

have two houses instead of one for twelve months. She would have avoided all inconvenience had she taken the trouble to carefully read through her agreement before she gave notice or took another house, for in it the terms on which she held the house were very clearly defined. The owner of a house expects proper references as to respectability and ability to pay the proposed rent from a would-be tenant before he accepts him.

Before leaving this branch of my subject I must say a few words relative to the purchase of houses.

A freehold house is one on which there is no ground rent to pay, the house and the ground on which it stands belonging to the same person; freehold property is therefore worth more than leasehold. A leasehold house is one built on land that is rented for a certain sum for a period of generally ninety-nine years; at the end of that time the house becomes the property of the person who owns the land, so the value of leaseholds depends on the number of years the lease has to run; that is to say, how many years before the house will become the property of the ground landlord (owner of the land), and whether the ground rent is high or low. Tables are published which show the value and what percentage property pays at different prices. Those who have money and wish to occupy a house, frequently find the best investment they can make is to purchase for their own occupation; being sure of their tenant, they are sure of the interest for their money. It is usually very easy to leave for a stated time a portion, say, half the purchase-money of a house on mortgage at reasonable interest. A mortgage is depositing the deeds of a house with someone who in return lends a sum of money at interest for a specified time. A deed is executed of which the mortgagor (borrower) has to pay the expense. It is not necessary here to go into more particulars, as a mortgage has to be prepared by a solicitor.

Before a house is purchased the opinion of a competent surveyor should be taken on it, and then a solicitor investigates the title of the vendor.

Whether one intends to buy or to rent a house, there are a great many things to be thought of before a decision is come to. Locality is of much importance. Is the neighbourhood in which we are seeking a home healthy? or rather is it likely to suit our household? There is just now a sort of desire with everyone to live in a bracing situation; it is not quite sensible, for though beneficial to many, there are also many people who have better health in mild situations; it is much more

reasonable in this respect to consider the idiosyncrasies of the family, and be guided by them rather than by a fancy for a warm or a cold place. I know a health resort celebrated for its many octogenarians that has a decidedly relaxing climate during the greater part of the year; at the same time it does not suit everyone. The nature of the soil is also a great point with many people; good gravel soil is much esteemed, but unfortunately in many places where one knows it ought to be gravel, the gravel has been dug out and sold, and one cannot say much for the various things with which the holes have been filled. Granite, sandstone, rock, and well-drained stiff clay are all healthy to reside on. Some consider that in towns clay is more healthy than gravel, because nothing rises through it, and anything wrong in the drainage is more quickly seen than with gravel that moisture will sink into. But damp, soft clay, and marshy, sandy land are considered very unhealthy to build on. Houses built on a good foundation of concrete or cement are good.

For London and its neighbourhood there are some special maps published showing the geological strata of the different parts, and the height above the Thames, etc. We will suppose that we have made up our minds as to the locality in which we wish to find a residence, then we must consider if the neighbourhood is likely to improve, or will it go down? Are the rates high? These vary very much in different parishes, and have to be calculated with the rent, for frequently where rents are low rates are high, and where the rents are high the rates are low. If the place is new and unfinished, the class of houses they are building on adjoining land is very important. Some friends of mine bought a very nice house some five years ago in a town suburb that then promised to be very pretty. The plots of land between their house and the railway station were to be let for building on. A short time back I went down to visit them; it was early in the week, and I shall not soon forget my first impression as we left the station; it was one of washing, washing everywhere, garments of all descriptions hanging out to dry in back gardens that were divided by such low wooden fences that the place looked like one huge drying ground. The houses had sprung up with marvellous rapidity; but how different they looked from the pretty pictures we had seen of the "proposed elevations," with elegant carriages in the road in front, and nice trees in the garden behind. Then the terrible sameness about the rows and rows of small Queen Anne houses, all doubtless respectably

tenanted, but not providing the class of society wished for by my friends, who would be very glad to get rid of their house at a loss to themselves, but which they will not do easily, as it is much superior to those built more recently.

If there are members of the family who have to go into town daily, railway, omnibus, and cab fares are things of no small importance to those who are not rich.

Other things of importance are the state of the drains—a good supply of water with proper sanitary arrangements of cisterns. The state of the roofs and gutters, chimneys that do not smoke, good grates, and the dryness of the house. A dark chocolate damp-proof paint is used a great deal now where there is any dampness in the walls; though of course it may be used on dry walls too, I feel a little doubt when I see it. The aspect of a house is not to be forgotten; some like north and south, some east and west. I should not say that one was better than the other, as it is really a matter of individual preference.

Young housekeepers when they are looking for a house are often apt to be taken with one because there is a pretty drawing-room, forgetting the importance of kitchen, larder, coal cellar, etc. I know some new houses that are very pretty to look at, and have two extremely pretty sitting-rooms, but the kitchens are hardly large enough to turn round in; there is not a place where one could keep a spare hamper; there is no proper larder, only a cupboard in the kitchen, which, though it has outside ventilation, the kitchen stove makes so warm that it is impossible to keep provisions cool, and the back of the house being to the south, there is no place to put a safe, and the coal cellars will only take a ton of coals by putting them in carefully. These things cause so much discomfort to servants as well as mistresses that it is not well to take a house that is not sensibly planned.

