the child.

How far Miss Sullivan carried this process of refinement and selection is evident from the humorous comment of Dr. Bell, that she made her pupil a little old woman, too widely different from ordinary children in her maturity of thought. When Dr. Bell said this he was arguing his own case. For it was Dr. Bell who first saw the principles that underlie Miss Sullivan's method, and explained the process by which Helen Keller absorbed language from books.

There is, moreover, a reason why Helen Keller writes good English, which lies in the very absence of sight and hearing. The disadvantages of being deaf and blind were overcome and the advantages remained. She excels other deaf people because she was taught as if she were normal. On the other hand, the peculiar value to her of language, which ordinary people take for granted as a necessary part of them like their right hand, made her think about language and love it. Language was her liberator, and from the first she cherished it.

The proof of Miss Keller's early skill in the use of English, and the final comment on the excellence of this whole method of teaching, is contained in an incident, which, although at the time it seemed unfortunate, can no longer be regretted. I refer to the "Frost King" episode, which I shall explain in detail. Miss Keller has given her account of it, and the whole matter was discussed in the first Volta Bureau Souvenir from which I quote at length:

MISS SULLIVAN'S ACCOUNT OF THE "FROST KING"

HON. JOHN HITZ, Superintendent of the Volta Bureau, Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir: Since my paper was prepared for the second edition of the Souvenir "Helen Keller," some facts have been brought to my notice which are of interest in connection with the subject of the acquisition of language by my pupil, and if it is not already too late for publication in this issue of the Souvenir, I shall be glad if I may have opportunity to explain them in detail.

Perhaps it will be remembered that in my paper*, where allusion is made to Helen's remarkable memory, it is noted that she appears to retain in her mind many forms of expression which, at the time they are received, she probably does not understand; but when further information is acquired, the language retained in her memory finds full or partial expression in her conversation or writing, according as it proves of greater or less value to her in the fitness of its application to the new experience. Doubtless this is true in the case of every intelligent child, and should not, perhaps, be considered worthy of especial mention in Helen's case, but for the fact that a child who is deprived of the senses of sight and hearing might not be expected to be as gifted mentally as this little girl proves to be; hence it is quite possible we may be inclined to class as marvelous many things we discover in the development of her mind which do not merit such an explanation.

* In this paper Miss Sullivan says: "During this winter (1891-92) I went with her into the yard while a light snow was falling, and let her feel the falling flakes. She appeared to enjoy it very much indeed. As we went in she repeated these words, 'Out of the cloud-folds of his garments Winter shakes the snow.' I inquired of her where she had read this; she did not remember having read it, did not seem to know that she had learned it. As I had never heard it, I inquired of several of my friends if they recalled the words; no one seemed to remember it. The teachers at the Institution expressed the opinion that the description did not appear in any book in raised print in that library; but one lady, Miss Marrett, took upon herself the task of examining books of poems in ordinary type, and was rewarded by finding the following lines in one of Longfellow's minor poems, entitled 'Snowflakes':

'Out of the bosom of the air, Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken, Over the woodlands brown and bare, Over the harvest-fields forsaken, Silent, and soft, and slow Descends the snow.'

"It would seem that Helen had learned and treasured the memory of this expression of the poet, and this morning in the snow-storm had found its application."

In the hope that I may be pardoned if I appear to overestimate the remarkable mental capacity and power of comprehension and discrimination which my pupil possesses, I wish to add that, while I have always known that Helen made great use of such descriptions and comparisons as appeal to her imagination and fine poetic nature, yet recent developments in her writings convince me of the fact that I have not in the past been fully aware to what extent she absorbs the language of her favourite authors. In the early part of her education I had full knowledge of all the books she read and of nearly all the stories which were read to her, and could without difficulty trace the source of any adaptations noted in her writing or conversation; and I have always been much pleased to observe how appropriately she applies the expressions of a favourite author in her own compositions.

The following extracts from a few of her published letters give evidence of how valuable this power of retaining the memory of beautiful language has been to her. One warm, sunny day in early spring, when we were at the North, the balmy atmosphere appears to have brought to her mind the sentiment expressed by Longfellow in "Hiawatha," and she almost sings with the poet: "The ground was all aquiver with the stir of new life. My heart sang for very joy. I thought of my own dear home. I knew that in that sunny land spring had come in all its splendour. 'All its birds and all its blossoms, all its flowers and all its grasses.'"

About the same time, in a letter to a friend, in which she makes mention of her Southern home, she gives so close a reproduction from a poem by one of her favourite authors that I will give extracts

from Helen's letter and from the poem itself:

EXTRACTS FROM HELEN'S LETTER

[The entire letter is published on pp. 245 and 246 of the Report of the Perkins Institution for 1891]

The blue-bird with his azure plumes, the thrush clad all in brown, the robin jerking his spasmodic throat, the oriole drifting like a flake of fire, the jolly bobolink and his happy mate, the mocking-bird imitating the notes of all, the red-bird with his one sweet trill, and the busy little wren, are all making the trees in our front yard ring with their glad song.

FROM THE POEM ENTITLED "SPRING" BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

The bluebird, breathing from his azure plumes
The fragrance borrowed from the myrtle blooms;
The thrush, poor wanderer, dropping meekly down,
Clad in his remnant of autumnal brown;
The oriole, drifting like a flake of fire
Rent by a whirlwind from a blazing spire;
The robin, jerking his spasmodic throat,
Repeats imperious, his staccato note;
The crack-brained bobolink courts his crazy mate,
Poised on a bullrush tipsy with his weight:
Nay, in his cage the lone canary sings,
Feels the soft air, and spreads his idle wings.

On the last day of April she uses another expression from the same poem, which is more an adaptation than a reproduction: "To-morrow April will hide her tears and blushes beneath the flowers of lovely May."

In a letter to a friend at the Perkins Institution, dated May 17, 1889, she gives a reproduction from one of Hans Christian Andersen's stories, which I had read to her not long before. This letter is published in the Perkins Institution Report (1891), p. 204. The original story was read to her from a copy of "Andersen's Stories," published by Leavitt & Allen Bros., and may be found on p. 97 of Part I. in that volume.

Her admiration for the impressive explanations which Bishop Brooks has given her of the Fatherhood of God is well known. In one of his letters, speaking of how God in every way tells us of His love, he says, "I think he writes it even upon the walls of the great house of nature which we live in, that he is our Father." The next year at Andover she said: "It seems to me the world is full of goodness, beauty, and love; and how grateful we must be to our heavenly Father, who has given us so much to enjoy! His love and care are written all over the walls of nature."

In these later years, since Helen has come in contact with so many persons who are able to converse freely with her, she has made the acquaintance of some literature with which I am not familiar; she has also found in books printed in raised letters, in the reading of which I have been unable to follow her, much material for the cultivation of the taste she possesses for poetical imagery. The pages of the book she reads become to her like paintings, to which her imaginative powers give life and colour. She is at once transported into the midst of the events portrayed in the story she reads or is told, and the characters and descriptions become real to her; she rejoices when justice wins, and is sad when virtue goes unrewarded. The pictures the language paints on her memory appear to make an indelible impression; and many times, when an experience comes to her similar in character, the language starts forth with wonderful accuracy, like the reflection from a mirror.

Helen's mind is so gifted by nature that she seems able to understand with only the faintest touch of explanation every possible variety of external relations. One day in Alabama, as we were gathering wild flowers near the springs on the hillsides, she seemed to understand for the first time that the springs were surrounded by mountains, and she exclaimed: "The mountains are crowding around the springs to look at their own beautiful reflections!" I do not know where she obtained this language, yet it is evident that it must have come to her from without, as it would hardly be possible for a person deprived of the visual sense to originate such an idea. In mentioning a visit to Lexington, Mass., she writes: "As we rode along we could see the forest monarchs bend their proud forms to

listen to the little children of the woodlands whispering their secrets. The anemone, the wild violet, the hepatica, and the funny little curled-up ferns all peeped out at us from beneath the brown leaves." She closes this letter with, "I must go to bed, for Morpheus has touched my eyelids with his golden wand." Here again, I am unable to state where she acquired these expressions.

