

CHAPTER X.—1842-1843.

DR. COMBE'S ENDORSEMENT IS OF BENEFIT—  
THE "POET LAUREATE" OF THE INSTITUTION—  
TAUGHT HOW TO WRITE POETRY—HAMILTON  
MURRAY'S AID—A REUNION AFTER SIXTY-  
FIVE YEARS' ABSENCE.

FROM the time that good Dr. Combe proclaimed me a poet, I was so considered by my teachers and associates; and they "knew then that they had known the fact from the first." But it takes a certain amount of outside endorsement to make even our best and nearest friends appreciate us; and this I had heretofore lacked. It was for the famous Scotch Phrenologist to set me, if I can say it without being suspected of a pun, upon my poetical feet.

I was now, I think it may be said without vanity, considered as the poet laureate of our Institution; and the teachers evidently determined to make a first-class writer of me, if cultivation could do it. I was taught all the intricacies of verse, until I began to wonder that

*A Teacher of Elocution.*

the subject which I had considered as a very simple, easy sort of thing, had so many complications. I was taught to analyze, to parse, to scan, to write in different measures; and began to worry lest I should disappoint the high expectations that the phrenologist had raised.

Among the most potential aids I received at the time, was that from a gentleman named Hamilton Murray. Mr. Murray claimed that he could not write poetry, but could teach others how to do so; and as pupils in that branch of study were not numerous, he seemed to take especial pleasure in giving me prosodical instruction. He had a poetic temperament, and a fine rich voice: and hour after hour he would read me some of the grandest poems he could find in English literature.

This, as you may readily imagine, was a luxurious feast: and a benefit. Mr. Murray also encouraged me to imitate, as nearly as I could, the different poetical masters of that day—as Bryant, Willis, etc. He pointed out, with much delicacy, the different defects in my literary style, and tried his best to remove them. With rare faithfulness, and with much kindness, considering that his pupil was not a rich man's daughter, but a poor blind girl just starting in life, he toiled for my benefit; and though I could not pay him in money, he had my heart-

*Fanny Crosby's Life-Story.*

felt gratitude. He has long walked the streets of the great Tuneful City: and I hope some day to meet him there, grasp him by the hand, and thank him once more.

Not long ago, I had the pleasure of meeting his nephew, Mr. Bronson Murray, of New York: whom I had also known at that time. He was of about my own age, and from him I had always received the most gentle and manly courtesies. We now met again for the first time in sixty-five years: and the reminiscences that were awakened, may be readily imagined. Seldom have I enjoyed a visit so much.

How do these old friendships draw compound interest, as the years go on! And what a grand treat it will be, in the next world, to meet all those whom we have known and loved here, and talk over the events of the past!

CHAPTER XI.—1842-1845.

MUSICAL DIVERSIONS FOR THE BLIND—NEIGHBORLY CALLS—SOIREES—WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT VISITS US—HIS KINDNESS TO THE GIRL-POET—TWO VISITS WITH HORACE GREELEY—SHOWING PEOPLE ABOUT THE INSTITUTION—HOW THE BLIND "FIND THE WAY TO THEIR MOUTHS."

**W**E had fine music in our school; for as is well known, some of the best musicians in the world come from among the blind. Indeed, an augmented delicacy of hearing generally compensates for loss of sight. We often had "musical soirees", and invited our neighbors in the city: and one evening we were electrified by the intelligence that the great William Cullen Bryant was coming as one of our guests!

Bryant was at that time the best-known American poet. Longfellow had not then written the books upon which hang most of his fame; Whittier was yet known rather as an