

Fanny Crosby

And Her Great Love for Jesus

On March 24, 1820, Fanny Crosby was born to Christian parents in a humble home in New York State, USA.

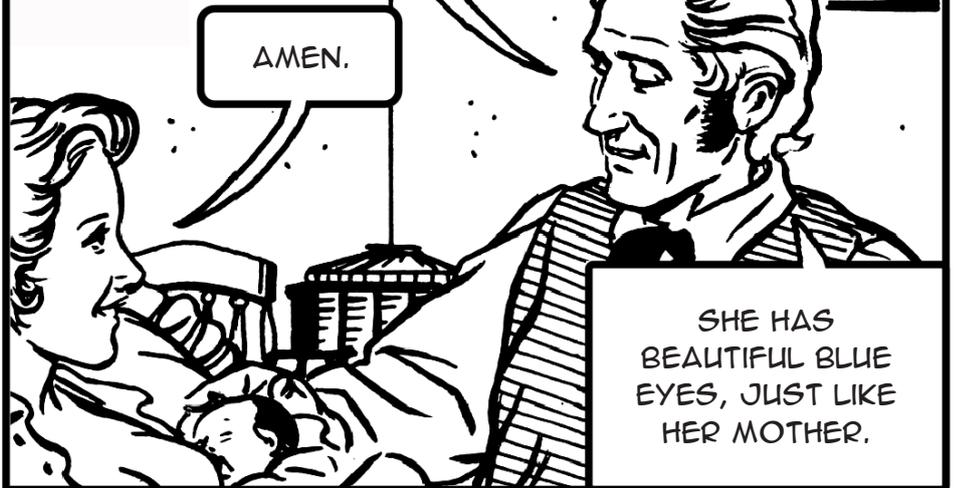


CONGRATULATIONS, MRS. CROSBY! YOU'RE THE MOTHER OF A BEAUTIFUL BABY GIRL.

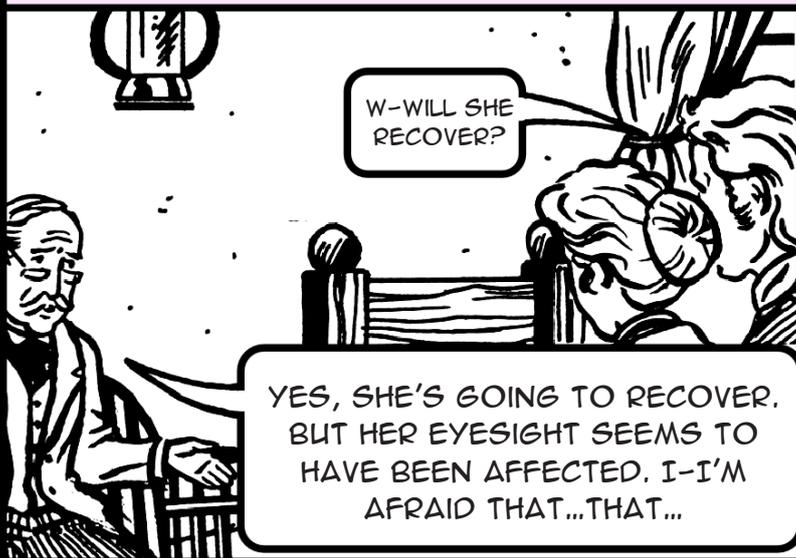


MAY THE GOOD LORD BLESS THIS CHILD AND USE HER LIFE FOR HIS GLORY.

AMEN.



But when Fanny was only six weeks old, she became very sick.



One year later the Crosbys suffered another tragedy. Fanny's father was suddenly taken ill.



PLEASE DON'T WEEP FOR ME, DEAREST. I WILL SOON BE WITH JESUS! MY ONLY CONCERN IS FOR YOU AND FANNY.

MY DARLING, DON'T WORRY. YOU KNOW THAT GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF US.



PLEASE ASK MY MOTHER TO COME AND LIVE WITH YOU. MOTHER CAN HELP YOU TAKE CARE OF FANNY.