She has always seemed to prefer stories which exercise the imagination, and catches and retains the poetic spirit in all such literature; but not until this winter have I been conscious that her memory absorbed the exact language to such an extent that she is herself unable to trace the source.

This is shown in a little story she wrote in October last at the home of her parents in Tuscumbia, which she called "Autumn Leaves." She was at work upon it about two weeks, writing a little each day, at her own pleasure. When it was finished, and we read it in the family, it occasioned much comment on account of the beautiful imagery, and we could not understand how Helen could describe such pictures without the aid of sight. As we had never seen or heard of any such story as this before, we inquired of her where she read it; she replied, "I did not read it; it is my story for Mr. Anagnos's birthday." While I was surprised that she could write like this, I was not more astonished than I had been many times before at the unexpected achievements of my little pupil, especially as we had exchanged many beautiful thoughts on the subject of the glory of the ripening foliage during the autumn of this year.

Before Helen made her final copy of the story, it was suggested to her to change its title to "The Frost King," as more appropriate to the subject of which the story treated; to this she willingly assented. The story was written by Helen in braille, as usual and copied by her in the same manner, I then interlined the manuscript for the greater convenience of those who desired to read it. Helen wrote a little letter, and, enclosing the manuscript, forwarded both by mail to Mr. Anagnos for his birthday.

The story was printed in the January number of the *Mentor* and, from a review of it in the *Goodson Gazette*, I was startled to find that a very similar story had been published in 1873, seven years before Helen was born. This story, "Frost Fairies," appeared in a book written by Miss Margaret T. Canby, entitled "Birdie and his Fairy Friends." The passages quoted from the two stories were so much alike in thought and expression as to convince me that Miss Canby's story must at some time have been read to Helen.

As I had never read this story, or even heard of the book, I inquired of Helen if she knew anything about the matter, and found she did not. She was utterly unable to recall either the name of the story or the book. Careful examination was made of the books in raised print in the library of the Perkins Institution to learn if any extracts from this volume could be found there; but nothing was discovered. I then concluded that the story must have been read to her a long time ago, as her memory usually retains with great distinctness facts and impressions which have been committed to its keeping.

After making careful inquiry, I succeeded in obtaining the information that our friend, Mrs. S. C. Hopkins, had a copy of this book in 1888 which was presented to her little daughter in 1873 or 1874. Helen and I spent the summer of 1888 with Mrs. Hopkins at her home in Brewster, Mass., where she kindly relieved me a part of the time, of the care of Helen. She amused and entertained Helen by reading to her from a collection of juvenile publications, among which was the copy of "Birdie and his Fairy Friends"; and, while Mrs. Hopkins does not remember this story of "Frost Fairies," she is confident that she read to Helen extracts, if not entire stories, from this volume. But as she was not able to find her copy, and applications for the volume at bookstores in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Albany, and other places resulted only in failure, search was instituted for the author herself. This became a difficult task, as her publishers in Philadelphia had retired from business many years ago; however, it was eventually discovered that her residence is at Wilmington, Delaware, and copies of the second edition of the book, 1889, were obtained from her. She has

since secured and forwarded to me a copy of the first edition.

The most generous and gratifying letters have been received from Miss Canby by Helen's friends, a few extracts from which are given:

Under date of February 24, 1892, after mentioning the order of the publication of the stories in the magazine, she writes:

"All the stories were revised before publishing them in book form; additions were made to the number as first published, I think, and some of the titles may have been changed."

In the same letter she writes:

"I hope that you will be able to make her understand that I am glad she enjoyed my story, and that I hope the new book will give her pleasure by renewing her friendship with the Fairies. I shall write to her in a short time. I am so much impressed with what I have learned of her that I have written a little poem entitled *A Silent Singer*, which I may send to her mother after a while. Can you tell me in what paper the article appeared accusing Helen of plagiarism, and giving passages from both stories? I should like much to see it, and to obtain a few copies if possible."

Under date of March 9, 1892, Miss Canby writes:

"I find traces, in the Report which you so kindly sent me, of little Helen having heard other stories than that of 'Frost Fairies.' On page 132, in a letter, there is a passage which must have been suggested by my story called 'The Rose Fairies' (see pp. 13-16 of 'Birdie') and on pages 93 and 94 of the Report the description of a thunderstorm is very much like Birdie's idea of the same in the 'Dew Fairies' on page 59 and 60 of my book. What a wonderfully active and retentive mind that gifted child must have! If she had remembered and written down accurately, a short story, and that soon after hearing it, it would have been a marvel; but to have heard the story once, three years ago, and in such a way that neither her parents nor teacher could ever allude to it or refresh her memory about it, and then to have been able to reproduce it so vividly, even adding some touches of her own in perfect keeping with the rest, which really improve the original, is something that very few girls of riper age, and with every advantage of sight, hearing, and even great talents for composition, could have done as well, if at all. Under the circumstances, I do not see how any one can be so unkind as to call it a plagiarism; it is a wonderful feat of memory, and stands ALONE, as doubtless much of her work will in future, if her mental powers grow and develop with her years as greatly as in the few years past. I have known many children well, have been surrounded by them all my life, and love nothing better than to talk with them, amuse them, and quietly notice their traits of mind and character; but I do not recollect more than one girl of Helen's age who had the love and thirst for knowledge, and the store of literary and general information, and the skill in composition, which Helen possesses. She is indeed a 'Wonder-Child.' Thank you very much for the Report, Gazette, and Helen's Journal. The last made me realize the great disappointment to the dear child more than before. Please give her my warm love, and tell her not to feel troubled about it any more. No one shall be allowed to think it was anything wrong; and some day she will write a great, beautiful story or poem that will make many people happy. Tell her there are a few bitter drops in every one's cup, and the only way is to take the bitter patiently, and the sweet thankfully. I shall love to hear of her reception of the book and how she likes the stories which are new to her."

I have now (March, 1892) read to Helen "The Frost Fairies," "The Rose Fairies," and a portion of "The Dew Fairies," but she is unable to throw any light on the matter. She recognized them at once as her own stories, with variations, and was much puzzled to know how they could have been published before she was born! She thinks it is wonderful that two people should write stories so much alike; but she still considers her own as original.

I give below a portion of Miss Canby's story, "The Rose Fairies," and also Helen's letter to Mr. Anagnos containing her "dream," so that the likenesses and differences may be studied by those

interested in the subject:

THE ROSE FAIRIES

[From "Birdie and his Fairy Friends," by Margaret T. Canby]

One pleasant morning little Birdie might have been seen sitting quietly on the grass-plot at the side of his mother's house, looking very earnestly at the rose-bushes.

It was quite early; great Mr. Sun, who is such an early riser in summer time, had not been up very long; the birds were just beginning to chirp their "good-mornings" to each other; and as for the flowers, they were still asleep. But Birdie was so busy all day, trotting about the house and garden, that he was always ready for HIS nest at night, before the birds and flowers had thought of seeking THEIRS; and so it came to pass that when Mr. Sun raised his head above the green woods and smiled lovingly upon the earth, Birdie was often the first to see him, and to smile back at him, all the while rubbing his eyes with his dimpled fists, until between smiling and rubbing, he was wide awake.

And what do you think he did next! Why, the little rogue rolled into his mamma's bed, and kissed her eyelids, her cheeks, and her mouth, until she began to dream that it was raining kisses; and at last she opened her eyes to see what it all meant, and found that it was Birdie, trying to "kiss her awake," as he said.

She loved her little boy very dearly, and liked to make him happy, and when he said, "Please dress me, dear mamma, and let me go out to play in the garden," she cheerfully consented; and, soon after, Birdie went downstairs in his morning-dress of cool linen, and with his round face bright and rosy from its bath, and ran out on the gravel path to play, until breakfast was ready.

