

*Fanny Crosby's Life-Story.*

In 1897, appeared "Bells at Evening and Other Verses", with a short biographical sketch by Rev. Robert Lowry, the famous composer. This book was issued for me, by the Biglow & Main Company, New York: who have also published many of my hymns, and with whom I have maintained most cordial and even affectionate relations, for many years past.

CHAPTER XVI.—1844-1902.

A NEW CHARGE—A PROMISING STUDENT—HIS CAREER IN SCHOOL—MARRIAGE—SYMPATHY IN PROFESSIONAL WORK—CHARACTERISTICS OF MY HUSBAND—HIS MANY GOOD QUALITIES—HIS DEATH.

**W**HEN we were at Oswego, upon the canal-trip mentioned in a previous chapter, a lady came to us, bringing a blind boy, just about to enter the years of manhood. I little thought, then, that my destiny would be indissolubly linked with his own.

His name was Alexander Van Alstyne. The mother appealed to me in particular, as I was one of the teachers, although, it must be confessed, young for such a position, and asked me to take her "boy" especially under my personal charge, and see that no harm came to him.

I consented, perhaps rather thoughtlessly: but the responsibility was fated to have more important results than I supposed.



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He entered the Institution in 1844, and was in several of my classes during the four years he remained with us. In 1848 he graduated, and then went to Union College, Schenectady, where he studied Greek, Latin, and Theology.

Although he became well grounded in general studies, and, indeed, distinguished himself by his scholarship, his natural profession was Music, and he became a most accomplished performer, teacher, and composer—being fully conversant with the works of the old masters. He felt that all the mental discipline that he could procure in general studies, would enrich his mind, and enable him to succeed better in his own vocation: and results proved the truth of that theory.

In 1855, he came back to our Institution for the Blind, and for two years was a teacher there, and in 1858, we were married.

We found in each other not only perfect congeniality, but sympathy in our pursuits: neither of us interfered with the other's professional career. Each of us (as is not always the case) could sympathize with the other's occupation, without rivalry or interference. He set several of my hymns to music: but his taste was mostly for the wordless melodies of the classics. He insisted that my literary name



PROF. ALEXANDER VAN ALSTYNE.



*Eulogy of Fanny's Husband.*

should remain as it was: I yielded to his desire, and although really Mrs. Van Alstyne, have always written under the name of Fanny Crosby, except when using soubriquets.

His father, Wells Van Alstyne, came from the banks of the Rhine, while still young, bringing his wife with him. He was an engineer by profession, and bore a prominent part in the construction of the Welland Canal.

For many years my husband taught music, and proved himself a brilliant instructor. He was proficient upon the piano and the cornet—and long occupied the position of organist in one of the city churches of New York.

He was not only a musician, but a philosopher, and a deep student of human nature. He delighted in bringing out latent musical talent, wherever he could find it. He often taught pupils free, in cases where they were not able to pay.

"Van", as everybody who knew him affectionately called him, was always an inspiration in any company in which he was present, with his ready wit, his winning magnetism, and his cheery ways. It has been told me by those who could see, that when he was at the organ or piano, his face bore the happiest expression of any they had ever witnessed in like circumstances. He had his faults—and so have I mine



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—and as I suppose have all of us frail mortals: but notwithstanding these, we loved each other to the last. We were long spared bereavement: but he was taken sick in 1901, with asthma, and after a long illness, died on June 18th, 1902, of a complication of diseases.

He was buried in Brooklyn, not far from where we first established our little home, soon after marriage: and there, though I cannot see the mound under which he rests, I can touch the turf with my hands, and try to make his spirit feel that I am constantly lamenting his temporary loss.

CHAPTER XVII.—1845.

THE BLIND NOT SO EASILY DECEIVED—WAYS TO ASCERTAIN WHAT IS “GOING ON”—LOVE-MAKING BEFORE THE BLIND NOT ALWAYS SAFE—WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY OF THE MIND, HEART, AND SOUL—THE BLIND CHILD FROM NEW JERSEY—GRIEVES FOR HIS GRANDMOTHER—ACTING THE PART OF THE GOOD OLD LADY—THE LITTLE BOY HAPPY.

**A**LTHOUGH they cannot see what is going on around them, yet the blind are not by any means so easily duped, as many suppose: for there are numerous ways in which they can know what is “doing”, almost as well as if they could witness it with good eyes, under the clear light of a noonday sun. Little by-plays often take place near me, the existence of which I am not supposed to know: but of which, in almost every detail, I am fully aware.

Even surreptitious love-making has been attempted in my presence, the parties trusting to my physical blindness to serve as a wall with which to hide themselves: but I have