When a house is taken through an order to view received from a house agent, it is only right to inform him of the fact; the landlord pays the agent's commission, so it makes no difference to a tenant whether he finds what will suit him through the medium of an agent or not, the rent will be the same as if he deals directly with the owner of the house. If a surveyor is employed by a would-be tenant to look over and report on a residence, the fee varies according to the size of the house. It can generally be agreed on beforehand.

Where there is land attached to a house, leases vary considerably, and in many counties there are special customs relative to them.

(To be continued.)

IN DARKNESS AND SILENCE.



HERE has recently passed away a woman of sixty years old, remarkable not on account of great gifts well applied, but of great deprivations cheerfully endured and wonderfully overcome. We mean Laura Bridgman, an American, who, almost from birth, was deaf, dumb, and blind, and with scarcely any power of taste or smell, but who, by the devotion and skill of her instructors and her own responsiveness thereto, has become an object of interest and edification to the whole civilised world.

When Laura was born in New Hampshire in 1829, the welcome arrival in a comfortable yeoman's homestead, she seems to have been much like other children. Her mother described her as a pretty, sprightly child with bright blue eyes. From the first, however, she was puny, and suffered from fits. For a while she appeared to grow stronger, but before she was two years old she had an illness (scarlet fever) which nearly cost her her life, and from which she recovered with the loss of her chief senses, and with none remaining intact save that of touch.

An account of her at this time says: "She followed her mother and felt her hands and arms as she was occupied about the house, and her disposition to imitate led her to repeat everything herself. She even learned to sew

a little and to knit . . . But she could be told to go to a place only by being pushed, or to come to one by a sign of drawing her. Patting her gently on the head signified approbation; on the back disapprobation. . . She had a sign to express her idea of each member of the family, as drawing her fingers down each side of her face to allude to the whiskers of one, twirling her hand around, in imitation of the motion of a spinning-wheel, for another, and so on."

Laura was eight years old when Dr. Howe, of the Perkins Institution for the Blind, Boston, having heard of her very peculiar case, visited her parents with the express object of inducing them to give their daughter into his charge. His hope was, that if he succeeded in alleviating this extreme case of deprivation,

he might the better show how much can be done for those with only one or two imperfect senses.

With that true love which alone can regard the loved one in the spirit of the line—
"That which is good for her is good for us," the parents consented to part from the child for her own dear sake.

Dr. Howe at once made her the express charge of one of his teachers, a Mrs. Lamson, and under his direction this lady gave Laura her devoted and exclusive attention for many years.

"The first experiments in teaching her were made by taking articles in common use, such as knives, forks, spoons, keys, etc., and pasting upon them labels with their names printed in raised letters. These she felt very carefully, and soon, of course, distinguished that the crooked lines 'spoon,' differed as much from the crooked lines 'key,' as the spoon differed from the key in form. Small detached labels with the same words printed upon them were then put into her hands, and she soon observed that they were similar to the ones pasted on the articles. She showed her perception of the similarity by laying the label key upon the key, and the label spoon upon the spoon. She was encouraged by the natural sign of approbation—patting on the head."

The same process was repeated with every article she could handle. Then detached letters were given her to arrange herself into the names of such articles as she already knew. It is said that at this point "she perceived that here was a way by which she could herself make up a sign of anything that was in her own mind, and show it to another mind; and at once her countenance lighted up with animation."

From this she went on to metal types, with a board filled with square holes, into which she could fit them. And when her vocabulary had in this way become extensive, she was taught the deaf-mute alphabet on the fingers. She soon managed this so fast and deftly that only those accustomed to her could follow the movements of her fingers. Still more wonderful was the ease with which she read similar movements in others, though her only possible method of observation was to grasp their hands as they gesticulated.

When Laura's mother visited her, the scene was very touching. The visit occurred six months after she had left home. And how

was the recognition to be accomplished, since eyes and ears were closed? Laura felt Mrs. Bridgman's dress—it was not one she knew. The mother put into her hands a string of beads the child had worn at home. Laura evidently recognised them by touch, and put them on with great delight. Memory evidently was there, though affection could find no outlet. Another and another token from home were put into her hands. Laura grew excited; she felt that something unusual was in the air. She approached the "stranger" again, passing her hands eagerly over her person. Suddenly the mother drew her to her side and kissed her, and evidently the recognition was complete. Laura nestled to her, disregarded her favourite playmates, and never left Mrs. Bridgman's side while she remained in the institution.