He stood still a moment to look about him, and think what he should do first. The fresh morning air blew softly in his face, as if to welcome him and be his merry playmate; and the bright eye of Mr. Sun looked at him with a warm and glowing smile; but Birdie soon walked on to find something to play with. As he came in sight of the rose-bushes that grew near the side of the house, he suddenly clapped his hands, and with a little shout of joy stopped to look at them; they were all covered with lovely rosebuds. Some were red, some white, and others pale pink, and they were just peeping out of the green leaves, as rosy-faced children peep out from their warm beds in wintertime before they are quite willing to get up. A few days before, Birdie's papa had told him that the green balls on the rose-bushes had beautiful flowers shut up within them, but the little boy found it hard to believe, for he was so young that he did not remember how pretty the roses had been the summer before. Now he found out that his father's words were true, for a few days of warm weather had turned the green balls into rosebuds, and they were SO beautiful that it was enough to make Birdie stand still before them, his blue eyes dancing with delight and his little hands clasped tightly together.

After awhile he went nearer, and looking closely at the buds, found that they were folded up, leaf over leaf, as eyelids are folded over sleeping eyes, so that Birdie thought they must be asleep. "Lazy roses, wake up," said he, giving the branches a gentle shake; but only the dew fell off in bright drops, and the flowers were still shut up. At last Birdie remembered how he had awakened his mother with kisses, and thought he would try the same plan with the roses; so he drew up his red lips until THEY looked like a rosebud, too, and bending down a branch with a lovely pink bud upon it, he kissed it softly two or three times.

Here the similarity in the language of the story to that in the letter ceases.

HELEN'S LETTER TO MR. ANAGNOS

(Written February 2 and 3, 1890.)

[This letter was enclosed in another written in French, dated Le 1 février 1890.]

My Dear Mr. Anagnos: You will laugh when you open your little friend's letter and see all the queer mistakes she has made in French, but I think you will be pleased to know that I can write even

a short letter in French. It makes me very happy to please you and my dear teacher. I wish I could see your little niece Amelia. I am sure we should love each other. I hope you will bring some of Virginia Evangelides' poems home with you, and translate them for me. Teacher and I have just returned from our walk. It is a beautiful day. We met a sweet little child. She was playing on the pier with a wee brother. She gave me a kiss and then ran away, because she was a shy little girl. I wonder if you would like to have me tell you a pretty dream which I had a long time ago when I was a very little child? Teacher says it was a day-dream, and she thinks you would be delighted to hear it. One pleasant morning in the beautiful springtime, I thought I was sitting on the soft grass under my dear mother's window, looking very earnestly at the rose-bushes which were growing all around me. It was quite early, the sun had not been up very long; the birds were just beginning to sing joyously. The flowers were still asleep. They would not awake until the sun had smiled lovingly upon them. I was a very happy little child with rosy cheeks, and large blue eyes, and the most beautiful golden ringlets you can imagine. The fresh morning air blew gently in my face, as if to welcome me, and be my merry playmate, and the sun looked at me with a warm and tender smile. I clapped my chubby hands for joy when I saw that the rose-bushes were covered with lovely buds. Some were red, some white, and others were delicate pink, and they were peeping out from between the green leaves like beautiful little fairies. I had never seen anything so lovely before, for I was very young and I could not remember how pretty the roses had been the summer before. My little heart was filled with a sweet joy, and I danced around the rosebushes to show my delight. After a while I went very near to a beautiful white rose-bush which was completely covered with buds and sparkling with dewdrops; I bent down one of the branches with a lovely pure white bud upon it, and kissed it softly many times; just then I felt two loving arms steal gently around me, and loving lips kissing my eyelids, my cheeks, and my mouth, until I began to think it was raining kisses; and at last I opened my eyes to see what it all meant, and found it was my precious mother, who was bending over me, trying to kiss me awake. Do you like my day-dream? If you do, perhaps I will dream again for you some time.

Teacher and all of your friends send you their love. I shall be so glad when you come home, for I greatly miss you. Please give my love to your good Greek friends, and tell them that I shall come to Athens some day.

Lovingly your little friend and playmate, HELEN A. KELLER.

"The Frost Fairies" and "The Frost Kings" are given in full, as the differences are as important as the resemblances:

The Frost Fairies [From "Birdie and his Fairy Friends"] by Margaret T. Canby

King Frost, or Jack Frost as he is sometimes called, lives in a cold country far to the North; but every year he takes a journey over the world in a car of golden clouds drawn by a strong and rapid steed called "North Wind." Wherever he goes he does many wonderful things; he builds bridges over every stream, clear as glass in appearance but often strong as iron; he puts the flowers and plants to sleep by one touch of his hand, and they all bow down and sink into the warm earth, until spring returns; then, lest we should grieve for the flowers, he places at our windows lovely wreaths and sprays of his white northern flowers, or delicate little forests of fairy pine-trees, pure white and very beautiful. But his most wonderful work is the painting of the trees, which look, after his task is done, as if they were covered with the brightest layers of gold and rubies; and are beautiful enough to comfort us for the flight of summer.

I will tell you how King Frost first thought of this kind work, for it is a strange story. You must know that this King, like all other kings, has great treasures of gold and precious stones in his palace; but, being a good-hearted old fellow, he does not keep his riches locked up all the time, but tries to do good and make others happy with them. He has two neighbours, who live still farther north; one is King Winter, a cross and churlish old monarch, who is hard and cruel, and delights in making the

poor suffer and weep; but the other neighbour is Santa Claus, a fine, good-natured, jolly old soul, who loves to do good, and who brings presents to the poor, and to nice little children at Christmas.

Well, one day King Frost was trying to think of some good that he could do with his treasure; and suddenly he concluded to send some of it to his kind neighbour, Santa Claus, to buy presents of food and clothing for the poor, that they might not suffer so much when King Winter went near their homes. So he called together his merry little fairies, and showing them a number of jars and vases filled with gold and precious stones, told them to carry those carefully to the palace of Santa Claus, and give them to him with the compliments of King Frost. "He will know how to make good use of the treasure," added Jack Frost; then he told the fairies not to loiter by the way, but to do his bidding quickly.

The fairies promised obedience and soon started on their journey, dragging the great glass jars and vases along, as well as they could, and now and then grumbling a little at having such hard work to do, for they were idle fairies, and liked play better than work. At last they reached a great forest, and, being quite tired, they decided to rest awhile and look for nuts before going any further. But lest the treasure should be stolen from them, they hid the jars among the thick leaves of the forest trees, placing some high up near the top, and others in different parts of the various trees, until they thought no one could find them.

Then they began to wander about and hunt for nuts, and climb the trees to shake them down, and worked much harder for their own pleasure than they had done for their master's bidding, for it is a strange truth that fairies and children never complain of the toil and trouble they take in search of amusement, although they often grumble when asked to work for the good of others.

The frost fairies were so busy and so merry over their nutting frolic that they soon forgot their errand and their king's command to go quickly; but, as they played and loitered in the forest until noon, they found the reason why they were told to hasten; for although they had, as they thought, hidden the treasure so carefully, they had not secured it from the power of Mr. Sun, who was an enemy of Jack Frost, and delighted to undo his work and weaken him whenever he could.

His bright eyes found out the jars of treasure among the trees, and as the idle fairies left them there until noon, at which time Mr. Sun is the strongest, the delicate glass began to melt and break, and before long every jar and vase was cracked or broken, and the precious treasures they contained were melting, too, and dripping slowly in streams of gold and crimson over the trees and bushes of the forest.

Still, for awhile, the frost fairies did not notice this strange occurrence, for they were down on the grass, so far below the tree-tops that the wonderful shower of treasure was a long time in reaching them; but at last one of them said, "Hark! I believe it is raining; I certainly hear the falling drops." The others laughed, and told him that it seldom rained when the sun was shining; but as they listened they plainly heard the tinkling of many drops falling through the forest, and sliding from leaf to leaf until they reached the bramble-bushes beside them, when, to their great dismay, they found that the RAIN-DROPS were MELTED RUBIES, which hardened on the leaves and turned them to bright crimson in a moment. Then looking more closely at the trees around, they saw that the treasure was all melting away, and that much of it was already spread over the leaves of the oak trees and maples, which were shining with their gorgeous dress of gold and bronze, crimson and emerald. It was very beautiful; but the idle fairies were too much frightened at the mischief their disobedience had caused, to admire the beauty of the forest, and at once tried to hide themselves among the bushes, lest King Frost should come and punish them.

