MARTINEAU, Harriet. 1854. “Three Graces of Christian Science”. *Household Words* 9 (217), 20 de mayo: 317-320.

aid and for hard money given to him, he did not spend ten minutes in a picture for him. He sent nothing, and again kept out of his way.

While he was thus wasting his opportunities and powers, Philip Roos on one occasion went to Tivoli, and was met with more than the ordinary clamour from his birds and beasts, who surrounded his house with the urgent, painful cries of creatures that for many hours had not been fed. He ran to his wife's chamber and found her white and still upon her bed, her fatal beauty marred with the few lines that had been left there by a long despair. In her cold right hand there was a piece of paper firmly grasped; it was the last letter written to her by her father; she had died thinking of him, and not of Philip.

The husband was not capable of worthy grief. He plunged into fresh excesses, became prematurely haggard, staggered about the streets enveloped in the odours of the wine shop, and died, at fifty, of decrepitude. The Italians, embarrassed by his German name, called this great painter the Rose of Tivoli. A great painter, but a little man.

After all, perhaps, the immortality of genius, taken alone, is not worth envying. He is both a great man and a happy man who knows how to be as respectable as he is clever; but sever the two qualities, and who would not rather be the honest man of Hackney than such an ever-blooming Rose as that which, by help of the clever little memoir lately compiled from first authorities by M. Alfred Michiels, has been here depicted?

THREE GRACES OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

Has any one of our readers ever seen a mind locked up in a case, the key of which cannot be found? Such is the condition of a human being without senses.

But are there such beings? it may be asked. There has been at least one, of which this dreadful conception is nearly a faithful account. There is a girl in Switzerland born blind and deaf, and almost entirely without the senses of smell and taste, and, originally, even that of touch. Such at least was her state when first examined by the benevolent persons who wished to improve her condition. Her parents, who were poor, concluded she was an idiot; and, while sufficiently attached to her to desire not to expose her to observation, and the trouble of being meddled with, left her to nature, as they said—which in her case, meant everything that was dreadful and disgusting. At nine years old, when the family were at their meal, she stood near, and a piece of bread being put into her hand, she ate it: and when, instead of bread, a piece of iron was given her, she put it into her mouth, tried to chew it, and after a time let it drop out. When left alone, she lay huddled up, with her fists upon her eyes, and the thumbs closing her ears. It was not easy to make her walk, and she clung to the person next her, uttering shrill cries. Her skin was nearly insensible. On looking further into the case, however, the physician was of opinion that sight might possibly be obtained, sooner or later, by operation for cataract. It appeared also that she was not totally deaf. Sharp sounds, close at hand, evidently gave her great pain, but none were heard at the distance of a few feet. Her hearing had originally been somewhat better than this; and she had even shown some disposition to speak, which, however, seemed to be lost in total deafness (practically speaking) at two years old or under. The parents let her go at last to an asylum, though shedding many tears at the parting.

In three months she took walks. By bathing, fresh air, and exercise, her skin had become nearly as sensitive as other people's: so here was one sense obtained, to proceed upon. For a time, this was rather a grief than a satisfaction to everybody; for she was continually hurting herself, even knocking her head against the bedstead in the night, and uttering the most lamentable cries. The strangest thing she did was dealing with her food like a ruminating animal. She bolted it first, and then, in ten minutes stretched her neck forward, brought up what she had swallowed, and chewed it for an hour. It took a month to cure her of this. It was done by watching the moment, and compelling her to throw her head and body back, and open her mouth. Once conquered, the strange propensity never re-appeared. When the circulation and digestion were brought into a healthy state, her sleep became quiet. She left off knocking her head against the bedstead and screaming in the night. The poor child was now brought into a state of bodily ease. Still, however, her nervous condition was such as to make the surgeon decline operating on the eyes. She showed terror when any effort whatever was required of her; and her sounds of satisfaction were made only in connection with eating;—not on account of the taste; for she was insensible to that, but after a meal, when the satisfaction of her hunger was felt. It must have been a happy moment to her guardians when she first laughed. It was in answer to caresses. She soon learned to shake hands, and she hugged the friend who so greeted her, and laughed. But it was still doubtful whether she knew one person from another,—even her own particular nurse from a stranger. It was a whole year before she could be taught to feed herself with a spoon; though before that time her voice had become more human—several notes of the scale having, as it were dropped in between the primary sounds she made when admitted. Her ability to feed herself was accompanied by other improvements, even of the deficient

senses themselves, and especially of hearing. She soon followed a voice calling to her at several feet distance. This was her state seven years ago: and, if such progress as this were made in one year, we may hope that now, at the age of nineteen (if she still live) her case may have passed from being that of a human being without senses, to that of one being born to them very late, and having them in an imperfect condition at last.

