

The Remarkable Case of Miss Tunison.



ASES of invalids who, being deprived of their normal faculties, have with marvellous skill and patience so developed other powers as to supply the deficiency are not rare, and many remarkable instances are related of unfortunates who have triumphed over natural disadvantages and made successes in life.

It is questionable, however, if the annals of medicine can afford a parallel to the remarkable case of Miss Fannie W. Tunison, of Sag Harbour, Long Island, U.S.A. Though absolutely paralyzed in every limb and unable to move either hands or feet the fraction of an inch, nevertheless, this exceptional woman not only earns her own living, sews, embroiders, and writes, but also executes excellent paintings which rival the best efforts of many clever amateurs. And the marvellous part of it is that she accomplishes all this with her tongue.

The achievements of the blind, who by developing the sense of touch practically supply the lost sense, or of those who have lost arms and learn to use their feet in the capacity of hands, are entirely eclipsed by the performances of this woman with the abnormally-cultivated teeth and tongue. It has often been said that a woman's most trustworthy weapon is her tongue; but it has been left to Miss Tunison to show the world what a very useful organ the tongue really is.

Thirty years ago she was born, and to the grief of her parents was found to be suffering

from a form of infantine paralysis, which totally incapacitated her from using either her arms or legs. Her parents were only poor farmers in a small way of business, and Fannie's affliction not only weighed heavily upon their minds, but upon their pockets as well.

Medical attention was secured, and every effort made to effect a cure, but everything proved unavailing, and she was declared to be a hopeless cripple, without the slightest chance of recovery. A person of less strength of character would have yielded to the misery entailed by this wretched, worth-

less existence, and aggravated the grief of those around her by falling a victim to despair, misanthropy, and melancholia; but Miss Tunison was made of sterner stuff, and determined that she would not consent to be a burden to her family. By dint of the most painstaking care and patience she gradually developed her tongue and teeth to answer the purpose of all the faculties she lacked. Aided by her mother she has succeeded, and is the wonder of everyone who sees her. Now, in place of being a financial burden, she is the biggest wage-earner of the family, and



MISS FANNIE TUNISON.
From a Photograph.

averages over £200 a year.

Miss Tunison has turned her shortcomings to good account. Deprived of the use of her limbs, she gets along perfectly well with her tongue, and paints, embroiders, and writes a better hand, or rather mouth, than many people who are blessed with the use of their ten digits.

Miss Tunison's work is of no mean order. The pictures that she paints compare favour-

ably with any amateur artist's, and she paints with considerable quickness. So proficient is she at wielding the brush with her tongue that she excels at copying, and she possesses several canvases that would bring credit to any copyist. She is especially good at painting pictures of the Montauk Point Lighthouse, and the little picture, which

takes her less than twenty minutes to paint, she sells to visitors for the price of a dollar.

But it is not only as an artist that Miss Tunison shines. She is expert at fancy work as well, and, wonderful as it may seem, she



MISS TUNISON PAINTING A PICTURE WITH HER TONGUE.
From a Photograph.

built for her. From the arm of the chair rises a metal rod which supports a small wooden table, and it is upon this table that all the work is done.

In spite of her affliction Fannie always has a cheerful word for visitors; it is her greatest pleasure to receive company, and she is never so happy as when she can show off her wonderful

powers. It is during the summer season, when visitors and holiday-seekers swarm down to Sag Harbour, that Fannie is really busy, and the number of orders that pour in keeps her at all times fully occupied.



From a

MISS TUNISON'S COTTAGE AT SAG HARBOUR.

[Photograph.]

is perfectly able to thread her needle and use the scissors. She never requires the assistance of anybody, and all the work she turns out is done strictly by herself.

When Miss Tunison is at work she is seated in a chair which has been specially

In appearance Fannie differs somewhat from the ordinary mortal. Owing to the excessive use of her tongue the muscles of the neck are extremely well developed and stand out thick and prominent. Her eyes, too, have a languid look about them, and

roll, when she speaks, in a peculiar manner. Her speech is thick and heavy, no doubt due to the excessive size of her tongue.