Their fears were well founded, for their long absence had alarmed the king, and he had started out to look for his tardy servants, and just as they were all hidden, he came along slowly, looking on all sides for the fairies. Of course, he soon noticed the brightness of the leaves, and discovered the

cause, too, when he caught sight of the broken jars and vases from which the melted treasure was still dropping. And when he came to the nut trees, and saw the shells left by the idle fairies and all the traces of their frolic, he knew exactly how they had acted, and that they had disobeyed him by playing and loitering on their way through the woods.

King Frost frowned and looked very angry at first, and his fairies trembled for fear and cowered still lower in their hiding-places; but just then two little children came dancing through the wood, and though they did not see King Frost or the fairies, they saw the beautiful colour of the leaves, and laughed with delight, and began picking great bunches to take to their mother. "The leaves are as pretty as flowers," said they; and they called the golden leaves "buttercups," and the red ones "roses," and were very happy as they went singing through the wood.

Their pleasure charmed away King Frost's anger, and he, too, began to admire the painted trees, and at last he said to himself, "My treasures are not wasted if they make little children happy. I will not be offended at my idle, thoughtless fairies, for they have taught me a new way of doing good." When the frost fairies heard these words they crept, one by one, from their corners, and, kneeling down before their master, confessed their fault, and asked his pardon. He frowned upon them for awhile, and scolded them, too, but he soon relented, and said he would forgive them this time, and would only punish them by making them carry more treasure to the forest, and hide it in the trees, until all the leaves, with Mr. Sun's help, were covered with gold and ruby coats.

Then the fairies thanked him for his forgiveness, and promised to work very hard to please him; and the good-natured king took them all up in his arms, and carried them safely home to his palace. From that time, I suppose, it has been part of Jack Frost's work to paint the trees with the glowing colours we see in the autumn; and if they are NOT covered with gold and precious stones, I do not know how he makes them so bright; DO YOU?

The Frost King by Helen A. Keller

King Frost lives in a beautiful palace far to the North, in the land of perpetual snow. The palace, which is magnificent beyond description, was built centuries ago, in the reign of King Glacier. At a little distance from the palace we might easily mistake it for a mountain whose peaks were mounting heavenward to receive the last kiss of the departing day. But on nearer approach we should discover our error. What we had supposed to be peaks were in reality a thousand glittering spires. Nothing could be more beautiful than the architecture of this ice-palace. The walls are curiously constructed of massive blocks of ice which terminate in cliff-like towers. The entrance to the palace is at the end of an arched recess, and it is guarded night and day by twelve soldierly-looking white Bears.

But, children, you must make King Frost a visit the very first opportunity you have, and see for yourselves this wonderful palace. The old King will welcome you kindly, for he loves children, and it is his chief delight to give them pleasure.

You must know that King Frost, like all other kings, has great treasures of gold and precious stones; but as he is a generous old monarch, he endeavours to make a right use of his riches. So wherever he goes he does many wonderful works; he builds bridges over every stream, as transparent as glass, but often as strong as iron; he shakes the forest trees until the ripe nuts fall into the laps of laughing children; he puts the flowers to sleep with one touch of his hand; then, lest we should mourn for the bright faces of the flowers, he paints the leaves with gold and crimson and emerald, and when his task is done the trees are beautiful enough to comfort us for the flight of summer. I will tell you how King Frost happened to think of painting the leaves, for it is a strange story.

One day while King Frost was surveying his vast wealth and thinking what good he could do with it, he suddenly bethought him of his jolly old neighbour, Santa Claus. "I will send my treasures to Santa Claus," said the King to himself. "He is the very man to dispose of them satisfactorily, for he

knows where the poor and the unhappy live, and his kind old heart is always full of benevolent plans for their relief." So he called together the merry little fairies of his household and, showing them the jars and vases containing his treasures, he bade them carry them to the palace of Santa Claus as quickly as they could. The fairies promised obedience, and were off in a twinkling, dragging the heavy jars and vases along after them as well as they could, now and then grumbling a little at having such a hard task, for they were idle fairies and loved to play better than to work. After awhile they came to a great forest and, being tired and hungry, they thought they would rest a little and look for nuts before continuing their journey. But thinking their treasure might be stolen from them, they hid the jars among the thick green leaves of the various trees until they were sure that no one could find them. Then they began to wander merrily about searching for nuts, climbing trees, peeping curiously into the empty birds' nests, and playing hide and seek from behind the trees. Now, these naughty fairies were so busy and so merry over their frolic that they forgot all about their errand and their master's command to go quickly, but soon they found to their dismay why they had been bidden to hasten, for although they had, as they supposed, hidden the treasure carefully, yet the bright eyes of King Sun had spied out the jars among the leaves, and as he and King Frost could never agree as to what was the best way of benefiting the world, he was very glad of a good opportunity of playing a joke upon his rather sharp rival. King Sun laughed softly to himself when the delicate jars began to melt and break. At length every jar and vase was cracked or broken, and the precious stones they contained were melting, too, and running in little streams over the trees and bushes of the forest.

Still the idle fairies did not notice what was happening, for they were down on the grass, and the wonderful shower of treasure was a long time in reaching them; but at last they plainly heard the tinkling of many drops falling like rain through the forest, and sliding from leaf to leaf until they reached the little bushes by their side, when to their astonishment they discovered that the rain-drops were melted rubies which hardened on the leaves, and turned them to crimson and gold in a moment. Then looking around more closely, they saw that much of the treasure was already melted, for the oaks and maples were arrayed in gorgeous dresses of gold and crimson and emerald. It was very beautiful, but the disobedient fairies were too frightened to notice the beauty of the trees. They were afraid that King Frost would come and punish them. So they hid themselves among the bushes and waited silently for something to happen. Their fears were well founded, for their long absence had alarmed the King, and he mounted North Wind and went out in search of his tardy couriers. Of course, he had not gone far when he noticed the brightness of the leaves, and he quickly guessed the cause when he saw the broken jars from which the treasure was still dropping. At first King Frost was very angry, and the fairies trembled and crouched lower in their hiding-places, and I do not know what might have happened to them if just then a party of boys and girls had not entered the wood. When the children saw the trees all aglow with brilliant colors they clapped their hands and shouted for joy, and immediately began to pick great bunches to take home. "The leaves are as lovely as the flowers!" cried they, in their delight. Their pleasure banished the anger from King Frost's heart and the frown from his brow, and he, too, began to admire the painted trees. He said to himself, "My treasures are not wasted if they make little children happy. My idle fairies and my fiery enemy have taught me a new way of doing good."

When the fairies heard this, they were greatly relieved and came forth from their hiding-places, confessed their fault, and asked their master's forgiveness.

Ever since that time it has been King Frost's great delight to paint the leaves with the glowing colors we see in the autumn, and if they are not covered with gold and precious stones I cannot imagine what makes them so bright, can you?

If the story of "The Frost Fairies" was read to Helen in the summer of 1888, she could not have understood very much of it at that time, for she had only been under instruction since March, 1887.

Can it be that the language of the story had remained dormant in her mind until my description of

the beauty of the autumn scenery in 1891 brought it vividly before her mental vision?

I have made careful investigation among Helen's friends in Alabama and in Boston and its vicinity, but thus far have been unable to ascertain any later date when it could have been read to her.

Another fact is of great significance in this connection. "The Rose Fairies" was published in the same volume with "The Frost Fairies," and, therefore, was probably read to Helen at or about the same time.

