

## CHAPTER X.

Boston.—Blind Asylum and Laura Bridgeman.—Respect for Freedom of Conscience.—Cemetery of Mount Auburn.—Channing's Cenotaph.—Episcopal Churches.—Unitarian Congregations.—Eminent Preachers.—Progress of Unitarians why slow.—Their Works reprinted in England.—Nothingarians.—Episcopalian Asceticism.—Separation of Religion and Politics.

DURING our stay at Boston we visited the Perkins' Institution, or Asylum for the Blind, and found Laura Bridgman, the girl who has been blind, deaf and dumb from infancy, much grown since we saw her four years ago. She is now sixteen, and looks very intelligent. She was reading when we entered, and we were told that formerly, when so engaged and alone, she used to make with one hand the signs of all the words which she felt out with the other, just as an illiterate beginner speaks aloud each sentence as he spells it. But the process of conveying the meaning of the words to her mind is now far too rapid for such delay, and the hand not occupied in reading remains motionless. We were afterward delighted to watch her while she was following the conversation of two other dumb children who were using the modern single-hand alphabet. She was able to comprehend all the ideas they were exchanging, and to overhear, as it were, every word they said, by making her fingers play, with fairy lightness, over theirs, with so slight a touch, as not in the least degree to interfere with the freedom of their motions. We saw her afterward talk with Dr. Howe, with great rapidity and animation, pointing out accurately the places on a map while he gave a lesson in geography. She indulged her curiosity in examining my wife's dress, and, taking her hand, told her which was her wedding ring, and then began to teach her the deaf and dumb alphabet. She is always aware whether it is a lady's hand she touches, and is shy toward a stranger of the other sex. As she is now in communication with no less than a hundred acquaintances, she has grown much more like other children than formerly.