From the mere names of things, Laura was led on to expressions of relation to place, and to the knowledge of adjectives and of active verbs. At this point it was judged expedient to teach her to write! In a few months she could make every letter distinctly, and separate words from each other. She actually wrote, unaided, a legible letter to her mother, which however rude, imperfect, and infantine in style, was in itself little short of a miracle.

We have seen an autograph of hers of a date a little later. She wrote it in pencil on a slip of paper, in the presence of visitors. The letters are upright, even, and well-formed, in character not unlike the bold calligraphy now in fashion. There is a pathetic interest in the words of this little missive; for the blind girl wrote, remembering another equally afflicted child in a sister asylum—

"I want to see deaf and dumb and blind Julia Brace in Hartford.

"LAURA BRIDGMAN."

By the time Laura was eleven years old she was familiar with addition and subtraction in small numbers. For large numbers she generally used the word "hundred." With the days of the week, and the week itself as a whole, she was familiar. It was said that "her judgment of distances and of relations of place is very accurate. She will rise from her seat, go straight towards a door, put out her hand just at the right time, and grasp the handle with precision."

One who saw her at this time described her as possessing "a countenance of much symmetry," and as being cheerful and even

merry in manner, and delighted with little gifts or with signs of approbation.

Along with the development of the imprisoned mind, Laura's moral culture was duly attended to. She was trained gently, and displayed a conscientious character, aware of her own rights and respecting those of others. She never tried to conceal her faults, and liked to share her gifts with the other children, especially with the sick, on whom she was very fond of waiting. She showed a curious shrinking from the weak in intellect, and was very strong in her personal attachments. She bore pain with great fortitude, always trying to laugh it off, though she wept freely for sorrow. She grew skilful in all kinds of domestic work, and especially with her needle; indeed, she became so expert in these ways, that in his last report upon her case, her patient benefactor, Dr. Howe, was able to say, "In all these things she succeeded so well that she is now capable of earning a livelihood as assistant to any kind and intelligent house-keeper who would accommodate her work to Laura's ways." From the first she had been careful and neat in personal habits and ways, and as years passed on she showed "a feminine delight in personal ornamentation, in showy and fashionable dresses, bonnets, and the like, and trinkets for her dressing-table." Her faculties of taste and smell perceptibly improved.

In the course of time she showed the advantages of a general education; we hear of "geography, algebra, and history." She saw many visitors from all parts of the world, among them, of course, some famous people, such as Charles Dickens, who describes his interview with much pathos and power in his "American Notes." With some of the guests she maintained her acquaintanceship, and thus she who at first had seemed like a soul imprisoned in impenetrable silence and darkness, came to carry on a correspondence with people of all ranks and races. It is said that she reasoned with good sense and discrimination and thought deeply on religious subjects. She was always interested and busy, and ultimately became skilful as a teacher of her fellow-sufferers.

There seems no doubt that, despite all its limitations, the life of Laura Bridgman was a thoroughly happy one. Let those who lack aught from nature lay to heart the consolation her life gives them, and let those who lack little give still more heed to its lesson.

"SHALL I EVER GET WELL, I WONDER?"

By MEDICUS.



"EIGHO! I wonder if I shall ever get well, and be just like other people—just like my old self again?"

Rather a plaintive, even sad sort of question for an invalid to put to herself, but one that is spoken, whispered, or thought by some unfortunate one or other

every minute of the day in this big bustling world of Britain.

Let me, by way of example, imagine such a case, and it is not all imagination either—of that be assured.

They call her Aunt Agatha, but she is very young for all that, and being fragile, looks younger even than she is. The children—her elder sister's—love her, in fact everybody loves

her and is kind to her, though there are times when she is cross with herself, because she cannot respond with sufficiently expressed gratitude for little fireside kindnesses offered to her!

That is, to her own way of thinking, probably one of the most painful of her symptoms. To feel too utterly low and dejected to be able to return wee Winnie's caress, or give more than a languid "No thank you, dear," to her big brother's inquiry whether he can do anything for her. To feel that it is almost in her heart to say to Winnie, "Do go away, child," or to her brother, "Leave me alone;" thus throwing back their affection in their faces, and to know that feeling thus is owing to her trouble, and no criterion of her disposition, which is tenderness itself when the sun of health sheds its blessings on her.

She is sitting here by herself to-night, quite

alone except for the pussy that purrs on the hearth; for everyone has gone out, and she is left to think. She is not altogether sorry for this, for weal or for woe she even nurses melancholy at times. It is the evening of a day in spring, cold and bleak-looking outside, though healthy, happy people do not seem to feel it. The wind is swaying the branches of the trees, and making a kind of whispering moan, and now and then a single drop of rain falls pat against the panes, with a sound like the commencement of a dirge.

Mary comes quietly in to ask if she will have candles. But Aunt Agatha will not have candles. The evening's falling shadows accord with the chastened gloom on her own mind, and she will not pull down the blind and shut out the view. Mary is one of the best girls in the world. She thinks the dear young lady must feel lonely, and she steals softly in again to ask if she will have tea.