

The Story of My Life

2016

Long Answer Type Questions [10 Marks]

Question 1.

The arrival of Anne Sullivan coincided with the coming of spring. What symbolic significance does it hold?

Answer:

Mr. William Edicott lived in a beautiful home at Beverly Farms with his daughter. He was a dignified and kind-hearted person. Mr. Edicott and his daughter were the friends Helen made in Boston. She enjoyed a visit to his house. His kindness to Helen was the seed from which 'many pleasant memories have since grown'. He showed her the beautiful rose-garden, their dogs, particularly the swiftest horse Nimrod. She was taken to the beach, where for the first time she played in the sand. Mr. Edicott also told her about the great ships that came sailing by from Boston, bound for Europe. After that, Helen saw him many times, and he was always a good friend to her. So great was Mr. Edicott that his kindness to Helen inspired her to name Boston, 'The City of Kind Hearts'. Hence, William Edicott's inspiration helped Helen know the historical sites in Boston. Thus, Mr. Edicott, as a good friend of hers, opens up a new horizon and a new chapter in her life.

Question 2.

Write a detailed character sketch of Mr. William Edicott as friend.

Answer:

The arrival of Anne Sullivan, the very next morning, brought a turning point in Helen's life. It was an eventful day when she stood on the porch, dumb, expectant. She guessed vaguely from her mother's signs and from the hurrying to and fro in the house that something unusual was about to happen. So she went to the door and waited on the steps. The arrival of Anne Sullivan coincided with the coming of spring. Her arrival has a symbolic significance. The image of Sullivan's arrival is being used to represent the arrival of spring, in order to reveal her importance in Helen's life. With the arrival of Sullivan, little Helen's fingers lingered almost unconsciously on the familiar leaves and blossoms which had just come forth to greet the sweet southern spring. What happens with the arrival spring? New foliage springs up, there is a wonderful thrill in the nature. So, Sullivan is the 'Morning Cuckoo' of the spring, and her arrival sounds much like the melodious song of the cuckoo. The tender leaves grow up and flowers blossom in spring, which is symbolic of Sullivan's arrival. Hence, the arrival of Anne Sullivan which coincides with the advent of Spring, is metaphorically cited in the story.

Question 3.

How did Helen Keller's book prove to be so inspiring to others?

Answer:

Helen Keller's book 'The Story of My Life' is a remarkable and inspiring autobiography that has touched millions of lives around the world. Her story fills up with a deep sense of respect for the women who lived through amazing experiences. In fact, Helen Keller left indelible footprints on the sands of time. So we learn different lessons from her inspirational book, 'The Story of My Life'. The book is a testimony to Keller's desire to help others like her. Her autobiography also makes it clear that neither she nor others like her could be ignored or overlooked. This book sends out a positive message of hope to thousands of people who are trapped in the darkness of their lives. Initially, life had been very unkind to her but her 'never say die' attitude helped Helen when she faced the biggest challenge of her life. Though physically challenged she refused to be defeated in life by virtue of her patience, tremendous perseverance and iron determination.

Helen's life is also a testimony to courage. She dared to nurture dreams and fulfil them. And in doing so, she lived a full and rich life, and became an inspiration to people of the world over.

Question 4.

How did Anne Sullivan succeed in transforming the life of Helen Keller?

Answer:

Anne Sullivan had a great role in transforming the life of Helen Keller. Helen was deaf, blind and almost dumb, trapped in her silent and dark world, prone to violence and anger. Sullivan came to Helen prepared to love and teach the girl. Her angelic touch, meticulous planning, her commitment and sympathy worked wonders for Helen. Miss Sullivan had a great psychological insight into Helen's mind. Even when the child locked her up or smashed her doll in a fit of anger, she handled the situation very calmly. It was Sullivan's untiring attempts that helped Helen understand that there was a word for everything in the world. Having kindled in Helen the joy of learning, Miss Sullivan set about expanding Helen's world. Her instructional and innovative ideas made even learning playful. Her unorthodox and creative teaching methodology helped Helen tremendously, helping her see the world as a seamless learning opportunity, where every leaf hid a lesson and every river told a story. Anne Sullivan has truly been called, "The Miracle Worker". She really succeeded in transforming the life of Helen Keller.

Question 5.

