

HELEN KELLER A COLLEGE GIRL

RADCLIFFE GIVES ITS DEGREE TO A STUDENT WHO HAS PASSED ALL EXAMINATIONS WITHOUT SIGHT OR HEARING—DEAN BRIDGE, OF HARVARD MADE PRESIDENT OF THE WOMAN'S COLLEGE.

Cambridge, Mass., June 25.—Undoubtedly the most remarkable girl graduate of the season is Miss Helen Keller, who will receive her bachelor's degree from Radcliffe College next Tuesday. That she has passed the full four years' course with honors, in spite of being deaf, dumb and blind, and that she has done her work under precisely the same conditions as her more normal classmates who become bachelors of arts at the same time, is proof of the extraordinary development in the so-called higher education of women during the past quarter century.

Radcliffe, which now becomes Miss Keller's alma mater, is the college for women affiliated to Harvard University and is the legal successor of the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women, known to fame as the Harvard "Annex," which was organized in 1879. Its purpose is to afford the college girls the same systematic instruction by the same professors and teachers as their brothers and cousins find at Harvard. The relationship between the woman's college and the great university is peculiar. The requirements for admission to Radcliffe are the same as those for admission to Harvard; its courses are identical with courses in the larger institution; the same examination papers are used when it is possible, and papers of the same standard always, the same teaching force is employed, and in some of the advanced work men and women meet in the same classes. Yet the relationship is in no sense co-educational and, although the Radcliffe degree represents exactly what a Harvard degree stands for and is countersigned by President Eliot, the governing boards of the college and the University are distinct. In other words the university guarantees the standard of instruction to be its own, while the college alone is responsible for all matters of discipline and finance.

In the last year, however, the connection between the two institutions has been made closer, and at the commencement exercises next Tuesday the girls will receive their degrees for the first time from an officer of the men's college—Dean LaBaron H. Briggs, of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, who was chosen active president of Radcliffe this year to fill the vacancy left by the retirement as honorary president of Mrs. Louis Agassiz, whose husband was the famous naturalist.

The manner in which Miss Keller has met the requirements of the highest educational standard in this country is particularly interesting. Born in Alabama 14 years ago, she had perfectly developed faculties until when she was about 3 years old an illness deprived her of sight, speech and hearing. The training which has made possible her quite unusual scholarship began when Miss Sullivan of the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston went South to undertake the education of the child who was then seven years old. Five years later Miss Keller came to Massachusetts, where she has lived ever since with Miss Sullivan as a constant companion. Although she learned to speak, to hear by touch and to see through the eyes of those about her under her teacher's guidance she was put in the hands of a special tutor in preparing to enter college, and all the while she has been a student at Radcliffe she has depended upon her own wonderful memory and her keen understanding to a much greater extent than the average college girl has to do. Miss Sullivan has been her ears, so to speak, sitting beside her in the class room and lecture hall and repeating to her verbatim, hour after hour, by the touch of her fingers on

her pupils' hand every word that was said. It was impossible, of course, for either of them to take notes and it has often been difficult for the student to follow the discussions which came up in question-and-answer form, while recitations have been quite out of the question for Miss Keller in the conditions of class-room work, that part of her work being done in conference with her instructors during a few moments at the end of class hour.

Latin and English literature, history and economics have been Miss Keller's leading subjects since she completed the required work of the freshmen year. Most of her text books were to be had in "braille," the raised type system most commonly used for blind readers in this part of the country. But a good deal of the collateral reading which forms such an important part of modern collegiate instruction was not available in this shape. It was too lengthy to be specially written out, and Miss Sullivan has had little time to synopsize such supplementary work. Nevertheless, Miss Keller has shown quite uncommon facility in writing her examination papers.

Although her instructors have naturally taken a special kind of interest in their blind pupil, the Radcliffe authorities have made sure that her work would be judged by precisely the same standard as that of other girls. The regular examination papers for the whole class have been reproduced for her benefit in "braille" on the morning of the test by Miss Spooner, formerly of the Perkins Institution, who was selected for the work by the college authorities, and Miss Keller has written her answers just as any other student would, using her own special typewriter.

Although the tremendous difficulties of her college work have kept her busy, Miss Keller has found time to enter largely into the social life of Radcliffe, which has many of the pleasant characteristics of university life as distinguished from that of the usual girls' college. She has been frequently seen at the gathering of the Idler, the students' club to which practically all Radcliffe girls belong, and that she is one of the popular girls of her class is shown by her election as "Lawyer" for the class day exercises this week, after having served as vice-president of her class in its freshman and senior years.

Among Miss Keller's classmates a large proportion come from nearby Cambridge, for the college has developed itself to university standards quietly and has assumed its present important position unobtrusively. Nevertheless thirty-two States and two foreign countries—China and Prussia—are represented among the Radcliffe girls this year.

Entrance examinations for Radcliffe are now held wherever examinations for Harvard University are given, all over the world. Last year there were candidates, for example, at Bonn, Germany, and Osaka, Japan, but many of the applicants heretofore have taken advantage of the provision by which Radcliffe issues certificates, countersigned by the President of Harvard, of the successful accomplishment of the requirements for entering, and a considerable number of those examined have not become active students afterwards. The expansion has been such, however, that the need for increased facilities has begun to press hard, and efforts looking to the construction of additional dormitories, of a new library building and of lecture and laboratory halls, in addition to the creation of a satisfactory endowment fund are being energetically pushed.