

# The Most Remarkable Child in the World—

Little Patricia Overcame Greater Handicaps Than Helen Keller, But There Are No Mother's Arms in Which To Cuddle as a Reward



Miss Inis B. Hall, Shown Above, Taught the Blind-Deaf-Mute Patricia Homans to Distinguish Between Objects by Placing Spoons, Balls, Blocks, Etc., in the Child's Hands One at a Time as Many as 60 Times a Day While Repeating Their Names; and Now Patricia Knows the Difference Between This Cat, Below, and Other Animals.



Miss Hall Taught Patricia to Speak and Hear by Placing Her Tongue in the Position to Make the Fundamental Sounds, "oo," "ar" and "ee," and Then Repeating Words Over and Over, While the Child's Sensitive Fingers Distinguished Their Sound Through the Vibrations of Miss Hall's Voice. No Sign Language or Spelling in the Palms of Her Hands Was Used, as in the Case of Helen Keller.



Above, a Camera Study, Made for This Magazine, of Patricia Homans, 7-Year-Old Kentucky "Miracle Child," Who Overcame Greater Handicaps Than the World Famous Helen Keller; and, Below, Blind Children Enjoying the Gymnasium at Perkins Institution, Where Patricia Is a Student. The Sightless Youths Play Football, Baseball and Basketball, Using Balls with Bells Inside, and They Participate in Almost All of the Track Sports.



SCIENCE, in its miraculous experiment over 7-year-old Patricia Homans, who presents a more difficult case than Helen Keller and is even more amazing than the Dionne quintuplets, so far has claimed her through its mercy for life.

But now these questions rise in the midst of the combined struggle of scientific experiment and human kindness at Perkins Institution for the Blind,

which is located at Watertown, Mass.:

Who, other than a state and an institution, cares for this astounding miracle of humanity? Is there to be no bond of blood, no love, no reward for her tremendous achievement, no sentimental attachment in store for the most remarkable child of today?

Patricia, born in Louisville, Ky., of a 16-year-old mother from a poor family and a 17-year-old Princeton student father, was turned over to an institution as a blanketed baby. There was no other place for the infant. Her parents were divorced immediately after her birth. Her grandparents did not accept any responsibility whatever.

It was soon discovered that while Patricia's body was well formed, her skin fair, her hair golden and curly, she could not see, hear or make a vocal sound. The blind-deaf-mute even lacked sense of taste! (Helen Keller was not afflicted until she was three.)

As little Patricia grew as an ordinary child would grow, she was recognized by the medical and scientific world as the only person ever to survive this quadruple handi-

cap so long in an apparently lucid state. Now, as a result of the scientific magic of Perkins Institution to which she was taken two years ago, she knows 13 commands, can feed and dress herself, can climb and descend stairs. She can harmonize on elementary musical instruments. She has a sense of protection, where once she was insensitive enough to go about colliding with objects. She has acquired the first three elements in speech. She distinguishes scores of objects and can let her wants be known.

Perkins Institution began to reclaim nature's human mistakes over 100 years ago. It was there in the eighties that Laura Bridgman was taught to "see" and hear by Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe (husband of Julia Ward Howe of "Battle Hymn of the Republic"

fame) and where later Helen Keller, through the sign language, palm alphabet and Braille methods developed by Dr. Howe with Laura, grasped a soul from the dark silence.

Dr. Gabriel Farrell, present Perkins' director, over great opposition from other authorities and against the caution of Helen Keller, believed that a new system of reaching into the dark, expressionless corridors of the mind could be successful and quicker than the laborious methods used with Laura and Helen. Hearing, he decided, could be accomplished through bone conduction; voice, words, could be given through tongue placement.

Patricia was taught to "hear" through the bones of her head; to make sounds by having her tongue placed and by being taught to feel mo-

tions of other lips; to "see" by an intensity of touch and developed sensitivity to vibration.

"The experiments were at first a matter of hope—but now, with the progress of Patricia, they are a matter of fact," he says.

"During this past season when little Patricia was ill and we had to give her four lumbar punctures and saw her lie unconscious for long intervals, we wondered if, after all, our experiments in treating and teaching, in forcing a mind, would last through her illness.

"But we found that in her recovery she retained all the commands. Even in her weakened physical condition she could walk; she remembered her lessons in balance and through bone conduction she heard, therefore responded to footsteps of her companions.

"While she presents the most extraordinary case on the records of the American Foundation for the Blind, Patricia also has been the means of proving the greatest experiments known to the medical and scientific world.

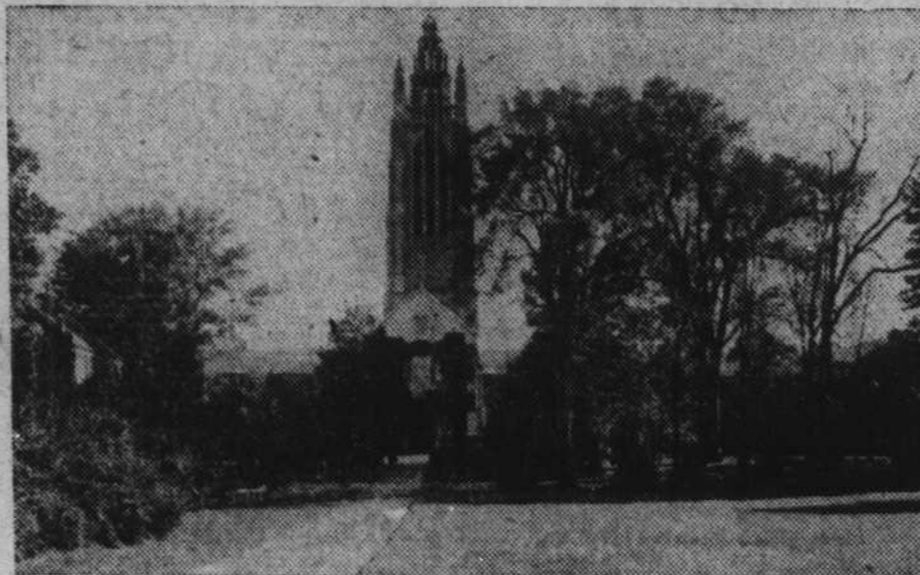
"But our greatest concern now about Patricia

is that no member of her family has shown interest in her progress, and no sentiment has been promised for her future.

"We believe both her parents are living and should be proud of this child. We have communicated with her grandfather. But whether the child lives or dies apparently raises no response in the hearts of those who are bonded to her through blood."



S. G. Howe, "Miracle Man" in Education of Blind-Deaf-Mutes.



Perkins Institution for the Blind, at Watertown, Mass., Where the Great Scientific Experiments of...



... Rev. Gabriel Farrell, Above, Are Having Amazing Results.