Helen's contact with Dr. Bell raised her perception and understanding of the world. Comment

Answer:

Dr Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, was a close friend of the Keller family. He took a keen interest in the welfare of the blind. Helen and her father had been directed to him for information about schools and teachers for the blind. Helen felt the tenderness and sympathy that Dr Bell's personality exuded, sitting on his knees and trying to converse with her through signs, which he had understood fully. Dr Bell recommended the Parson's Institute for the Blind for Helen's education and was instrumental in procuring Miss Sullivan. Thus, Helen compares this act of Dr Bell to that of the Jews as they left Egypt and stood before Mount Sinai, where Moses had received the Ten Commandments. Dr Bell also accompanied Helen to the World Fair in 1893, and apprised her of the many experiments on



view therein. Helen examined telephones, and other inventions in his company. This experience increased Helen's vocabulary and also her aware of the world. Dr Bell, therefore, was responsible for Helen taking the great leap from a child's world of fairy stories to that of industrial and technical advancement. Dr Bell was also a very humorous person and being in his company continued to be a source of pleasure for Helen.

Question 6.

Helen's teacher took her across the tough road of her life. What role did she play in her success?

Answer:

Miss Sullivan was an ideal teacher for Helen. She was endowed with knowledge and the knowhow of handling a child like Helen. A person of exemplary character and sympathy, she was Helen's constant support right through school and college. Miss Sullivan's expertise came to the fore when she began teaching Helen abstract concepts, like 'think'. Miss Sullivan spelt 'think' on her forehead and the idea clicked. Later, words like 'love' were clarified through the sense of feel and touch. Miss Sullivan taught concepts in geography in the countryside by making models of flowing rivers, etc. Her capacity for developing the sense of feel in Helen made her competent to experience the joys of seeing and hearing. This was evident during their various trips such as the visit to Niagara and the World Fair. Miss Sullivan was a great psychologist and could assess Helen's psyche. She was able to inspire her ward to try out daring things such as boating on her own or other such adventures. Miss Sullivan was able to imprint some of her good values into her ward and thus established an ideal relationship with her pupil.

Question 7.

There were many reasons for Helen Keller's embittered childhood. What were they and how were they overcome?

Answer:

Helen lost her sight and hearing after a brief illness as a child. Thus, she felt frustrated at her inability to express herself. This led her to spend hours feeling fretful and bewildered as she yearned for her lost sight once again. Helen's only ray of hope was the tenderness that her mother showered on her. Being naughty by nature she often indulged in pranks like locking up her mother in the pantry while she kept laughing in glee. She even locked Miss Sullivan in her room and hid the key. The arrival of a new baby sister, tormented Helen further as she sat in her mother's lap, a place hitherto occupied by Helen alone. She held Mildred responsible for this change and was angered and agitated. With her psychological needs dented with this new arrival, Helen grew more rebellious and it was only later that Mildred and Helen came close. The desire to express herself grew stronger every day and as Helen found her faculties proving more and more inadequate, she generally broke down into tears, huddled up to her mother, too miserable to remember what the initial cause for the outburst was. With the passage of time, these fits of temper and frustration became a daily routine with Helen.

Question 8.

Helen's struggle has become a source of inspiration for all less fortunate. Comment

Answer:

Helen's autobiography is an inspirational account as it manages to convey to readers the struggles that Helen endured. Being blind and deaf, she had to struggle to break through the barriers that imprisoned her. The book shows that if one is determined to work one's way around difficulties there are innovative solutions at hand to overcome them. Helen Keller has become a role model for the entire globe not by just overcoming her personal disabilities but by her ability to take up challenges despite the pain and suffering it involved. She makes us



value human companionship. For once Helen learnt to speak there was no looking back for her. The companionship and guidance she received from Miss Sullivan and others helped her move ahead. Helen makes readers to revere nature and realize that the greatest educator for human beings is nature. Thus, Helen's life teaches readers to draw the lessons of life from the company of helpful individuals.

Question 9.

What did Helen's visit to Niagara make her feel? What enabled her to understand the glory of nature?

Answer:

Helen describes her visit to Niagara in March 1893, as one of the chief events of that year. As she felt the air vibrate and the earth tremble, she was impressed with the beauties of Niagara to such an extent that it came to the notice of people at the spot, who had enquired as to how Helen could define beauty, judging from the fact that she could neither see the waves rolling up the beach, nor hear their roar. Helen summed up that these external stimuli, meant 'everything.' She clarified that though she could not define their meaning in concrete terms, her inability to do so could be likened to one's inability to define such abstractions as love, or religion, or goodness. Helen's ability to understand the glory of nature was a capacity she had learnt from her teacher, Miss Sullivan, who had taught her to find beauty in every object in nature. This lesson was acquired much before she had begun formal learning. Her mentor had ingrained nature in her thoughts so intimately that Helen could see beauty in a blade of grass. Mr Sullivan had instilled in her charge the special ability to feel things which others just saw or heard of, making the birds and flowers her 'happy peers'.