The earliest case of supposed extreme deficiency of the senses which was fully and properly recorded was that of which Dugald Stewart was the historian; that of James Mitchell, the son of a Scotch clergyman. The boy was born in seventeen hundred and ninety-five, totally deaf, but far from totally blind. He was fond of the light, though he could not distinguish objects; and his custom was to shut himself up in a dark stable, and stand for hours with his eye close to any hole or chink which let in a ray of sunshine. He bit pieces of glass into a proper shape, and held them between his eye and the sunshine, and got a candle all to himself in a dark corner of a room. Moreover, his senses of smell and taste were uncommonly acute, and he obtained a great amount and variety of knowledge by means of them. The vast conception of communication between people and things at a distance was conveyed to him at once by smell (if not even by such light as he was sensible of), and there is nothing so difficult to convey to those who have not his comparative advantages. He knew his family and friends some way off by his sense of smell; could tell whether they came home with wet feet or dry, and, no doubt, whether they had been gathering sweet herbs in the garden, or dressing the horse in the stable-yard. Yet this boy, who had only one sense absolutely deficient, and was cared for and tended with the utmost assiduity by educated people, and visited by philosophers, remained unspeakably ignorant and undeveloped in comparison with several persons who instead of being totally deficient in only one sense are possessed of only one. He used his small means very actively for amusement; but no one seems to have thought of using them for his education. It was a period when metaphysics were flourishing more than science, and especially in his neighbourhood; and poor James Mitchell accordingly never learned to read or write, or to speak any language at all. He taught those about him a limited language by signs; but they taught him none. When we read the philosopher's account of him, of the guardian sister's language of taps on the head, or hand (which then appeared very clever); and of his utterance being only "uncouth bellowings and boisterous laughter," we think of the three far happier cases of Edward, Laura, and Oliver half a century later, and bless the science that has brought out so much of the statue from its quarry—so much of living mind from its apparently impervious tomb. The night when Edward Meystre's guardian, hearing his uncouth voice, went to his room, and found him with folded hands, saying aloud, "I am thinking of God—I am thinking of God"—his first spontaneous prayer—must have been the sweetest in which ever the lover of his kind laid his head on his pillow.

This case of Meystre is the first of three to which our title applies. Here the total absence of each sense was not from birth. Edward, of whom we are speaking, had a deaf-and-dumb brother, but heard very well himself, as an infant, and began to say "papa" and "mama," when the small-pox deprived him of his hearing, utterly and absolutely, at the age of eleven months. There was fear for his eyes at the same time; but they escaped, and he saw perfectly well till the age of eight—an immense advantage in regard to his future development. It was a cruel accident that deprived him of sight; and we pity the perpetrator of the carelessness perhaps more than the sufferer. A boy of eleven, Edward's cousin, playing with his father's loaded gun, aimed it at the door of the room, and, at the precise moment when Edward was coming in, discharged the piece, lodging the shot in the poor child's face and eyes. The sufferer rent his mother's heart by clinging to her for long afterwards, saying, in his language of signs, that it was always night. He wanted to have his cousin killed; and his mother, strangely enough, pacified him by telling him the boy was dead and buried. He wanted to be certain, and she took him to a new-made grave. He stamped upon it with his feeble little foot; and such was his moral education! Happily he was taken under a wiser care; and the time arrived, and before very long, when he loved and consoled his poor cousin, and was always glad to meet him—while informing other people who visited him that he had had *two* eyes, and now had none, adding, turning pale as he made the signs, that it is very pleasant to be able to see.

At this time, his employment was handling and cutting wood in his father's shop—his father being a carpenter. When his father left business, the lad cut wood for the neighbours. It was sad that the one sense which was now to be relied on should be impaired by his hands being hardened and roughened in this way; and, though he was taken into the excellent Blind Asylum at Lausanne (maintained by one beneficent English gentleman) at the age of eighteen, his fingers never acquired the delicacy of touch of the other pupils. There is no evidence that his senses of smell and taste were turned to particular account in his education; but they were not deficient, and James Mitchell's case seems to show that much might have been done by means of them.

