

Fanny Crosby's Life-Story.

of feeling soon took place: and going around behind his chair, and putting my arms around his neck, I kissed him on the forehead. "You have talked to me as my father would have talked, were he living," I said, "and I thank you for it, over and over again. You have given me a lesson that I might have had to learn through bitter experience, and I shall profit by it."

And I believe I have done so: at least I have tried, through all these eighty-three years. I have done my best to remember that not my poor insignificant self, but the great God above, was entitled to the credit for whatever I could accomplish; and to keep the monster Egotism from coming up between my duty and me.

If in this autobiography, in which I am trying to give a true story of my life, the pronoun of the first person singular number is too often used, the reader must forgive: it is because it is unavoidable, and not because it is in my heart.

CHAPTER VI.—1835-1858.

INCITEMENTS TO AMBITION—GREAT PEOPLE WHO WERE BLIND—THE IMMORTAL HOMER—THE KING-POET OSSIAN—JOHN MILTON AND HIS GENIUS—FRANCIS HUBER, THE NATURALIST—OTHERS WHOSE CAREERS GAVE US ENCOURAGEMENT.

AMONG the interesting things that we were taught in our Institution, at the very outset, was the fact that scores and hundreds of individuals had achieved fame and fortune, in spite of blindness.

We were told about Homer, the greatest poet of antiquity, who, while traveling to get material for his immortal work, contracted a disease of the eyes, which made him blind forever: but who worked away with renewed ardor; and who, although he died poor, achieved an immortal fame—such as many people would be willing to go blind all their lives, if they could attain.

We were told of Ossian, the Celtic king—

who, it is said, was a warrior while he could see, but became a poet after he was stricken with blindness, and sung songs that made him famous forever. Indeed, we were told that his very existence was disputed by some critics: but, for that matter, the same experience had befallen the names of Homer, Virgil, Julius Cæsar, and William Tell. There seemed fully as much reason to believe that he existed, as that he did not; and, as he was, in a manner, one of us, we preferred to take the affirmative of the question.

We were told of Milton, who lost his eyesight from a disease caused by incessant study while he was young: but who, as the light of this world became gradually shut out, grew more and more luminous himself, with sacred lore and imagination. As we heard of the daughters who read to him, and wrote down his grand lines, and who, alas! did not seem always to appreciate the great privilege, many of us girls felt that if we could only have had our sight and assisted such a grand man as that, we would have asked not a single additional pleasure in the world!

Of course we were all proud of Francis Huber, who, notwithstanding the cataracts that grew over his eyes, and blinded him at last, became the historian and biographer of

those swift-winged messengers between flower and flower, and garden and hive—the bees. Within his mind he seemed to have constructed a great hive of learning, wherein he sorted, arranged, and made use of the facts that others brought him. He had patience to analyze and compare the different experiments that were made under his direction and that of others—which qualities he might have lacked or never have developed, if he had been “favored” with the power of seeing.

Added to these illustrious names, were given us many who had not climbed to the very top round of fame, but who, although blind, had accomplished more than the average degree of success, in their various callings. Science, mechanics, the “learned professions”, and all the miscellaneous pursuits, we found had been ornamented, to a greater or less extent, by the blind.

With this, we were taught that whatever we determined to do, if within the average power of man or woman, we could, with God's help, do—the same as if we had the blessings of sight: and at it we went with a will.