The way that she threads a needle is peculiar. She first holds the needle in her teeth for the purpose of planting it firmly in the wooden table before her. She then takes up the cotton, biting off the length she requires. The next step is to hold the cotton with her lips, which she screws up in a peculiar manner. Then in a trice, before one can say "Jack Robinson," she takes aim at the eye of the needle before her, and ten chances to one the needle is threaded.

She handles the scissors in the same dexterous manner, but the act in which she is really astonishing is the way in which she ties a knot. She places the cotton in her mouth, chews on it seemingly for a little while, appears to swallow it, and then opens her mouth and puts out her tongue. Upon the tongue, if the little operation is successful, is the piece of cotton with two or three knots tied in it.

Miss Tunison was taught entirely by her mother, and it is to her mother's love and care that she attributes her skill. She has had many tempting offers to exhibit herself in museums, but she is perfectly content with the life that she leads, and does not care to make a change. She has lived all her life at Sag Harbour, and has never had a day's sickness. She is a good correspondent, and writes a good "mouth," and has written letters to and received letters from most of the prominent men throughout the Union.

Miss Tunison is in no way deformed; in fact, she is a very good-looking young lady, bright and intelligent, and an excellent conversationalist. She lives with her father and two cousins in a little

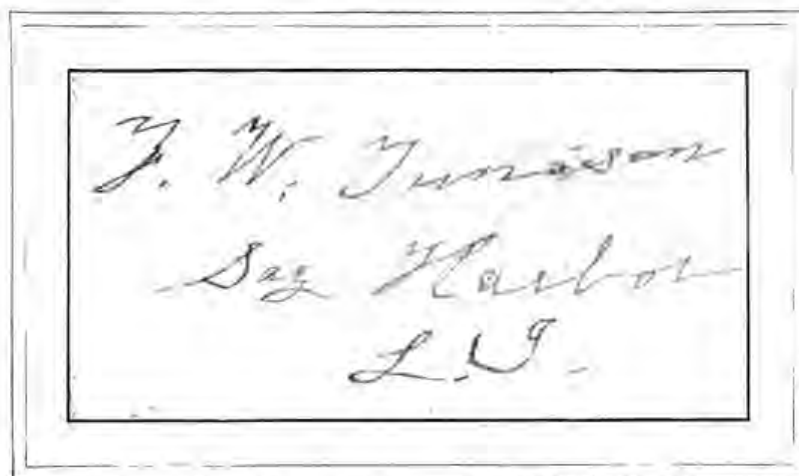
fisherman's cottage, which was built by her grandfather, who was a seafaring man, and also a soldier of the war of 1812. Her constant companion is her pet dog, Lion McKinley, who loves to sit beside her while she is at work and help her pass away the lonely hours.

Every morning Miss Tunison, who is an early riser, is lifted up by her father into her invalid chair, which has a cleverly constructed work-table attached to it. In this chair she remains throughout the day, held in by a strong band, which also supports her body, which is entirely powerless. In the winter her chair is placed by the front window, so that she can see the people passing along the sidewalk, while in summer she is wheeled out of doors and taken around the village, and everybody in the place knows this young and cheerful invalid.

From the time she is lifted into her chair in the morning until she retires at night she is never idle, as she is engaged in painting pretty book-marks, blotters, embroidery, doilies, mats and tidies, making table-covers and linen outline quilts.

She is very fond of reading, and the latest papers and publications are eagerly devoured by her. When reading she turns the leaves of the books over with her tongue, and places two small lead paper-weights on the pages to keep them in place while she reads. She also has a large correspondence, and she can handle a pencil most dexterously with her tongue.

When writing she uses a pad of paper rather than one sheet, and holds the pencil loosely between her teeth, the tongue guiding it lightly over the paper. Her writing, she confesses, is not altogether Spencerian, though it is perfectly legible.



MISS TUNISON'S SIGNATURE, WRITTEN WITH HER TONGUE.