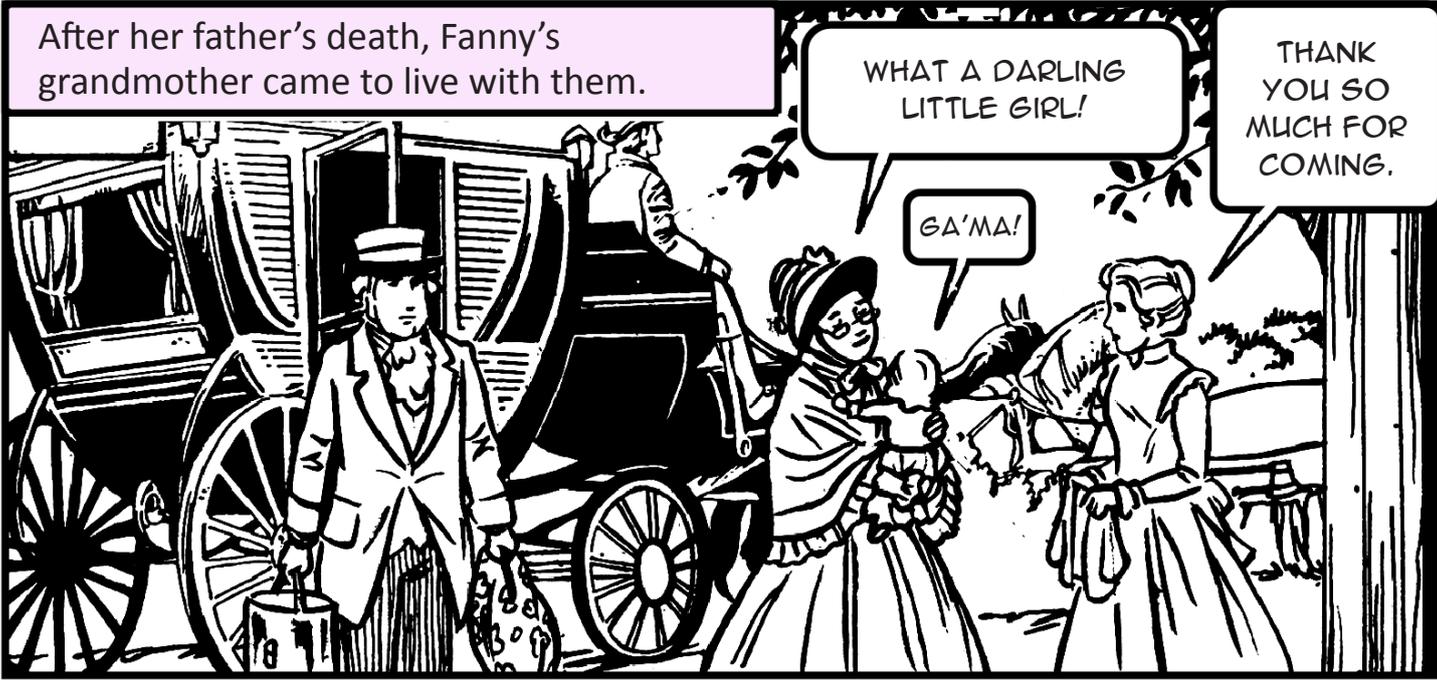
PLEASE TAKE ... TAKE GOOD CARE OF HER.... SHE'S SUCH A ...

SPECIAL CHILD....



OH! DEAR JOHN!

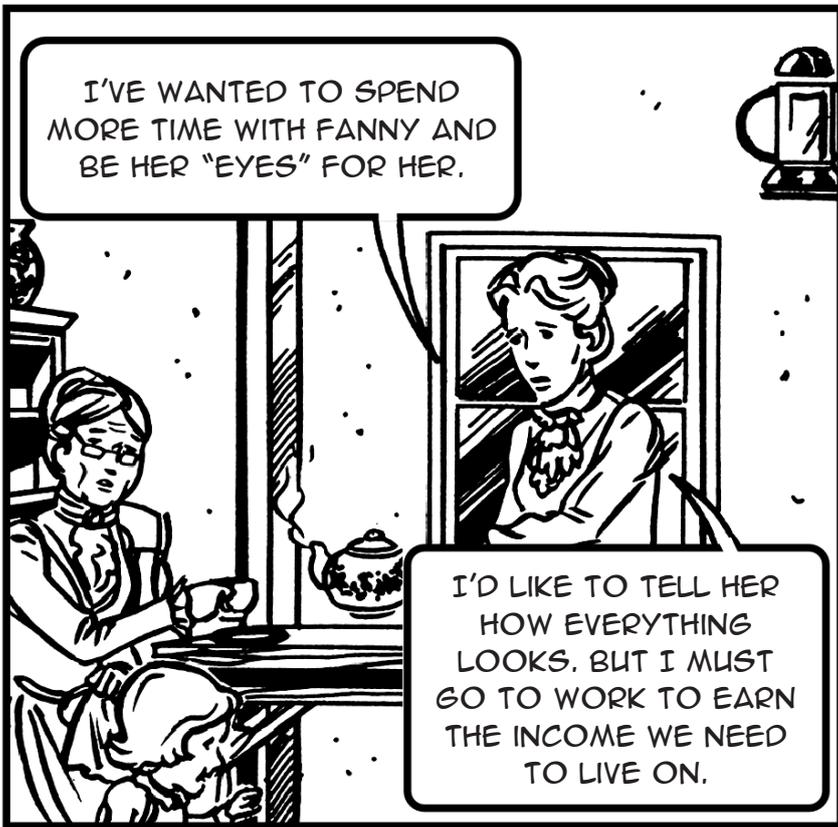
After her father's death, Fanny's grandmother came to live with them.