Question 10.

The charges of plagiarism had shaken Helen's confidence and demoralized her. How did she regain her confidence in life?

Answer:

The psychological setback that Helen suffered in the 'Frost King' episode made her hesitant even to write to her mother for fear of being accused of plagiarism. Though she had enjoyed playing with words earlier, she felt tortured at the thought of writing. But with time, the fear lessened. The greatest balm for her troubled state came from the encouragement that Miss Sullivan held out for her. With the hope of restoring Helen's self-confidence, Miss Sullivan persuaded her to write a brief account of her life for the 'Youth's Companion'. On looking back, Helen acknowledged that the effort was stoked by a prophetic vision that some good could come out of the undertaking. On being egged on by Miss Sullivan, Helen began writing. She became more introverted and was able to be more perceptive, seeing things that were earlier invisible to her sensibilities. She also emerged from the shadow of guilt, with a mind endowed with a truer knowledge of life.

2015

Long Answer Type Questions [10 Marks]

Question 11.

Who was Mr Anagnos? How did he bring light into the dark life of Helen?

Answer:

Anagnos is one of the main characters in the novel 'The Story Of My Life'. He was the director of the Perkins Institution. He played a very important role in the life of Helen Keller. Dr Bell advised Mr Keller to contact him for Helen. He was very kind and full of compassion for Helen. It was Mr Anagnos who sent Anne Sullivan to the Kellers' home. He and Keller became friends. Helen found him the most affectionate person in her life. He had her sit on his knee when she visited the Institution. An incident ruined their friendship forever. When



Keller wrote "The Frost King", she sent it to him on his birthday. Mr. Anagnos was happy to see it. But soon he was convinced beyond doubt that it was not an original work. He thought that Helen had intentionally plagiarized it. Their friendship was forever ruined.

Question 12.

Describe Miss Sarah Fuller, Principal of the Horace Mann School, as a result-oriented language teacher.

Answer:

In 1890, it was reported that a deaf and blind girl from Norway had been taught to speak.

This incident fired Helen's desire to speak and in fulfillment of her desire she was sent to Miss Sarah Fuller, Principal of the Horace Mann School, for advice and assistance.

Miss Fuller offered to teach Helen to speak, and on 26th March, 1890, Helen began her lessons under Miss Fuller.

Being a result-oriented teacher, she passed Helen's hand lightly over her face and let her feel the position of the tongue and lips each time she made a sound. This made Helen eager to imitate every motion and in an hour Helen had learnt six elements of speech, namely M, P, A, S, T, I.

In this manner, Helen was given eleven lessons and it filled her with delight when she uttered a complete sentence: 'It is warm.'

Miss Fuller did not teach her mechanically and thus awakened in Helen a consciousness of a release of new strength, a coming out of bondage and reaching out to knowledge and all faith.

Miss Sarah Fuller was thus a sweet-natured person, who did not leave the responsibility to someone else, but took it up herself, as she did, in the case of Helen.

Question 13.

Do you feel Anne suffered from low self-esteem? Give a reasoned answer.

Answer:

Anne Sullivan did not suffer from low self-esteem. Several instances in the autobiography contradict the above viewpoint.

- From the beginning Miss Sullivan used innovative techniques to make the process of educating Helen varied, absorbing and engaging for her pupil.
- Unlike a person of low self-esteem, Miss Sullivan did not recede behind the confines of a classroom and limit herself to bookish isolation. She encouraged Helen to explore nature through personal touch and experience. Such an attitude towards learning can only be conveyed through a confident personality who realizes the kinship between individuals and their surroundings.
- Unlike a person with low self-esteem who is mired in his or her own sorrows, Miss Sullivan's influence on her ward was inspirational. She managed to carry education beyond classroom confines by pointing out to her the mass of possibilities lying dormant and awaiting its discovery by Helen.
- Besides lessons, Miss Sullivan joined in the family's social activities such as preparations for Christmas. She even accompanied Helen on her trip to Boston and Cape Cod and other places, where she enjoyed these excursions as much as Helen did.
- At Radcliffe, it was Miss Sullivan who made sense of the lectures by writing short notes on Helen's palms. Thus she managed to turn round limitations that confronted people's lives into privileges by her personal solutions, a trait not known to exist among those with low self-esteem.