In his education there were some marked stages which it is highly interesting and important to know of. His enterprising and benevolent teacher, M. Hirzel, t ught him words, by means of raised print—beginning, of course, with nouns. He was made to touch a file, and the word file (in French); and the word was given him now in larger and now in smaller letters, that he might find out that it was the shape of the letters, and not the size that was important.

The next word given was *saw*, and a saw—a thing he was familiar with—was put into his hand. Then came the discovery—during the fourth lesson. His face lighted up. He had found it out! He showed everybody that the one word meant a saw, and the other a file; and it was some days before he recovered his composure. He now went to his lessons with pleasure, and began to want to know the printed names of things, and to like to pick out from the case the letters composing those he knew. It was a joke of his to put together the letters at random, and ask what they meant. Such were his early lessons. His favourite amusement was at the turning-lathe, where he became so expert that he quizzed the new pupils (all blind) for any irregularity in their work: plaiting straw, or whatever it might be.

The indefatigable teacher actually thought he would try to teach him to speak. To speak! A person totally deaf and blind! How could it be set about? It was accomplished, with infinite trouble, in which the teacher was sustained by the hope of success, and the pupil by the only inducement found strong enough—the promise of cigars—a luxury which, we trust, no one will think of grudging to a creature so bereaved. By feeling the teacher's breath, his chest, his throat, his lips, and by having his own mouth put into the proper form for the vowels, by prisms and rings of different sizes, the art of articulation was learned; and it brought on the next great event in Edward's experience. Being taught the easy name (Arni) of one of the blind pupils, he found that that boy always came to him when he called the name. He found that he could communicate with people at a distance by means of speech, and now knew what speech was for. No doubt Arni was wanted very often indeed, till more names were learned; and probably Arni was glad when the others had their turn to be called. This happened soon, for Edward now spoke a good deal, uttering aloud, of his own accord, the words he learned to read. He went on pretty easily through "The mason makes the wall," "The baker makes the bread," and so forth, and to know that the word wall may mean walls in general; and it was not very difficult to teach him "To-day," "Yesterday," and "To-morrow." By that time, the third great event was at hand. The weather, from being very cold, had become mild, and Edward's tutor took him out to feel the buds, leaves, and blossoms of plants, and made him observe the warmth of the sunshine, and that there was no snow, and gave him the name "Spring," and then taught him, "Leaves come out in spring." He caught a glimpse of the use of the abstract term, and in great agitation turned the phrase to "In spring, leaves come out." He looked brighter than ever when he said with his fingers that "One word means many things," and he actually capered with joy. It was curious to watch his apprehension of another abstraction. He told a falsehood once,—said he had had no wine, when the housekeeper had given him a glass, pleading that she ought to have been questioned and blamed, as she gave him the wine. Great pains were taken to impress him with the meaning and consciousness of the lie; but it was uncertain with what effect. A few days after, the pupils told him at bed time that there was snow. In the morning, he went out to ascertain for himself, being fond of verifying statements. The snow was melted; whereupon he cried out very loud, "Lie! no snow." Thus it was clear enough that he knew his fault, and the name of it.

The fourth great event was the clear formation of the religious ideas that were presented to him; and this kind of teaching began as soon as the affair of the lie showed him to be capable of moral training. It is probable that his recollections of light and all the beauties that it reveals determined his first superstition. While strongly disposed to fetishism in general—venerating the wind, for instance, because it was not tired after blowing strongly for several days,—his particular disposition was to worship the sun. The first religious sentiment that he expressed was that it does not do to shake one's fist at the sun. He was deeply impressed, when told by his companions, that the Maker of the sun was like a man, only so wise and powerful as men cannot imagine. As a necessary consequence of this way of teaching him, he was uneasy about what might become of everything when God was asleep. To remedy this, his teacher took him quietly round the house when the inmates were asleep, and made him softly touch their heads, and told him (by the finger speech) that they were now as if they were dead, being unable to think: whereas, God was always thinking. He now, of course, took up the idea that the dead could dream; but he became deeply impressed with the dignity of being able to think. When he wanted to play with the pupils whom he found at prayers, and then to know why they joined their hands, he was told that they prayed, and that praying was thinking of God. It was after this that his teacher heard that strange and heart-moving sound from the dark bed-side,—the loud uncouth voice saying over and over, "I am thinking of God!" One consequence of his new notion of the dignity of thought was his

feeling about the deaths of persons of different ages. He felt the corpse of a child of two years old, and asked a woman in the room if she cried for its death; but, without waiting for an answer, he added that that was not possible, for the child was too young to be able to think much, or therefore to be worth crying for.

