

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."

WE 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

Anti-Slavery agitator than as a writer of verse; and Willis, though a brilliant author and traveler, was obliged to yield to his older and more finished contemporary.

Bryant had composed at twenty-three his "Thanatopsis", the sweetest apology for Death in any language (I wonder if that was the reason Death finally spared him so long?). He had with his other poems attracted the attention and commanded the admiration of the world; had traveled extensively in Europe; and had now (1843) settled down for a time in editorial work.

As was the case almost wherever he went, he was obliged to hold a little impromptu reception at our soiree; and among those that were introduced to him, was poor little timid I, who had very little hope that he would greet me otherwise than conventionally, and as a stranger of whom he had never heard before.

To my surprise, however, he gave me a warm grasp of the hand, commented upon my poor little rhythmical efforts, commended them in a tone that I felt to be sincere, and told me to go on bravely and determinedly with my work. He never knew how much good he did, by those few words, to the young girl that had hardly hoped to touch the hem of his proud robe of poetic genius!

At a children's party on New Year's, 1844, I met for the first time Horace Greeley. He was then only thirty-three years old; had come to New York a journeyman printer, and fought his way into recognition. He had already founded the "Tribune", and, of course, to meet him was an event.

But I must say that I at first was disappointed in him: perhaps I expected too much. "Is that the great Horace Greeley?" I pondered, after hearing him talk. I had never been able to read any of his editorials, but concluded, in my inexperience, that if they were no more brilliant than his conversation, the world was making a queer mistake in honoring him.

I did not understand, at that time, as I have learned since, that great men have widely varying moods, and that they are at one time silently gathering up that which at another they dispense so lavishly.

The following summer I happened to meet him at the house of a mutual friend; and a more charming and intelligent conversationalist, I never heard. History, literature, social ethics, political economy—all subjects—seemed perfectly natural and easy to him; and no one else wished to talk, so long as *he* could be kept talking.

Of course, being human, I did not admire

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him one whit the less, when he insisted on my reciting to him some of my little poems, praised them, and invited me to write for his paper!

I hardly knew whether I walked or flew to my room that night: I was so proud at having been recognized as a poet by such a great genius as Horace Greeley!

On another occasion, during that same year, I remember feeling equally proud; and that was when I heard that my gallant old grandfather, who had been so enthusiastic in praising my juvenile abilities and so anxious that I should not be spoiled, wrote that he walked four miles to get a paper that had in it a poem written by me, and felt well paid for his trouble!

Our little Institution of one hundred and fifty students was under State control and patronage, and the Government naturally took much interest in it, and sent us as many interested visitors as it could. Institutions for the benefit of the blind were not so common as they are now, and we were quite objects of curiosity. The visitors, having read my poems in the different papers, where they had been published and republished, sometimes asked to be shown about the place by me. It was, in a manner, the blind leading those that were not blind; but I knew every inch of the establishment, almost as well as if I could see.

Finding the Way to the Mouth.

For a time, this piloting was a pleasant novelty; but, of course, it finally grew a little irksome to answer the same questions again and again, and I became quite willing to depute the pleasure to others. One bright boy, who had been guiding a large party of ladies and gentlemen through the rooms and halls, reported that they had asked him as they entered the dining-room, how blind people managed to find the way to their mouths while eating. "What did you tell them?" we inquired. "I informed them," said the blind boy, gravely, "that we hitched one end of a string to the leg of our chair, and the other to our tongue; and by that means managed to prevent the victuals losing their way."

The teachers gently reproved him; but I had opportunity to know, that they laughed over the queer little episode, many times, afterward.