
Laura Bridgman

Howe Maud

Title: Laura Bridgman

Author: Howe Maud

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LAURA BRIDGMAN

*"Would'st know him now? Behold him,
The Cadmus of the Blind.
Giving the dumb lip language,
The idiot clay a mind."*

WHITTIER.



Presented to the
ELLIOTT, MRS. MAUD (Howe) *Somers Lib.*
° LAURA BRIDGMAN

DR. HOWE'S FAMOUS PUPIL

AND

WHAT HE TAUGHT HER

BY

MAUD HOWE

AND

FLORENCE HOWE HALL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DRAWINGS BY


JOHN ELLIOTT

BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

1903

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P R E F A C E

IN the year 1846 Dr. Howe wrote to a friend, "I have in contemplation a work on Laura Bridgman. I had thought of writing to Messrs. Harper about its publication." Again, in his last report of the Perkins Institution, written in 1874, a little more than a year before his death, he says, speaking of Laura Bridgman:—

"I propose to give later a minute account of the instruction of this dear child and the condition into which it has brought her; but I must limit myself here to an expression of the thought and principle which gave me courage to begin and perseverance to finish the work."

This long-cherished purpose was never fulfilled. From the hour when the success of the method devised for Laura's instruction was made manifest, until the day of his death, nearly forty years later, Dr. Howe found no leisure season in which to put on record the most conspicuous achievement of his life. It is characteristic of the man that he never found time to tell the story of his hardest fought battle. Every year brought new causes for his championship, every day its active work for humanity. It is an irreparable loss that the story was never told as he alone could have told it.

On the death of Dr. Howe, his son-in-law and assistant, Mr. Michael Anagnos, succeeded him as director of the Perkins Institution for the Blind. Mr. Anagnos has carried on the work with love and loyalty until this day. Among the many legacies of trust, left by his predecessor, none has seemed to him more precious than that the story of Laura's education should be preserved as it is described in the reports, notes, and correspondence of Dr. Howe, the school journals, and Laura's own writings. At his request and with his assistance, two of Dr. Howe's daughters undertook this work.

If there be any measure of success in what they have attempted, it is due to the courageous spirit which has breathed from the faded ink of the dusty folios, the early letters and records, traced by their father's beloved hand; this spirit has animated them even as his ringing voice once roused them to whatever duty lay before them. If they have succeeded in portraying something of the simple strength of his nature, if they have been able to transfuse into their work the spirit of the man who sighed for obstacles to overcome, they have accomplished more than at the beginning of the work they dared to hope.

Thanks are due Mr. M. A. de Wolf Howe and Mr. I. R. Kent for help in revising the manuscript.

MAUD HOWE.
FLORENCE HOWE HALL.



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