Now Helen, in her letter of February, 1890 (quoted above), alludes to this story of Miss Canby's as a dream "WHICH I HAD A LONG TIME AGO WHEN I WAS A VERY LITTLE CHILD." Surely, a year and a half would appear "a long time ago" to a little girl like Helen; we therefore have reason to believe that the stories must have been read to her at least as early as the summer of 1888.

HELEN KELLER'S OWN STATEMENT

(The following entry made by Helen in her diary speaks for itself.)

'1892. January 30. This morning I took a bath, and when teacher came upstairs to comb my hair she told me some very sad news which made me unhappy all day. Some one wrote to Mr. Anagnos that the story which I sent him as a birthday gift, and which I wrote myself, was not my story at all, but that a lady had written it a long time ago. The person said her story was called "Frost Fairies." I am sure I never heard it. It made us feel so bad to think that people thought we had been untrue and wicked. My heart was full of tears, for I love the beautiful truth with my whole heart and mind.

'It troubles me greatly now. I do not know what I shall do. I never thought that people could make such mistakes. I am perfectly sure I wrote the story myself. Mr. Anagnos is much troubled. It grieves me to think that I have been the cause of his unhappiness, but of course I did not mean to do it.

'I thought about my story in the autumn, because teacher told me about the autumn leaves while we walked in the woods at Fern Quarry. I thought fairies must have painted them because they are so wonderful, and I thought, too, that King Frost must have jars and vases containing precious treasures, because I knew that other kings long ago had, and because teacher told me that the leaves were painted ruby, emerald, gold, crimson, and brown; so that I thought the paint must be melted stones. I knew that they must make children happy because they are so lovely, and it made me very happy to think that the leaves were so beautiful and that the trees glowed so, although I could not see them.

'I thought everybody had the same thought about the leaves, but I do not know now. I thought very much about the sad news when teacher went to the doctor's; she was not here at dinner and I missed her.'

I do not feel that I can add anything more that will be of interest. My own heart is too "full of tears" when I remember how my dear little pupil suffered when she knew "that people thought we had been untrue and wicked," for I know that she does indeed "love the beautiful truth with her whole heart and mind."

Yours truly, ANNIE M. SULLIVAN.

So much appears in the Volta Bureau Souvenir. The following letter from Mr. Anagnos is reprinted from the American Annals of the Deaf, April, 1892:

PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND SO. BOSTON, March 11, 1892. TO THE EDITOR OF THE ANNALS.

Sir: In compliance with your wishes I make the following statement concerning Helen Keller's story of "King Frost." It was sent to me as a birthday gift on November 7th, from Tuscumbia, Alabama. Knowing as well as I do Helen's extraordinary abilities I did not hesitate to accept it as her own work; nor do I doubt to-day that she is fully capable of writing such a composition. Soon after its appearance in print I was pained to learn, through the Goodson Gazette, that a portion of the

story (eight or nine passages) is either a reproduction or adaptation of Miss Margaret Canby's "Frost Fairies." I immediately instituted an inquiry to ascertain the facts in the case. None of our teachers or officers who are accustomed to converse with Helen ever knew or heard about Miss Canby's book, nor did the child's parents and relatives at home have any knowledge of it. Her father, Captain Keller, wrote to me as follows on the subject:

"I hasten to assure you that Helen could not have received any idea of the story from any of her relations or friends here, none of whom can communicate with her readily enough to impress her with the details of a story of that character."

At my request, one of the teachers in the girls' department examined Helen in regard to the construction of the story. Her testimony is as follows:

"I first tried to ascertain what had suggested to Helen's mind the particular fancies which made her story seem like a reproduction of one written by Miss Margaret Canby. Helen told me that for a long time she had thought of Jack Frost as a king, because of the many treasures which he possessed. Such rich treasures must be kept in a safe place, and so she had imagined them stored in jars and vases in one part of the royal palace. She said that one autumn day her teacher told her as they were walking together in the woods, about the many beautiful colours of the leaves, and she had thought that such beauty must make people very happy, and very grateful to King Frost. I asked Helen what stories she had read about Jack Frost. In answer to my question she recited a part of the poem called 'Freaks of the Frost,' and she referred to a little piece about winter, in one of the school readers. She could not remember that any one had ever read to her any stories about King Frost, but said she had talked with her teacher about Jack Frost and the wonderful things he did."

The only person that we supposed might possibly have read the story to Helen was her friend, Mrs. Hopkins, whom she was visiting at the time in Brewster. I asked Miss Sullivan to go at once to see Mrs. Hopkins and ascertain the facts in the matter. The result of her investigation is embodied in the printed note herewith enclosed. [This note is a statement of the bare facts and an apology, which Mr. Anagnos inserted in his report of the Perkins Institute.]

I have scarcely any doubt that Miss Canby's little book was read to Helen, by Mrs. Hopkins, in the summer of 1888. But the child has no recollection whatever of this fact. On Miss Sullivan's return to Brewster, she read to Helen the story of "Little Lord Fauntleroy," which she had purchased in Boston for the purpose. The child was at once fascinated and absorbed with the charming story, which evidently made a deeper impression upon her mind than any previously read to her, as was shown in the frequent reference to it, both in her conversation and letters, for many months afterward. Her intense interest in Fauntleroy must have buried all remembrance of "Frost Fairies," and when, more than three years later, she had acquired a fuller knowledge and use of language, and was told of Jack Frost and his work, the seed so long buried sprang up into new thoughts and fancies. This may explain the reason why Helen claims persistently that "The Frost King" is her own story. She seems to have some idea of the difference between original composition and reproduction. She did not know the meaning of the word "plagiarism" until quite recently, when it was explained to her. She is absolutely truthful. Veracity is the strongest element of her character. She was very much surprised and grieved when she was told that her composition was an adaptation of Miss Canby's story of "Frost Fairies." She could not keep back her tears, and the chief cause of her pain seemed to be the fear lest people should doubt her truthfulness. She said, with great intensity of feeling, "I love the beautiful truth." A most rigid examination of the child of about two hours' duration, at which eight persons were present and asked all sorts of questions with perfect freedom, failed to elicit in the least any testimony convicting either her teacher or any one else of the intention or attempt to practice deception.

In view of these facts I cannot but think that Helen, while writing "The Frost King," was entirely

unconscious of ever having had the story of "Frost Fairies" read to her, and that her memory has been accompanied by such a loss of associations that she herself honestly believed her composition to be original. This theory is shared by many persons who are perfectly well acquainted with the child and who are able to rise above the clouds of a narrow prejudice.

Very sincerely yours, M. ANAGNOS. Director of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind.

The episode had a deadening effect on Helen Keller and on Miss Sullivan, who feared that she had allowed the habit of imitation, which has in truth made Miss Keller a writer, to go too far. Even to-day, when Miss Keller strikes off a fine phrase, Miss Sullivan says in humorous despair, "I wonder where she got that?" But she knows now, since she has studied with her pupil in college the problems of composition, under the wise advice of Mr. Charles T. Copeland, that the style of every writer and indeed, of every human being, illiterate or cultivated, is a composite reminiscence of all that he has read and heard. Of the sources of his vocabulary he is, for the most part, as unaware as he is of the moment when he ate the food which makes a bit of his thumbnail. With most of us the contributions from different sources are blended, crossed and confused. A child with but few sources may keep distinct what he draws from each. In this case Helen Keller held almost intact in her mind, unmixed with other ideas, the words of a story which at the time it was read to her she did not fully understand. The importance of this cannot be overestimated. It shows how the child-mind gathers into itself words it has heard, and how they lurk there ready to come out when the key that releases the spring is touched. The reason that we do not observe this process in ordinary children is, because we seldom observe them at all, and because they are fed from so many sources that the memories are confused and mutually destructive. The story of "The Frost King" did not, however, come from Helen Keller's mind intact, but had taken to itself the mould of the child's temperament and had drawn on a vocabulary that to some extent had been supplied in other ways. The style of her version is in some respects even better than the style of Miss Canby's story. It has the imaginative credulity of a primitive folktale; whereas Miss Canby's story is evidently told for children by an older person, who adopts the manner of a fairy tale and cannot conceal the mature mood which allows such didactic phrases as "Jack Frost as he is sometimes called," "Noon, at which time Mr. Sun is strongest." Most people will feel the superior imaginative quality of Helen Keller's opening paragraph. Surely the writer must become as a little child to see things like that. "Twelve soldierly-looking white bears" is a stroke of genius, and there is beauty of rhythm throughout the child's narrative. It is original in the same way that a poet's version of an old story is original.