WHAT A DARLING LITTLE GIRL!

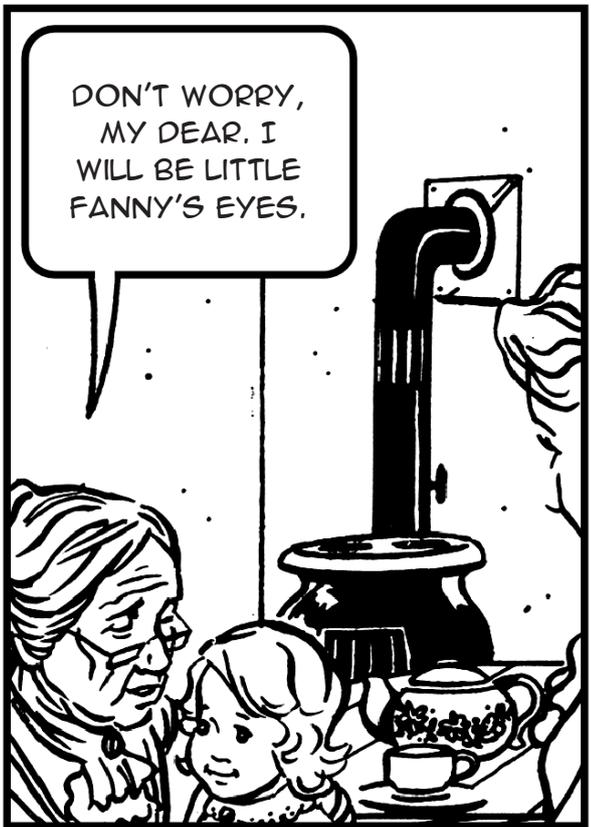
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING.

GA'MA!



I'VE WANTED TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH FANNY AND BE HER "EYES" FOR HER.

I'D LIKE TO TELL HER HOW EVERYTHING LOOKS. BUT I MUST GO TO WORK TO EARN THE INCOME WE NEED TO LIVE ON.

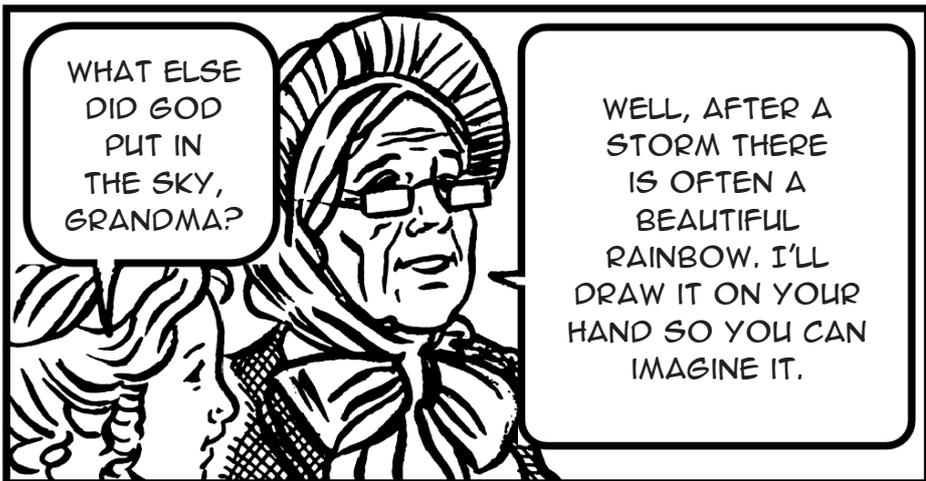


DON'T WORRY, MY DEAR. I WILL BE LITTLE FANNY'S EYES.