Question 14.

'Tough people outlast tough situations.' Describe the fighter instinct in Helen.

Answer:

Helen Keller does not give much information about Mr Irons. But he played a big role in her life. He was a friend of a family. Miss Anne Sullivan and Keller visited him. Irons was a Latin scholar. He taught Keller as a student. Keller describes him as 'a man of rare, sweet nature and of wide experience'. He taught Keller about literature. It was Mr Irons who taught Helen 'to know an author, to recognize his style as I recognize the clasp of a friend's hand.'

Question 15.

What was the incident of the Frost King? How did it affect Helen?

Answer:

The 'Frost King' incident in Helen's life seemed to darken her childhood's bright sky. A little story called "The Frost King" that Helen wrote and sent to Mr. Anagnos was the root of the trouble. In fact, "The Frost King" was similar to the story "The Frost Fairies" written by Margaret T. Canby. Helen read Miss Canby's story, but she forgot about it. She had the habit of absorbing ideas from others so she had unknowingly used the thought and language of other writers in her story. It appeared that the two stories were quite similar in thought and language. This made Helen's story deliberately copied from others. However, her story impressed everyone. She dispatched it to Mr Anagnos, who got it published in the Perkins institution reports. Initially, Anagnos seemed to believe her but later he felt deceived and suspected both Miss Sullivan and Helen cheated him. Helen was brought before a court of investigation and questioned and counter-questioned. This incident made her extremely humiliated. She felt so much grieved thinking that she had brought suspicion to the minds of her friends like Mr Anagnos. That night she wept bitterly. She was so much disturbed that she lost her self-confidence. Even her teacher Sullivan's loving words could not console her.

Question 16.

Write a character sketch of Bishop Brooks as he appears in Helen Keller's – The Story of My Life.

Answer:

Bishop Brooks was a man of genius. He had loved Helen like a father since her childhood. He gave her a real sense of joy in life and Helen learned a fine thought, in every meeting she had with him. As a child, she loved to sit on his knee and clasp his hand with one of hers. He taught Helen that there was only one universal religion, the religion of love. He imparted a very fine message to Helen, "Love your Heavenly father with your whole heart and soul, love every child of God as much as ever you can and remember that the possibilities of evil, and you have the key to Heaven." Bishop Brook had a noble soul and he led a very pure life, seeing God in everything. He emphasized that there was no creed, the only worship is to nurture two ideas—The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. If one believed in these, then all the dark clouds withered away. He believed that these are the universal truths. However, Helen could not forget Bishop Brooks' teachings and remained grateful for such great thought.

Question 17.

What were Helen's memories of Radcliffe?

Answer:

Helen appeared for her preliminary examination for Radcliffe from 29th June to 3rd July 1897. The subjects she had offered were Elementary and Advanced German, French, Latin, English, Greek and Roman history, making it nine hours in all. The examination papers were given out at 9 O'clock at Harvard and brought to Radcliffe by a special messenger. Each candidate was known by an allotted number. Helen was given a separate room so that the noise of the typewriter might not disturb others. On the first day of the examination, Mr.

Gilman read out the paper sentence by sentence and made Helen repeat the words. He read out by means of the manual alphabet. The papers were difficult and Helen typed the answers on the typewriter. Mr. Gilman read out the answers and Helen made whatever corrections or changes she wished to make. Later, Mr. Gilman dispatched her papers with his certificate to the examiners.

Helen was able to pass every subject and received honours in German and English.

Question 18.

How important was the presence of Miss Anne Sullivan in Helen's life?

Answer:

Miss Anne Sullivan played an important role in Helen's life. She not only transformed Helen but also made her transcend her physical barriers. She was the person who helped change the wild little girl into a civilised, educated young lady who became an inspiration for others like her. It was after her arrival that Helen experienced the first stirrings of her conscience. Anne's patience and compassion helped Helen to discover the world around her. It was her creativity and her expertise that helped Helen to learn diverse subjects like geography, biology, history and the languages as well as a normal person does. It was with Anne's help in school and college that Helen could follow the lessons and lectures being delivered by the teachers there. Anne Sullivan dedicated her whole life to help Helen to lead a life as much normal as possible. She was the key factor in Helen Keller's growth and accomplishment. Thus, the presence of Anne Sullivan in Helen's life is very important.

Question 19.

What does Helen say about her association with Alexander Graham Bell?