This little story calls into life all the questions of language and the philosophy of style. Some conclusions may be briefly suggested.

All use of language is imitative, and one's style is made up of all other styles that one has met.

The way to write good English is to read it and hear it. Thus it is that any child may be taught to use correct English by not being allowed to read or hear any other kind. In a child, the selection of the better from the worse is not conscious; he is the servant of his word experience.

The ordinary man will never be rid of the fallacy that words obey thought, that one thinks first and phrases afterward. There must first, it is true, be the intention, the desire to utter something, but the idea does not often become specific, does not take shape until it is phrased; certainly an idea is a different thing by virtue of being phrased. Words often make the thought, and the master of words will say things greater than are in him. A remarkable example is a paragraph from Miss Keller's sketch in the *Youth's Companion*. Writing of the moment when she learned that everything has a name, she says: "We met the nurse carrying my little cousin; and teacher spelled 'baby.' AND FOR THE FIRST TIME I was impressed with the smallness and helplessness of a little baby, and mingled with the thought there was another one of myself, and I was glad I was myself, and not a baby." It

was a word that created these thoughts in her mind. So the master of words is master of thoughts which the words create, and says things greater than he could otherwise know. Helen Keller writing "The Frost King" was building better than she knew and saying more than she meant.

Whoever makes a sentence of words utters not his wisdom, but the wisdom of the race whose life is in the words, though they have never been so grouped before. The man who can write stories thinks of stories to write. The medium calls forth the thing it conveys, and the greater the medium the deeper the thoughts.

The educated man is the man whose expression is educated. The substance of thought is language, and language is the one thing to teach the deaf child and every other child. Let him get language and he gets the very stuff that language is made of, the thought and the experience of his race. The language must be one used by a nation, not an artificial thing. Volapuk is a paradox, unless one has French or English or German or some other language that has grown up in a nation. The deaf child who has only the sign language of De l'Epee is an intellectual Philip Nolan, an alien from all races, and his thoughts are not the thoughts of an Englishman, or a Frenchman, or a Spaniard. The Lord's prayer in signs is not the Lord's prayer in English.

In his essay on style De Quincey says that the best English is to be found in the letters of the cultivated gentlewoman, because she has read only a few good books and has not been corrupted by the style of newspapers and the jargon of street, market-place, and assembly hall.

Precisely these outward circumstances account for Helen Keller's use of English. In the early years of her education she had only good things to read; some were, indeed, trivial and not excellent in style, but not one was positively bad in manner or substance. This happy condition has obtained throughout her life. She has been nurtured on imaginative literature, and she has gathered from it into her vigorous and tenacious memory the style of great writers. "A new word opens its heart to me," she writes in a letter; and when she uses the word its heart is still open. When she was twelve years old, she was asked what book she would take on a long railroad journey. "Paradise Lost," she answered, and she read it on the train.

Until the last year or two she has not been master of her style, rather has her style been master of her. It is only since she has made composition a more conscious study that she has ceased to be the victim of the phrase; the lucky victim, fortunately, of the good phrase.

When in 1892, she was encouraged to write a sketch of her life for the Youth's Companion, in the hope that it would reassure her and help her to recover from the effect of "The Frost King," she produced a piece of composition which is much more remarkable and in itself more entertaining at some points than the corresponding part of her story in this book. When she came to retell the story in a fuller form, the echo was still in her mind of the phrases she had written nine years before. Yet she had not seen her sketch in the Youth's Companion since she wrote it, except two passages which Miss Sullivan read to her to remind her of things she should say in this autobiography, and to show her, when her phrasing troubled her, how much better she did as a little girl.

From the early sketch I take a few passages which seem to me, without making very much allowance for difference in time, almost as good as anything she has written since:

I discovered the true way to walk when I was a year old, and during the radiant summer days that followed I was never still a minute....

Then when my father came in the evening, I would run to the gate to meet him, and he would take me up in his strong arms and put back the tangled curls from my face and kiss me many times, saying, "What has my Little Woman been doing to-day?"

But the brightest summer has winter behind it. In the cold, dreary month of February, when I was nineteen months old, I had a serious illness. I still have confused memories of that illness. My mother sat beside my little bed and tried to soothe my feverish moans while in her troubled heart she prayed,

"Father in Heaven, spare my baby's life!" But the fever grew and flamed in my eyes, and for several days my kind physician thought I would die.

But early one morning the fever left me as mysteriously and unexpectedly as it had come, and I fell into a quiet sleep. Then my parents knew I would live, and they were very happy. They did not know for some time after my recovery that the cruel fever had taken my sight and hearing; taken all the light and music and gladness out of my little life.

But I was too young to realize what had happened. When I awoke and found that all was dark and still, I suppose I thought it was night, and I must have wondered why day was so long coming. Gradually, however, I got used to the silence and darkness that surrounded me, and forgot that it had ever been day.

I forgot everything that had been except my mother's tender love. Soon even my childish voice was stilled, because I had ceased to hear any sound.

But all was not lost! After all, sight and hearing are but two of the beautiful blessings which God had given me. The most precious, the most wonderful of His gifts was still mine. My mind remained clear and active, "though fled fore'er the light."

As soon as my strength returned, I began to take an interest in what the people around me were doing. I would cling to my mother's dress as she went about her household duties, and my little hands felt every object and observed every motion, and in this way I learned a great many things.

When I was a little older I felt the need of some means of communication with those around me, and I began to make simple signs which my parents and friends readily understood; but it often happened that I was unable to express my thoughts intelligibly, and at such times I would give way to my angry feelings utterly....

Teacher had been with me nearly two weeks, and I had learned eighteen or twenty words, before that thought flashed into my mind, as the sun breaks upon the sleeping world; and in that moment of illumination the secret of language was revealed to me, and I caught a glimpse of the beautiful country I was about to explore.

Teacher had been trying all the morning to make me understand that the mug and the milk in the mug had different names; but I was very dull, and kept spelling MILK for mug, and mug for milk until teacher must have lost all hope of making me see my mistake. At last she got up, gave me the mug, and led me out of the door to the pump-house. Some one was pumping water, and as the cool fresh stream burst forth, teacher made me put my mug under the spout and spelled "w-a-t-e-r," Water!

That word startled my soul, and it awoke, full of the spirit of the morning, full of joyous, exultant song. Until that day my mind had been like a darkened chamber, waiting for words to enter and light the lamp, which is thought....

I learned a great many words that day. I do not remember what they all were; but I do know that MOTHER, FATHER, SISTER and TEACHER were among them. It would have been difficult to find a happier little child than I was that night as I lay in my crib and thought over the joy the day had brought me, and for the first time longed for a new day to come.

The next morning I awoke with joy in my heart. Everything I touched seemed to quiver with life. It was because I saw everything with the new, strange, beautiful sight which had been given me. I was never angry after that because I understood what my friends said to me, and I was very busy learning many wonderful things. I was never still during the first glad days of my freedom. I was continually spelling and acting out the words as I spelled them. I would run, skip, jump and swing, no matter where I happened to be. Everything was budding and blossoming. The honeysuckle hung in long garlands, deliciously fragrant, and the roses had never been so beautiful before. Teacher and I lived out-of-doors from morning until night, and I rejoiced greatly in the forgotten light and sunshine found

again....

