

CHAPTER XXII.—1850-1868.

SECULAR SONGS—CANTATAS—MEET MR. BRADBURY—ENGAGE TO WRITE HYMNS—LIFE-WORK DISCOVERED—A DREAM-VISION—DEATH AND FUNERAL OF MR. BRADBURY—THE MYSTERIOUS VOICE—NOM-DE-PLUMES.

DURING the fifties and sixties, I wrote the words of several songs, which became popular, and continued so for many years.

One of these was "Rosalie, the Prairie Flower"; another was "Glad to Get Home"; another "Proud World, Good-bye"; and still another, "There's Music in the Air." These were set to notes by George F. Root, and sold in thousands of copies in sheet music and other forms, throughout the country.

Several cantatas also constituted part of my pen-work during this time. Among these were "The Flower Queen" and "The Pilgrim Fathers"—the music of the latter having been composed jointly by George F. Root and Lowell Mason.



STARTING FOR A LECTURE

Great Work of Life is Begun.

But in 1864 commenced the real and most important work of my life, so far as poetry was concerned. In that year, the late Peter Stryker, one of the most excellent of men, introduced me to William B. Bradbury, who was already famous as a writer of hymn-music.

Mr. Bradbury received me with a cordiality that made me feel immediately that we could work together: poet and composer cannot always do that. "For many years, I have been wanting you to write for me," he said, "but somehow could not get opportunity to talk with you on the subject. I wish you would begin, right away."

It now seemed to me as if the great work of my life had really begun: and I commenced the delicious toil which, with an occasional pause for rest, I have continued ever since.

If at any time I have been tempted to leave this work, and turn my poetical efforts in other directions, I have invariably been brought back and spurred to fresh vigor, by the memory of a dream that I had, not long before my taking of this, what seemed to me a sacred, trust.

It was really more than a dream—more even than a vision: it was a kind of reality—with my senses all at their fullest, though the body was asleep.

I was in an immense observatory, and be-

Fanny Crosby's Life-Story.

fore me the largest telescope I had ever imagined. I could see everything plainly (for, in my most vivid dreams, the sense of sight appears fully restored). Looking in the direction pointed out by my friend, I saw a very bright and captivating star, and was gradually carried toward it—past other stars, and any amount of celestial scenery that I have not strength even to describe.

At last we came to a river, and paused there. "May I not go on?" I asked of my guide. "Not now, Fanny", was the reply. "You must return to the earth and do your work there, before you enter those sacred bounds; but ere you go, I will have the gates opened a little way, so you can hear one burst of the eternal music."

Soon there came chords of melody such as I never had supposed could exist anywhere: the very recollection of it thrills me. And in the writing of my hymns, the memory of that journey toward the star, always cheers and inspires me.

The first one I wrote for Mr. Bradbury, was the hymn that begins:

"We are going, we are going,
To a home beyond the skies,
Where the roses never wither,
And the sunlight never dies."

Six or Seven Hymns in One Day.

Others followed, in rapid succession; and for four years, almost until the date of my associate's death, we continued to work together in that capacity. Three volumes of hymns—each containing from thirty to forty of mine—were published by Mr. Bradbury. Of all these, perhaps the one having the widest circulation, was that which contained the hymn beginning:

"There's a cry from Macedonia".

As I often composed as many as six or seven hymns in one day, there were more of them in the aggregate than Mr. Bradbury could set to music; and the late Philip Phillips, a most genial and lovable man, took several of them for his own compositions.

From this large number of hymns that I composed, selections were made: some were put aside and never used. I made no pretense of being able to do this selecting myself—it was always performed by others; and I often find myself wondering whether some hymn may not have been suppressed, that was of real merit, while others less worthy, were put to the fore. One cannot always determine at first sight, concerning products of the pen, which will most forcibly strike the public mind and heart.

Fanny Crosby's Life-Story.

But Mr. Bradbury was not strong, physically; and in 1868 he died. "I know I am not going to live very long," he used to say: "but, Fanny, you must take up the work where I leave it."

At his funeral, in Montclair, N. J., the first hymn sung was that with which we had commenced our work together—

"We are going, we are going,
To a home beyond the skies".

It is needless to say that the exercises affected me more deeply than almost anything I had ever experienced. As I stood for a minute by the casket which held the honored dead, I could not refrain from sobs and tears; but all at once I heard a clear beautiful voice from the congregation, saying:

"Fanny, pick up the work where Mr. Bradbury leaves it; take your harp from the willow, and dry your tears."

I could never learn who spoke these words, although there were several others who distinctly heard them; but they came to my ears very plainly, and I can hear them now.

"We see so many of your hymns in our books!" often say new friends to me: "How many you must have written!" But they are

A Few Nom de Plumes.

often not aware that hundreds more—not with my name attached, but bearing different nom-de-plumes, are from my pen. I cannot now even remember all the different names, over a hundred in number, I have used; but among them are "Mrs. E. A. Andrew", "Ella Dale", "Julia Stirling", "Victoria Francis", "Victoria Stewart", "Lyman Cuyler", "Charles Bruce", "Lizzie Edwards", "Grace I. Francis", "Sally M. Smith", "Henrietta Blain", "Myra Judson", "Charles Burns", "Alice Monteith", "James M. Black", "Frank Gould", "Jennie Garnett", "Victoria Stirling", "Carrie M. Wilson", "Maud Marion", etc., etc.

Among many other incidents connected with my hymns, is one related to me by Mr. Ira B. Sankey, who has long been, and is still, one of my dearest friends. When he was in Edinburgh, an old Scotch woman came to him, and said she wanted to thank him for writing "Safe in the Arms of Jesus". "But I didn't write it," replied Mr. Sankey: "that was Fanny Crosby";—and he sat down and told her about me.

"Weel," said the old lady, when he was through, "when ye gang back to America, gie her my love, an' tell her an auld Scots woman sends her blessing. The last hymn my daughter sang before she died, was that one."

Fanny Crosby's Life-Story.

There are many other hymns that have been widely used, and concerning which I could relate many (to me) interesting reminiscences. Among these are "Rescue the Perishing", "Speed Away", "Pass Me Not", "I Am Thine", etc., etc.

I am sometimes asked how many hymns I have written in my lifetime. This question I am unable to answer accurately; but am safe in saying that the number reaches over five thousand.

I may be able, some time, to remember the names of all those who have done my hymns the honor of setting them to music, but have not the leisure just at present. If there should be subsequent editions of this book, I can perhaps include them. Besides those already mentioned and to be mentioned, stand out prominently Prof. H. R. Palmer and Mr. Hubert P. Main—both of whom are among my friends still living.

CHAPTER XXIII.—1853-1893.

GROVER CLEVELAND AS A YOUNG MAN—HIS GRIEF AT HIS FATHER'S DEATH—HIS INDUSTRY AND DEVOTION TO HIS STUDIES—DISPOSITION TO HELP OTHERS—COPIES POEMS FOR ME—UPBRAIDED BY SUPERINTENDENT—GROVER'S ADVICE—SOME PLAIN PROSE—NO MORE TROUBLE—PLEASANT ACQUAINTANCE WITH HIM AFTER HE HAD SERVED AS PRESIDENT.

IN 1853, our head teacher, Prof. William Cleveland, was called to New Jersey by the death of his father, a Presbyterian clergyman. After a few day's absence, he returned, bringing with him his brother, a youth of sixteen; and the next morning afterward he came to consult me in regard to "the boy".

"Grover has taken our father's death very much to heart," he said, "and I wish you would go into the office, where I have installed him as clerk, and talk with him, once in a while."

So I went down as requested, and was in-