Answer:

When Helen was young, Dr. Graham Bell recommended Helen's parents to Mr. Anagnos, which resulted in the arrival of Miss Sullivan in Helen's life. Dr. Bell was very sympathetic to Helen. He was an eye opener to her. Helen recounted that meeting with Dr. Bell in glowing words, for it helped her "to pass from darkness to light, from isolation to friendship, companionship, knowledge and love".

Helen also visited the World Fair with him and he introduced her to autophones and other inventions that made communication in the world easier. Helen went everywhere with him. For the first time in her life, she could "see" all the marvels of inventions, treasures of industry and skill, and all the activities of human life. These experiences matured Helen and she felt that she had taken "a long leap from the little child's interest in fairy tales and toys to the appreciation of the real and the earnest in the workaday world". However, Dr. Bell remained a sustaining influence in her life. Helen spent many delightful hours in his laboratory, listening to his experiments. She also helped Dr. Bell in flying kites to discover the laws that would govern future airships. Virtually, Helen's association with Dr. Bell broadened her horizon of knowledge to know the unknown and to see the unseen.

Question 20.

Describe Merton S. Keith as he appears in Helen Keller's—"The Story of My Life."

Answer:

Merton S. Keith was a Cambridge mathematician. After Helen's mother withdrew her from Cambridge School, it was arranged that Helen should continue her studies under Merton S. Keith.

From February to July, 1898, Mr. Keith came out to Wrentham twice a week, and taught Helen algebra, geometry, Greek and Latin. He was very patient and took a lot of pains to teach her. He repeated his lessons till Helen was able to understand the concepts.

In October, they returned to Boston. For eight months Mr. Keith gave her lessons five times a week in periods of about an hour. He explained each time what she did not understand in



the previous lesson, assigned new work and took home with him the Greek exercises. She wrote these exercises on her typewriter. However, Mr. Keith made mathematics interesting to her. He kept her mind alert and eager and trained it to reason clearly, and to seek conclusions calmly and logically instead of jumping wildly into space and arriving nowhere. Mr. Keith was always gentle and forbearing no matter how dull a subject Helen was. Thus, Merton S. Keith, the tutor of Helen Keller appeared in her life.

2014

Long Answer Type Questions [10 Marks]

Question 21.

Describe in your own words Helen's first Christmas after Miss Sullivan came to Thscumbia.

Answer:

At her first Christmas after Miss Sullivan's arrival at Tuscumbia, Helen prepared surprise gifts for everyone with Miss Sullivan's help. As Helen was curious to find out about her gifts, her friends fanned her curiosity by half spelling gifts' names. Miss Sullivan too kept up the game of guessing, so it taught Helen about the use of language.

On Christmas Eve, Helen was invited to the Tuscumbian school by the children. She expressed delight at seeing the glowing Christmas tree in the middle of the classroom. She danced and capered round the room with the children. She learnt that there was a gift for each child. She was asked to hand it over to each child. In the pleasure of the gift handing Helen forgot about her own gifts. But her impatience mounted as the day of Christmas approached. That night she lay awake a long time after hanging up her stocking, hoping for a glimpse of Santa.

The next morning Helen was the first to wake up. Her gifts were not just in her stocking but on the window ledge, chair and she kept stumbling on gifts all over the place. But the best gift was a canary given to her by Miss Sullivan.

Question 22.

Helen found new surprises during Christmas with Miss Sullivan. Discuss the characteristics of Miss Sullivan in the light of this statement.

Answer:

During the Christmas celebrations, Miss Sullivan helped Helen to prepare surprise gifts for her friends and everyone else. Instead of leaving it at the level of enjoyment, Miss Sullivan used this opportunity to teach her ward more about the use of language in a manner which was more efficient than any textbook learning. Every evening, sitting around the fire she had them play the guessing game and that increased vocabulary usage for Helen.

Instead of dry classroom lessons, Miss Sullivan taught Helen, using an illustrative approach, i.e. talking to her as if she was a little girl. Thus, feelings of dread, pain, delight were understood through an experiential approach without any painful plodding.

Geography lessons were imbibed in woods, and nature was touched, felt and pressed on hands and smelt, to learn. Raised maps were created to learn about lakes and rivers and strings and orange sticks illustrated the poles.

Miss Sullivan's methodology introduced to her complex thoughts such as liberty and disappointment, love and inspiration through her innovative practical ways proving her ability as a teacher, who awakened knowledge through a loving touch.

Question 23.

Helen was an inquisitive child. How can we say so? Elucidate.