These results are surely wonderful for a period of eighteen months. This desolate creature could, in that time, speak, read, think, and inquire; he was a subject of moral discipline, and was capable of an energetic industry. His work at the turning-lathe was excellent, and he had employments enough to fill up his time innocently and cheerfully. A cheering thought and image to all who had heard of him, what must he have been to his guardian, the patient M. Hirzel! His family were proud of him, even to the deaf and dumb brother, and he lost none of his attachment to them.*

Even greater progress has been made in the development of the American girl, Laura Bridgman, whose case is happily so well known as not to need to be here detailed at length. In her case, too, the sense of touch was the only resource at first; and in her case, too, there was the advantage (how great we cannot know) of her having enjoyed sight and hearing till she was two years old. At the age of eight, Dr. Howe, who was to her what M. Hirzel was to Edward Meystre, took her under his charge in the Blind Asylum, at Boston, Massachusetts, and taught her as much as Edward was taught, except that actual speech was not attempted. Poor child! When informed that the sounds she made were too loud and frequent, she asked, "Why, then, has God given me so much voice?" The pathetic, unconscious hint was taken, and she was then permitted for a certain time every day to exercise her lungs freely,—making as much noise as she pleased, in a room where she could disturb nobody. When alone and watched without her knowing it, she soliloquises in the finger speech; and, what appears still more strange, she uses it in her dreams. The governess who visits her bedside, can tell, by watching the motions of the hand, what she is dreaming about. She writes freely now, and her mind communicates very largely with others. Her diary, which she writes in a clear free hand, without the guidance of lines, tells how her days pass,—among books and work,—books in raised print, and neat sewing or knitting of her own, and lessons in geography, history, and algebra, among other things; and about her walks, her visitors, the letters she receives and writes, and the news from all parts of the world that her friends report to her. She is regular in all her doings, neat in her dress, always busy in one way or another, exceedingly inquiring and intelligent, and remarkably merry. Her turn has come—even hers—for benefiting a fellow-being. Oliver, a boy in her own plight was brought to the institution as she had been, and she assists materially in his education, and must be an inestimable companion to him.

There was once seen, we believe in France, an awful and heart-breaking spectacle, when, for purposes of philosophical observation, the inmates of a blind school and a deaf and dumb asylum were brought together. At first, they tried to communicate—the deaf and dumb being permitted to feel the lips and throats of the blind; but a dreadful scene ensued. Their strong and scarcely disciplined passions became furiously excited by the difficulty of communication, which each supposed to be the fault of the other, and they sprang at each other's throats like wild beasts, and fought so desperately that there was great difficulty in parting them. The two classes spoke of each other afterwards with bitter hatred. How different is now the scene, when the merely blind pupils help and serve Laura and Edward, and are beloved by them; and when Laura, with flushed cheeks and trembling fingers, labours to convey some of her knowledge and her intellectual pleasures to Oliver, and succeeds, and he is happy in consequence! How are times changed since the helpless were cast out to perish!

* This youth is an old acquaintance of mine, and I presented him with the cigars he smoked—he has a great delight in smoking—for some months, when I lived at Lausanne. For a long time after I left that place, he always associated my name with a cigar. Being there, last October, after an absence of five or six years, I went to see my old friend. M. Hirzel could not then, by any means, induce him to associate me in the right manner with a cigar, though Edward was painfully anxious to understand. I left some money for him, to be expended in the old way; and I believe he has gradually smoked me back into his remembrance. "C. D."

A TRUE KNIGHT.

Though he lived and died among us
Yet his name may be enrolled
With the knights whose deeds of daring
Ancient chronicles have told.

Still a stripling, he encountered
Poverty, and struggled long,
Gathering force from every effort,
Till he knew his arm was strong.

Then his heart and life he offered
To his radiant mistress, Truth;
Never thought, or dream, or faltering,
Marred the promise of his youth.

And he rode forth to defend her,
And her peerless worth proclaim;
Challenging each recreant doubter
Who aspersed her spotless name.

First upon his path stood Ignorance,
Hideous in his brutal might,
Hard the blows and long the battle
Ere the monster took to flight.