The morning after our arrival I awoke bright and early. A beautiful summer day had dawned, the day on which I was to make the acquaintance of a somber and mysterious friend. I got up, and dressed quickly and ran downstairs. I met Teacher in the hall, and begged to be taken to the sea at once. "Not yet," she responded, laughing. "We must have breakfast first." As soon as breakfast was over we hurried off to the shore. Our pathway led through low, sandy hills, and as we hastened on, I often caught my feet in the long, coarse grass, and tumbled, laughing, in the warm, shining sand. The beautiful, warm air was peculiarly fragrant, and I noticed it got cooler and fresher as we went on.

Suddenly we stopped, and I knew, without being told, the Sea was at my feet. I knew, too, it was immense! awful! and for a moment some of the sunshine seemed to have gone out of the day. But I do not think I was afraid; for later, when I had put on my bathing-suit, and the little waves ran up on the beach and kissed my feet, I shouted for joy, and plunged fearlessly into the surf. But, unfortunately, I struck my foot on a rock and fell forward into the cold water.

Then a strange, fearful sense of danger terrified me. The salt water filled my eyes, and took away my breath, and a great wave threw me up on the beach as easily as if I had been a little pebble. For several days after that I was very timid, and could hardly be persuaded to go in the water at all; but by degrees my courage returned, and almost before the summer was over, I thought it the greatest fun to be tossed about by the sea-waves....

I do not know whether the difference or the similarity in phrasing between the child's version and the woman's is the more remarkable. The early story is simpler and shows less deliberate artifice, though even then Miss Keller was prematurely conscious of style, but the art of the later narrative, as in the passage about the sea, or the passage on the medallion of Homer, is surely a fulfilment of the promise of the early story. It was in these early days that Dr. Holmes wrote to her: "I am delighted with the style of your letters. There is no affectation about them, and as they come straight from your heart, so they go straight to mine."

In the years when she was growing out of childhood, her style lost its early simplicity and became stiff and, as she says, "periwigged." In these years the fear came many times to Miss Sullivan lest the success of the child was to cease with childhood. At times Miss Keller seemed to lack flexibility, her thoughts ran in set phrases which she seemed to have no power to revise or turn over in new ways.

Then came the work in college—original theme writing with new ideals of composition or at least new methods of suggesting those ideals. Miss Keller began to get the better of her old friendly taskmaster, the phrase. This book, her first mature experiment in writing, settles the question of her ability to write.

The style of the Bible is everywhere in Miss Keller's work, just as it is in the style of most great English writers. Stevenson, whom Miss Sullivan likes and used to read to her pupil, is another marked influence. In her autobiography are many quotations, chiefly from the Bible and Stevenson, distinct from the context or interwoven with it, the whole a fabric quite of her own design. Her vocabulary has all the phrases that other people use, and the explanation of it, and the reasonableness of it ought to be evident by this time. There is no reason why she should strike from her vocabulary all words of sound and vision. Writing for other people, she should in many cases be true to outer fact rather than to her own experience. So long as she uses words correctly, she should be granted the privilege of using them freely, and not be expected to confine herself to a vocabulary true to her lack of sight and hearing. In her style, as in what she writes about, we must concede to the artist what we deny to the autobiographer. It should be explained, too, that LOOK and SEE are used by the blind, and HEAR by the deaf, for PERCEIVE; they are simple and more convenient words. Only a literal person could think of holding the blind to PERCEPTION or APPERCEPTION, when SEEING and LOOKING are so much easier, and have, moreover, in the

speech of all men the meaning of intellectual recognition as well as recognition through the sense of sight. When Miss Keller examines a statue, she says in her natural idiom, as her fingers run over the marble, "It looks like a head of Flora."

It is true, on the other hand, that in her descriptions, she is best from the point of view of art when she is faithful to her own sensations; and this is precisely true of all artists.

Her recent training has taught her to drop a good deal of her conventionality and to write about experiences in her life which are peculiar to her and which, like the storm in the wild cherry tree, mean most and call for the truest phrasing. She has learned more and more to give up the style she borrowed from books and tried to use, because she wanted to write like other people; she has learned that she is at her best when she "feels" the lilies sway; lets the roses press into her hands and speaks of the heat which to her means light.

Miss Keller's autobiography contains almost everything that she ever intended to publish. It seems worth while, however, to quote from some of her chance bits of writing, which are neither so informal as her letters nor so carefully composed as her story of her life. These extracts are from her exercises in her course in composition, where she showed herself at the beginning of her college life quite without rival among her classmates. Mr. Charles T. Copeland, who has been for many years instructor in English and Lecturer on English Literature at Harvard and Radcliffe, said to me: "In some of her work she has shown that she can write better than any pupil I ever had, man or woman. She has an excellent 'ear' for the flow of sentences." The extracts follow:

A few verses of Omar Khayyam's poetry have just been read to me, and I feel as if I had spent the last half-hour in a magnificent sepulcher. Yes, it is a tomb in which hope, joy and the power of acting nobly lie buried. Every beautiful description, every deep thought glides insensibly into the same mournful chant of the brevity of life, of the slow decay and dissolution of all earthly things. The poet's bright, fond memories of love, youth and beauty are but the funeral torches shedding their light on this tomb, or to modify the image a little, they are the flowers that bloom on it, watered with tears and fed by a bleeding heart. Beside the tomb sits a weary soul, rejoicing neither in the joys of the past nor in the possibilities of the future, but seeking consolation in forgetfulness. In vain the inspiring sea shouts to this languid soul, in vain the heavens strive with its weakness; it still persists in regretting and seeks a refuge in oblivion from the pangs of present woe. At times it catches some faint echo from the living, joyous, real world, a gleam of the perfection that is to be; and, thrilled out of its despondency, feels capable of working out a grand ideal even "in the poor, miserable, hampered actual," wherein it is placed; but in a moment the inspiration, the vision is gone, and this great, much-suffering soul is again enveloped in the darkness of uncertainty and despair.

It is wonderful how much time good people spend fighting the devil. If they would only expend the same amount of energy loving their fellow men, the devil would die in his own tracks of ennui.

I often think that beautiful ideas embarrass most people as much as the company of great men. They are regarded generally as far more appropriate in books and in public discourses than in the parlor or at the table. Of course I do not refer to beautiful sentiments, but to the higher truths relating to everyday life. Few people that I know seem ever to pause in their daily intercourse to wonder at the beautiful bits of truth they have gathered during their years of study. Often when I speak enthusiastically of something in history or in poetry, I receive no response, and I feel that I must change the subject and return to the commonest topics, such as the weather, dressmaking, sports, sickness, "blues" and "worries." To be sure, I take the keenest interest in everything that concerns those who surround me; it is this very interest which makes it so difficult for me to carry on a conversation with some people who will not talk or say what they think, but I should not be sorry to find more friends ready to talk with me now and then about the wonderful things I read. We need not be like "Les Femmes Savantes" but we ought to have something to say about what we learn as well

as about what we MUST do, and what our professors say or how they mark our themes.

To-day I took luncheon with the Freshman Class of Radcliffe. This was my first real experience in college life, and a delightful experience it was! For the first time since my entrance into Radcliffe I had the opportunity to make friends with all my classmates, and the pleasure of knowing that they regarded me as one of themselves, instead of thinking of me as living apart and taking no interest in the everyday nothings of their life, as I had sometimes feared they did. I have often been surprised to hear this opinion expressed or rather implied by girls of my own age and even by people advanced in years. Once some one wrote to me that in his mind I was always "sweet and earnest," thinking only of what is wise, good and interesting—as if he thought I was one of those wearisome saints of whom there are only too many in the world! I always laugh at these foolish notions, and assure my friends that it is much better to have a few faults and be cheerful and responsive in spite of all deprivations than to retire into one's shell, pet one's affliction, clothe it with sanctity, and then set one's self up as a monument of patience, virtue, goodness and all in all; but even while I laugh I feel a twinge of pain in my heart, because it seems rather hard to me that any one should imagine that I do not feel the tender bonds which draw me to my young sisters—the sympathies springing from what we have in common—youth, hope, a half-eager, half-timid attitude towards the life before us and above all the royalty of maidenhood.