Answer:

Right from childhood Helen was inquisitive because she could assess if the mother and aunts were going out, by simply looking at their attire. Along with Martha, the child Helen



made her acquaintance with the animals in the sheds, the place where the corn was stacked and enjoyed the joys of discovering her surroundings. It was her curiosity that made her notice her towel-wrapped doll had no eyes and remedied the same using two buttons from her aunt's cape.

It was her innate sense of curiosity that made Helen make full use of all her excursions and trips to various places. She acquired knowledge of the seasons by her curiosity to know things and whenever she travelled she enjoyed Miss Sullivan narrating to her what was going on outside the car window.

Besides travels and her keen observation of the phenomena of nature, Helen was curious to know more about acquired knowledge. Her interest in physical geography, languages and other subjects, was instigated by her curiosity to learn how language gave picturesque dimensions to surroundings and how man could overcome the forces mightier than himself by following his sense of curiosity and the urge to find out why and how things worked.

Question 24.

Write a detailed character-sketch of Martha Washington.

Answer:

Martha Washington was a Black American child and the daughter of the cook in the Keller household. She sported bunches of fuzzy hair tied with shoe strings sticking out all over her head, like corkscrews, in addition to her ebony skin Martha was a fine companion to Helen because of her friendly nature that made her inclined to do just what Helen desired of her. She was a docile person and did not object to the domination exerted over her by Helen. She was a sprightly child who was strong, active and did not weigh the consequences of her actions too much. She had the same playful interests as Helen and the two of them spent much time in the kitchen together. Martha was quick to follow Helen's gestures and understood what she was required to do, by Helen.

Martha was very fond of mischief and many were the escapades in which the duo of Helen and Martha were involved. Martha, like all children, could not concentrate for too long and needed distractions, as is evident from the time when, given to cut out paper doll decorations for Christmas, after a while, the duo took to snipping off each others' curls instead.

Question 25.

How did Helen Keller enjoy her visit to the World Fair?

Answer:

During the summer of 1893, Helen Keller visited the World's Fair with Miss Sullivan and Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. She was struck with the marvels of invention in the field of industry, skill and all the activities of human life. She visited the Midway Plaisance. It was like the Arabian Nights'. It was crammed so full of novelty and interest. It was full of activity like a bazaar with Shivas and elephant-gods. She also visited the Pyramids, the lagoons of Venice and went aboard a Viking Ship. Helen also had the chance to see the model of Santa Maria at a little distance. Examining an hour glass on the desk in Columbus's cabin she began to think how Columbus, the heroic navigator, must have felt as he saw the sand dropping grain by grain while desperate men were plotting against his life." Mr. Higinbotham, President of the World Fair gave her permission to touch the exhibits. She touched everything with great eagerness. The French bronzes fascinated her. At the cape of Good Hope exhibit, she learnt much about the processes of mining diamonds. Thus, visit the World Fair was very exciting to her. At the same time it widened thd horizon of her knowledge.

Question 26.

Attempt in 120-150 words a character sketch of Miss Sullivan.

Answer:

Miss Anne Mansfield Sullivan comes across as a brilliant teacher who has immensepatience



and compassion to touch the heart of Helen Keller. It is her expertise, patience and love that helps Helen learn everything she knows and understands about the world. Miss Sullivan is Helen Keller's teacher, companion, friend and philosopher for nearly fifty years.

Miss Sullivan became Helen's teacher on 3 March 1887. Helen called the day her 'soul's birthday'. Mr. Anagnos, director of the Perkins Institution in Boston had wisely chosen Sullivan to be Helen's teacher. She was a most innovative teacher who believed in learning by doing. She was an expert in adopting myriad styles for teaching words. She taught spelling in her hand. Initially, Helen was not listening to her, she even kicked her teacher. Through patience and firm consistency, Anne Sullivan finally won Helen's heart. She seems to have dedicated her whole life to Helen's well being.

So, Anne proved to be a great teacher who let such beautiful thoughts germinate in the mind of her deprived student Helen. No wonder she was called Helen's "Spiritual benefactor".

Anne Sullivan was determined to provide all kinds of stimulus, that Helen lacked.

Question 27.

What role did Mr. Gilman play in Helen Keller's life?

Answer:

Mr. Arthur Gilman was the principal of the Cambridge School. Helen joined the school to prepare for the entry into Radcliffe College. Gilman allowed Sullivan to attend the school with Helen. He knew the finger alphabet and taught Helen this concept. He instructed Helen to learn English literature. He read out the lessons to Helen and explained various topics in a simplified manner.

