

From the pine he desires its "pensiveness serene," and with brook he fain would share its "sparkling merriment," and then looking down at the flowers of spring he cries

"Heaven help me! How could I forget
To beg of thee, dear violet,
Some of the modesty
That blossoms here as well unseen
As if before the world thou'dst been,
O, give to strengthen me."

Thus does kindly Nature lend us some touches of her endless grace and give us too of her vigorous life.

Among other interests we are impressed by the blessed



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equalities of Nature. She has a voice for us all. Truly Nature does not belong to those whose wealth is counted by the acre, but to those who love her. The farmer or landlord may claim the land, but the land-uses is ours. The millionaire may have as many sunset scenes in his collection as he pleases, but the poorest urchin in the north end of any city can come out at the close of day and gaze on the actual scene. While thinking of this blessed equality let us think also of the beauty of the common things. There is no orchid, even if it cost \$1,000 to procure, that can be compared with the little blue-eyed grass so common on our prairies. The sweetest and earliest of our wild flowers blooms with a courage we must admire. The Prairie Crocus or Early Anemone braves the cutting winds and stinging sleet of early spring, and such is its love of the common ways that if it is moved to the shelter of our gardens it pines and dies. In Nature the sweetest things spring up at our feet. The late J. T. Fields used to relate the following incident which happened at the home of the poet Tennyson. They were wandering in the fields late one night when the poet suddenly fell on his knees, his face to the ground. "What is it?" said

Mr. Field, thinking some sickness had overtaken his friend. "Violets! man, violets," cried Tennyson, "Get down on your knees and take a good sniff; you will sleep all the better for it."

Turning to Nature as a teacher we find that she unfolds as a book so that those who run may read. All her colors, forms, and actions have a voice. He who reads Nature reads God's language. Only let our thoughts be of equal greatness and Nature stretches out her arms to embrace us. Every appearance in Nature corresponds to some state of the mind. Every character in human life has its parallel in Nature, from the highest in society to the poorest in slumland; from the most Christ-like Christian to the greatest hypocrite; for each one there is a like character in Nature. Even the saloon and bar-room has its likeness in the many pitcher plants. A weary fly settles down to rest on a leaf of the plant, and after a little time looks around for food. At the end of the leaf he sees a peculiar structure decorated with a color that usually denotes the presence of food. It decides to make a closer examination, and so arrives at the base of the pitcher where it gets a drink of honey, but one drink does not satisfy, it looks about for more and starts on the road which leads to destruction. It soon reaches the top of the pitcher, getting several small drinks on the way. All would be well if it stopped here, but much wants more, and just inside the rim at the top is a greater supply of honey. The fly sees it, is tempted and falls. The surface of the rim is about the only surface a fly's foot cannot hold to, and so intent is it on the drink of honey that it does not realize its danger until it has slipped and fallen into the slimy fluid at the bottom, where it is held to give its life to the saloon, that so neatly enticed it. Many other comparisons could be given of human life and Nature. Our life we compare to a river, our death to the fall of a leaf, the resurrection to the butterfly waking from its sleep. The sunshine is our joy, the tempest our passion. How eloquent is Nature's testimony to God. "Nature," says Emerson, "is too thin a screen, the glory of God breaks in everywhere." This is joyfully true. The study of Nature's ever-open book is profitable in so far as it raises up "by golden steps of sweet ascent to the eternal throne." None but the foolish will deny that Nature witnessed for God. She is the garments by which we see Him. To everyone it is apparent that this orderly and beautiful world of Nature is not the product of accident but the embodiment of thought. Nature is but the name for an effect whose cause is God, but her laws cannot account for their own origin. Admit the great truth of Divine existence and all is radiant and consistent. Without it we grope about amid mystic shadows, but bring in the idea of God and all is light. Such are some of the visions which impress us as we move in

"Nature's Cathedral boundless as our wonder
Whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply,
Its choir the wind and waves; its organ thunder,
Its dome the sky!"

Fanny Crosby—Blind Poet and Hymn Writer

BY IDA E. HAMILTON.

ON March 24th Fanny Crosby, America's famous blind hymn writer, if living, will celebrate her ninetieth birthday.

Although totally blind since her infancy, it would be hard to find a person of a sunnier disposition. She believes that everything happens for a purpose, and that her misfortune is only a part of the great plan that has enabled her to bring happiness to hundreds of others through her hymns. At the present she is living with a friend in Bridgeport, Conn.

When but five years of age she was placed in the New York Institute for the Blind, where she afterwards became a teacher. It was here that her instructor, Hamilton Murray, a man of fine literary taste, encouraged Miss Crosby in her first efforts at writing, and no doubt much credit is due to his sympathetic guidance.

We are indebted to Fanny Crosby for over five thousand hymns, so she stands second to none excepting Charles Wesley, who is said to have written over eight thousand.

A few of the most familiar of these hymns are: "Safe in the arms of Jesus," "Rescue the Perishing," and "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour." "Safe in the arms of Jesus" was composed in less than fifteen minutes, and it is in like manner that a great many of the others have been written.

In her younger days Miss Crosby was greatly interested in the Bowery Mission in New York. One evening she went to the Mission greatly impressed that she would make a stronger effort than usual to bring someone to Christ, and made an address in which she appealed to young men. She asked if there was any young man in the audience who had gone away from his mother's God, and held out hope to him. After the meeting a young man went up and spoke to her, and told her how he had drifted away, but now he had heard the address, he felt he could meet his mother. It was after this service that Miss Crosby went home and wrote "Rescue the Perishing." Several years afterward, when addressing a meeting in Lynn, she told this story, and at the close of the ser-

vice a middle-aged man came to her and said, "Miss Crosby, I wish to thank you for the good you have done for me. I was the boy who came to you that night in the Bowery Mission, and, thank God, I have tried to live a good life since that time."

To my mind, one of her most beautiful compositions is "Saved by Grace." What must be the faith and experience of a woman who at eighty-five can say:

"Some day my earthly house will fall,
I cannot tell how soon 'twill be;
But this I know, my All in All
Has now a place in heaven for me."

When asked if from all the hymns she had composed, she had ever wished to change any of the sentiments expressed in them, Miss Crosby said, "No, I have made changes to improve the literary quality but I do not recall a single hymn I regret having written. I believe I was inspired to write what I did, that what I did was of a higher power, and that my best hymns performed their mission."

Miss Crosby has not always been a writer of sacred songs, and it is a constant source of regret to her that so many pretty airs are wasted on verses totally unworthy of them. She thinks that much could be done to elevate these pieces and has expressed her willingness to try it sometime herself. "Blue Bell" is one of her favorites and her mind is one of the prettiest things along that line she has ever heard.

Miss Crosby had the distinction of being the first woman whose voice was ever publicly heard in the Senate chamber at Washington. This was way back in the '50s when she read a poem.

Although nearly to her journey's end, Fanny Crosby will leave a living monument in the hearts of the people, which time will fall to crumble or wear away.

Listowel, Ont.