As Fanny grew, her grandmother spent much time with her, telling her about the beauties of God's creation. Together they would explore the woods and listen to the birds, or sit on top of a hill.

WHAT ARE CLOUDS LIKE, GRANDMA?

THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL! LIKE FLUFFY COTTON PUFFS IN THE SKY THAT, AS IF BY MAGIC, KEEP CHANGING SHAPE AND FORM.



WHAT ELSE DID GOD PUT IN THE SKY, GRANDMA?

WELL, AFTER A STORM THERE IS OFTEN A BEAUTIFUL RAINBOW. I'LL DRAW IT ON YOUR HAND SO YOU CAN IMAGINE IT.



OOOOH!

SIT ON MY LAP AND I'LL TELL YOU THE STORY OF NOAH, AND HOW GOD MADE THE FIRST RAINBOW AS A SIGN THAT HE WOULD NEVER AGAIN COVER THE EARTH WITH A FLOOD.



Fanny liked the times that her grandma told her stories from the Bible best of all.

THE STORIES ARE SO BEAUTIFUL, GRANDMA! OH, HOW I WISH I COULD READ THEM TOO.

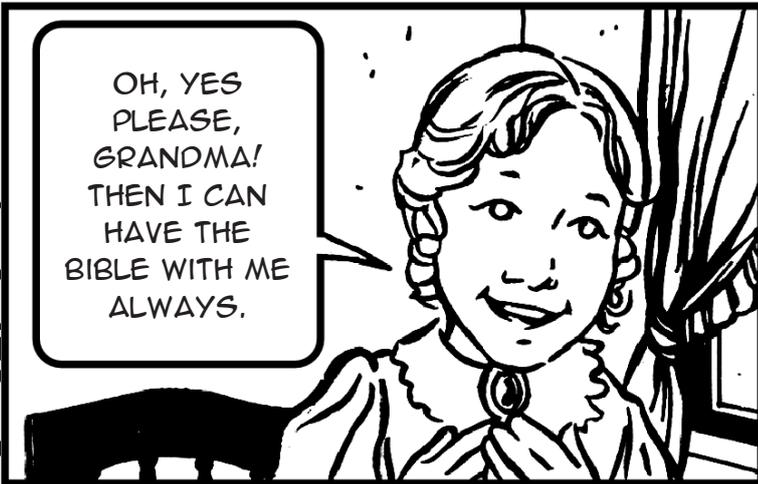


FANNY, I HAVE A SPLENDID IDEA!

SINCE YOU CAN'T SEE TO READ THE VERSES IN THE BIBLE, I'M GOING TO HELP YOU MEMORIZE THEM.



OH, YES PLEASE, GRANDMA! THEN I CAN HAVE THE BIBLE WITH ME ALWAYS.



Soon Fanny had learned many verses, Psalms, and Proverbs, and the whole book of Ruth by heart.

On her eighth birthday.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR FANNY!



THANK YOU, MAMA! MAY I HELP LIGHT THE CANDLES, PLEASE?

OH, IF GOD WOULD GRANT ME ONE WISH FOR NEXT YEAR, IT WOULD BE THAT I COULD SEE!



MY SWEET ONE, SO MANY TIMES WE'VE PRAYED FOR YOUR EYESIGHT. ALTHOUGH NOW YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY GOD HAS LET THIS HAPPEN, ONE DAY YOU SURELY WILL.



DID YOU KNOW, FANNY, THAT MANY FAMOUS PEOPLE OF THE PAST WERE BLIND, LIKE JOHN MILTON? HE WAS A GREAT POET THAT LIVED IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

REALLY?

IN FACT, MANY OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS PEOPLE HAD SERIOUS HANDICAPS. BEETHOVEN COMPOSED SOME OF HIS GREATEST SYMPHONIES AFTER HE BECAME DEAF.