Mr. Gilman was very loving and sympathetic towards Helen. He knew Helen's limitations. He was quite accommodating but rigid also. He was also a great scholar. When Mr. Gilman found Helen overworked and stressed, he decided to reduce her overload. It was decided that Helen would study mathematics principally besides other subjects. Helen felt discouraged at this because she was very weak in mathematics. Besides, Gilman wanted Helen to spend three more years instead of two to complete her studies. Miss Sullivan, Helen and her parents did not like his plans.

Mr. Gilman refused to budge. He felt what he planned was in Helen's interest. However, his sympathies were misunderstood.

Question 28.

Describe the progress made by Helen Keller during the two years spent at Wright-Humason School for the Deaf in New York City.

Answer:

Helen Keller joined the Wright-Humason School for the Deaf in New York City in October 1894. The school was famous for its specialised training in vocal culture and lip-reading. Helen joined the school to improve her speech further. Besides learning speech, during two years she studied there arithmetic, physical geography, French and German.

Helen made much progress in German because Miss Reamy, her German teacher, could use the manual alphabet. In a few months she was able to understand almost everything her teacher said. She found French much more difficult because Madame Olivier, a French lady, did not know the manual alphabet. So she could not read her lips easily.

Helen's progress in lip-reading and speech was unexpectedly slow. It was so because her ambition was to speak like other people, which was too high to achieve. So the disappointment was inevitable. No doubt, she worked very hard but found goal not within reach. She was not good at arithmetic. However, physical geography enabled her to learn the secrets of nature. All the teachers at the Wright-Humason School tried their level best to provide every advantage to the pupils of the school. So Helen looked back at the two years she spent there with fondness.



Question 29.

Attempt a character sketch of Mr. Gilman as a teacher.

Answer:

The same as answer no. 27.

Question 30.

It was her determination that helped Helen Keller get admission to Radcliffe College.

Comment.

Answer:

Helen Keller's achievements were more due to her tremendous perseverance and iron determination. Her keen sense of touch and smell helped her to understand the world around her. She was very intelligent and understood things by her intuition.

After Helen was withdrawn from Cambridge, she studied mathematics for one year by a private tutor, Merton S. Keith of Cambridge. He made mathematics interesting to her. Then she found it easier and pleasanter to study alone and overcame obstacles in mathematics. Then she was confident enough to face any obstacles in her life. A powerful force within her impelled her to try her strength by the standards of those who saw and heard. She looked forward to get admission to Radcliffe College for many years. Now the struggle for admission to college ended. Helen could now enter Radcliffe whenever she pleased. She says, "Every struggle is a victory. One more effort and I reach the luminous cloud, the blue depths of the sky, the uplands of my desire." This quote reveals her strong sense of determination that made her 'victorious' to get admission to Radcliffe College.

Question 31.

The accusation of plagiarism left a deep impact on Helen Keller, how did it affect her?

Answer:

Helen and her friends like Mr. Anagnos were shocked to learn that her story "The Frost King" was a copy of Miss Canby's story "The Forst Fairies". They were sure that Helen could not do so, and that she was quite innocent in this matter. Miss Anne Sullivan, her teacher, was also certain that she had not read out the story to Helen. After investigation, it was discovered that during Helen's stay at Brewster Mrs. Hopkins might have read out the story to her in the absence of Miss Sullivan. She clearly understood what must have happened. However, Helen had the habit of using others' ideas later as if they were her own. Mr. Anagnos was deeply troubled and felt cheated. As the two stories seemed quite similar in thought and language, this made Helen's story a plagiarism.

Helen was asked to appear before a court of investigation, comprising teachers and officers of the institution. Helen was so discouraged that she could not answer their questions. Dazed and totally shattered Helen left the room. She felt most grieved at the thought of accusation of plagiarism. Moreover, Helen was scarred for life. Whenever she would write something, she would grow doubtful if the words belonged to someone else. Hence, the accusation of plagiarism affected Helen awfully.

Question 32.

Attempt a character sketch of Ms. Sullivan.

Answer:

The same as answer no. 26.

Question 33.

What do you know about Helen Keller's love of the country and outdoor sports?