Sainte-Beuve says, "Il vient un age peut-etre quand on n'ecrit plus." This is the only allusion I have read to the possibility that the sources of literature, varied and infinite as they seem now, may sometime be exhausted. It surprises me to find that such an idea has crossed the mind of any one, especially of a highly gifted critic. The very fact that the nineteenth century has not produced many authors whom the world may count among the greatest of all time does not in my opinion justify the remark, "There may come a time when people cease to write."

In the first place, the fountains of literature are fed by two vast worlds, one of action, one of thought, by a succession of creations in the one and of changes in the other. New experiences and events call forth new ideas and stir men to ask questions unthought of before, and seek a definite answer in the depths of human knowledge.

In the second place, if it is true that as many centuries must pass before the world becomes perfect as passed before it became what it is to-day, literature will surely be enriched incalculably by the tremendous changes, acquisitions and improvements that cannot fail to take place in the distant future. If genius has been silent for a century it has not been idle. On the contrary, it has been collecting fresh materials not only from the remote past, but also from the age of progress and development, and perhaps in the new century there will be outbursts of splendor in all the various branches of literature. At present the world is undergoing a complete revolution, and in the midst of falling systems and empires, conflicting theories and creeds, discoveries and inventions, it is a marvel how one can produce any great literary works at all. This is an age of workers, not of thinkers. The song to-day is:

Let the dead past bury its dead, Act, act in the living present, Heart within and God overhead.

A little later, when the rush and heat of achievement relax, we can begin to expect the appearance of grand men to celebrate in glorious poetry and prose the deeds and triumphs of the last few centuries.

It is very interesting to watch a plant grow, it is like taking part in creation. When all outside is cold and white, when the little children of the woodland are gone to their nurseries in the warm earth, and the empty nests on the bare trees fill with snow, my window-garden glows and smiles, making summer within while it is winter without. It is wonderful to see flowers bloom in the midst of a snow-storm! I have felt a bud "shyly doff her green hood and blossom with a silken burst of sound," while the icy fingers of the snow beat against the window-panes. What secret power, I wonder, caused

this blossoming miracle? What mysterious force guided the seedling from the dark earth up to the light, through leaf and stem and bud, to glorious fulfilment in the perfect flower? Who could have dreamed that such beauty lurked in the dark earth, was latent in the tiny seed we planted? Beautiful flower, you have taught me to see a little way into the hidden heart of things. Now I understand that the darkness everywhere may hold possibilities better even than my hopes.

A FREE TRANSLATION FROM HORACE BOOK II-18.

I am not one of those on whom fortune deigns to smile. My house is not resplendent with ivory and gold; nor is it adorned with marble arches, resting on graceful columns brought from the quarries of distant Africa. For me no thrifty spinners weave purple garments. I have not unexpectedly fallen heir to princely estates, titles or power; but I have something more to be desired than all the world's treasures—the love of my friends, and honorable fame, won by my own industry and talents. Despite my poverty, it is my privilege to be the companion of the rich and mighty. I am too grateful for all these blessings to wish for more from princes, or from the gods. My little Sabine farm is dear to me; for here I spend my happiest days, far from the noise and strife of the world.

O, ye who live in the midst of luxury, who seek beautiful marbles for new villas, that shall surpass the old in splendor, you never dream that the shadow of death is hanging over your halls. Forgetful of the tomb, you lay the foundation of your palaces. In your mad pursuit of pleasure you rob the sea of its beach and desecrate hallowed ground. More even than this, in your wickedness you destroy the peaceful homes of your clients! Without a touch of remorse you drive the father from his land, clasp to his bosom his household gods and his half-naked children.

You forget that death comes to the rich and the poor alike, and comes once for all; but remember, Acheron could not be bribed by gold to ferry the crafty Prometheus back to the sunlit world. Tantalus, too, great as he was above all mortals, went down to the kingdom of the dead, never to return. Remember, too, that, although death is inexorable, yet he is just; for he brings retribution to the rich for their wickedness, and gives the poor eternal rest from their toil and sorrow.

Ah, the pranks that the nixies of Dreamland play on us while we sleep! Methinks "they are jesters at the Court of Heaven." They frequently take the shape of daily themes to mock me; they strut about on the stage of Sleep like foolish virgins, only they carry well-trimmed note-books in their hands instead of empty lamps. At other times they examine and cross-examine me in all the studies I have ever had, and invariably ask me questions as easy to answer as this: "What was the name of the first mouse that worried Hippopotamus, satrap of Cambridge under Astyagas, grandfather of Cyrus the Great?" I wake terror-stricken with the words ringing in my ears, "An answer or your life!"

Such are the distorted fancies that flit through the mind of one who is at college and lives as I do in an atmosphere of ideas, conceptions and half-thoughts, half-feelings which tumble and jostle each other until one is almost crazy. I rarely have dreams that are not in keeping with what I really think and feel, but one night my very nature seemed to change, and I stood in the eye of the world a mighty man and a terrible. Naturally I love peace and hate war and all that pertains to war; I see nothing admirable in the ruthless career of Napoleon, save its finish. Nevertheless, in that dream the spirit of that pitiless slayer of men entered me! I shall never forget how the fury of battle throbbed in my veins—it seemed as if the tumultuous beating of my heart would stop my breath. I rode a fiery hunter—I can feel the impatient toss of his head now and the quiver that ran through him at the first roar of the cannon.

From the top of the hill where I stood I saw my army surging over a sunlit plain like angry breakers, and as they moved, I saw the green of fields, like the cool hollows between billows. Trumpet answered trumpet above the steady beat of drums and the rhythm of marching feet. I spurred my panting steed and waving my sword on high and shouting, "I come! Behold me, warriors—Europe!" I plunged into the oncoming billows, as a strong swimmer dives into breakers, and

struck, alas, 'tis true, the bedpost!

Now I rarely sleep without dreaming; but before Miss Sullivan came to me, my dreams were few and far between, devoid of thought or coherency, except those of a purely physical nature. In my dreams something was always falling suddenly and heavily, and at times my nurse seemed to punish me for my unkind treatment of her in the daytime and return at an usurer's rate of interest my kickings and pinchings. I would wake with a start or struggle frantically to escape from my tormentor. I was very fond of bananas, and one night I dreamed that I found a long string of them in the dining-room, near the cupboard, all peeled and deliciously ripe, and all I had to do was to stand under the string and eat as long as I could eat.

After Miss Sullivan came to me, the more I learned, the oftener I dreamed; but with the waking of my mind there came many dreary fancies and vague terrors which troubled my sleep for a long time. I dreaded the darkness and loved the woodfire. Its warm touch seemed so like a human caress, I really thought it was a sentient being, capable of loving and protecting me. One cold winter night I was alone in my room. Miss Sullivan had put out the light and gone away, thinking I was sound asleep. Suddenly I felt my bed shake, and a wolf seemed to spring on me and snarl in my face. It was only a dream, but I thought it real, and my heart sank within me. I dared not scream, and I dared not stay in bed. Perhaps this was a confused recollection of the story I had heard not long before about Red Riding Hood. At all events, I slipped down from the bed and nestled close to the fire which had not flickered out. The instant I felt its warmth I was reassured, and I sat a long time watching it climb higher and higher in shining waves. At last sleep surprised me, and when Miss Sullivan returned she found me wrapped in a blanket by the hearth.

Often when I dream, thoughts pass through my mind like cowered shadows, silent and remote, and disappear. Perhaps they are the ghosts of thoughts that once inhabited the mind of an ancestor. At other times the things I have learned and the things I have been taught, drop away, as the lizard sheds its skin, and I see my soul as God sees it. There are also rare and beautiful moments when I see and hear in Dreamland. What if in my waking hours a sound should ring through the silent halls of hearing? What if a ray of light should flash through the darkened chambers of my soul? What would happen, I ask many and many a time. Would the bow-and-string tension of life snap? Would the heart, overweighted with sudden joy, stop beating for very excess of happiness?

THE END

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