IT'S A MASTERPIECE! WHAT A GENIUS! WHAT DEPTH OF FEELING.

WHY DOESN'T HE TURN AROUND WHEN WE CLAP?

YOU SEE, FANNY, SOMETIMES WHEN GOD HAS ALLOWED ONE GIFT TO BE LOST, HE GIVES US A BETTER ONE.

HE DOESN'T KNOW THAT WE ARE APPLAUDING. REMEMBER, HE'S NOW DEAF.

YES, GRANDMA.

The next day.

GOOD MORNING, MOMMY!

GOOD MORNING, FANNY! YOU LOOK HAPPY!

MOMMY, LAST NIGHT I WAS THINKING ABOUT WHAT GRANDMA SAID ABOUT BEETHOVEN AND JOHN MILTON, THE POET, AND I DECIDED TO COMPOSE A POEM. WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR IT?

OH, THAT'S SWEET. YES, PLEASE, DEAR!

*O, what a happy soul I am,
Although I cannot see,
I am resolved that in this world
Contented I will be.*



*How many blessings I enjoy
That other people don't.
To weep and sigh because I'm blind,
I cannot, and I won't!*



MAMA, I CAN HEAR YOU CRYING. DID I MAKE YOU SAD?



OH NO, MY DEAR. I'M JUST CRYING BECAUSE IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL!— JUST SO BEAUTIFUL!



MAMA, LAST NIGHT I PROMISED GOD THAT I WILL NEVER AGAIN BE BITTER ABOUT MY BLINDNESS, BUT RATHER ACCEPT IT AS A SPECIAL GIFT FROM HIM.

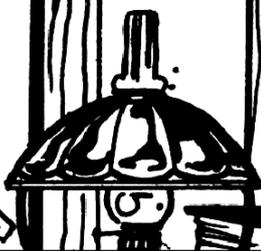


It was not until Fanny was fifteen that her mother had saved enough money for her to be able to study at the Institute for the Blind in New York. It was there that she began to write more poetry.

EXCUSE ME, TEACHER! I COMPOSED A POEM LAST NIGHT. WOULD YOU PLEASE WRITE IT DOWN FOR ME?



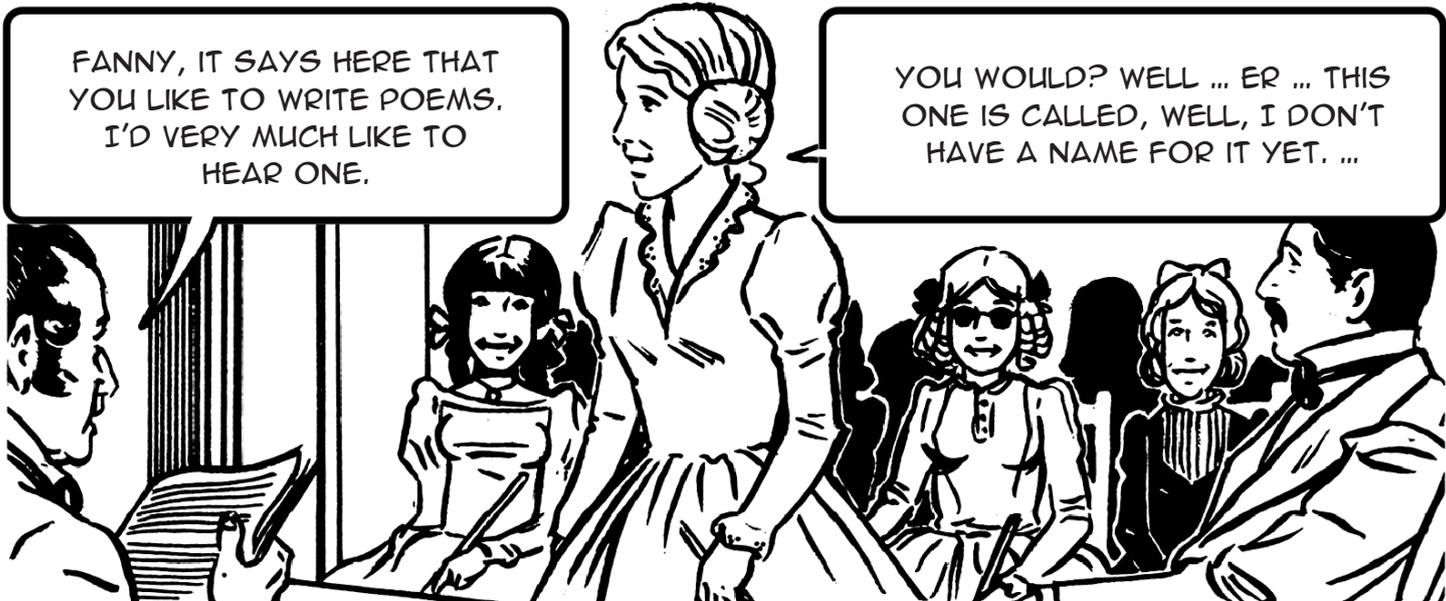
ANOTHER POEM? OH, WELL ... ER ... YES, FANNY, I'LL TRY TO FIND THE TIME LATER.