Answer:

Helen Keller had a great love of the country she belonged to. She was born in Tuscomb, a little town of northern Alabama (USA). Helen's house was completely covered with vines,

climbing roses and honeysuckle. She found an immense joy in the garden of flowers. She loved the Nature and her beauty. Helen loved spending her time in the countryside. One summer she lived with the family of Mr. J.E. Chamberlin in a charming village in Wrentham, New England. Helen says, "In the country one sees only nature's fair works, and one's soul is not saddened by the cruel struggle for mere existence that goes on in the crowded city." Helen also spent sometime with Miss Sullivan in a little cottage on a lake in Wrentham. Helen was fond of rowing, swimming canoeing and sailing. When she was a young girl, she learned to row and swim. Rowing a boat gave her the greatest thrill. She also enjoyed canoeing, and that too on a moonlit night. Her favourite amusement was sailing. In 1901, Helen visited Nova Scotia and enjoyed the delights of ocean. She had also experiences of sailing in Halifax. The experiences of sailing boats reveal Helen's love for sports and her fearlessness.

2013

Long Answer Type Questions [10 Marks]

Question 34.

What was the first ray of hope to her parents about her education?

Answer:

When Helen's tantrums aggravated because of her inability to express herself, her 7 parents suffered, seeing her plight. Her mother's only ray of hope was the case of Laura Bridgman, a deaf and blind girl, educated at the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts, by Dr Howe.

Helen's mother had heard of Dr Howe and of Laura Bridgman having read 'American Notes' by Charles Dickens, wherein he had written an account of it. Unfortunately, by that time, Dr Howe was dead and she feared that his methods had probably died with him. Besides, living in far-off Alabama, she feared they could hardly hope for such an education.

Thus, the parents chose to visit an eminent oculist, Dr Chisholm in Baltimore, for treatment of Helen's sight. Unable to help, he directed them instead to Dr Alexander Graham Bell, who gave the Kellers information about a school for blind and deaf children. On the doctor's advice the parents journeyed to Washington, where Dr Bell advised the Kellers to take Helen to Dr Anagnos at the Perkins Institution in Boston and ask him for a competent teacher for Helen. In a few weeks, Dr Anagnos sent a letter with the comforting assurance that Miss Sullivan had been found as a teacher for Helen, heralding the first ray of hope for Helen's education.

Question 35.

Give instances from the text as to how Nature can be regarded as a teacher?

Answer:

For Helen Keller, nature around her surroundings was a great teacher. She learnt the meaning of the word 'water' by feeling it flowing out of her hand, in her garden. Nature became an educator for her not only in the way of vocabulary building but also in discovering its beneficence in the manner in which things grow, and the sun and rain help it to grow out of the ground.

Nature also awakened Helen's soul to beauty and very early she learnt, with the help of her teacher, to realize the beauty of the fragrant woods, the dimples in a baby's hands and she also learnt that birds and flowers were her happy peers.

Helen also came to know about the cruel side of nature when she was caught in a freak storm all alone. The helplessness and fear that gripped her made her realise the other side of nature and life.

Also, the realization of feelings was possible for Helen by comparisons with nature. She compares the feelings of love by comparing it to rain clouds. Though one cannot touch the



clouds, one can feel rain and know about the gladness of flowers, and these emotions are not possible without the feeling of love.

Question 36.

Why did Helen call Boston “The city of kind hearts”?

Answer:

Helen called Boston ‘The City of Hearts’, especially, because of Mr Endicott. Mr. William Endicott and his daughters were among the many friends Helen made at Boston. They were very kind to her. When Helen and her teacher visited their home at Beverly Farms, Helen went through their rose-garden, played with their dogs, Leo and Fritz. Their horse Nimrod, which poked its nose into Helen’s hands. Mr. Endicott told Helen about the great ships that came sailing by from Boston, bound for Europe. Helen said that he was always a good friend to her.

Question 37.

Give a character-sketch of Anne Sullivan as an ideal teacher.

Answer:

Anne Mansfield Sullivan is the most important person in the life of Helen Keller. Without her support Helen could never do what she achieved in her life. She was a dedicated teacher, who brought light in the life of a troubled child. It was her constant motivation and well planned strategy that enlightened the life of Helen. When Anne Sullivan went to teach Keller, she was only twenty years old and a recent graduate of the Perkins Institution for the Blind. She herself had impaired vision and could understand the need of such a child as Helen. She was a disciplined teacher. She knew the importance of discipline in learning. That is why she became an effective and successful teacher. She was a patient teacher for Helen. She was an effective teacher because she opted for structured and spontaneous lessons. She understood the interest and environment of her student and taught her accordingly. Miss Sullivan dedicated her life to support Helen Keller.