At first her teachers and friends tried to discourage her.



Then one day a doctor came to examine the students.



YOU HAVE A REAL POETESS HERE, MR. CLEVELAND!
YOU SHOULD GIVE HER EVERY POSSIBLE
ENCOURAGEMENT. YOU WILL HEAR GREAT THINGS
FROM THIS LADY ONE DAY.

OH, THANK YOU,
DOCTOR! I'VE FELT
FOR A LONG TIME THAT
POETRY WRITING IS TO
BE MY CALLING. I JUST
NEEDED SOMEONE TO
ENCOURAGE ME IN IT.



This praise and encouragement was just what Fanny needed.

The school principal, Mr. Grover Cleveland,
offered his help.



FORTY POEMS?! YOU
MEAN, ALL AT ONCE?!
IN YOUR MIND?
WITHOUT WRITING
THEM DOWN?

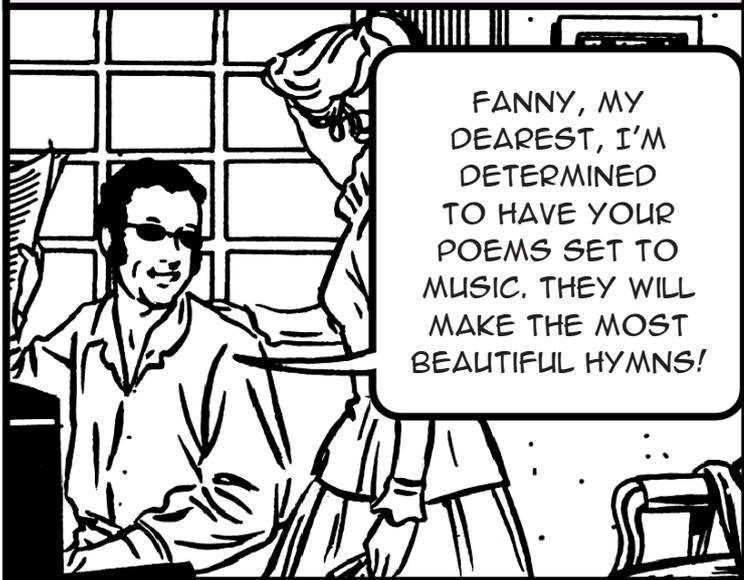
YES. GOD
ALLOWED ME TO
LOSE MY SIGHT,
BUT HE GAVE ME
OTHER GIFTS, LIKE
A GOOD MEMORY.

YOU'RE A REMARKABLE YOUNG
WOMAN, FANNY! I PROMISE TO
HELP YOU ALL THAT I CAN.



Fanny Crosby spent twenty-three years at the Institute, first as a student, and then as a teacher. She married a blind singer named Alexander Van Alstyne.

God gave them a little baby who soon went to be with Jesus.



FANNY, MY DEAREST, I'M DETERMINED TO HAVE YOUR POEMS SET TO MUSIC. THEY WILL MAKE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HYMNS!



I KNOW WE'RE GOING TO MISS OUR DEAR SON!

I'LL MISS CUDDLING HIM IN MY ARMS! BUT I KNOW THAT HE'S SAFE IN THE ARMS OF JESUS NOW!

THE LORD GAVE ME THIS POEM FOR OUR DEPARTED LITTLE ONE.

*Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o'er-shaded
Sweetly my soul shall rest!
Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe from corroding care,
Safe from the world's temptations,
Sin cannot harm me there!¹*



¹ "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" was to become one of Fanny's best-known hymns.

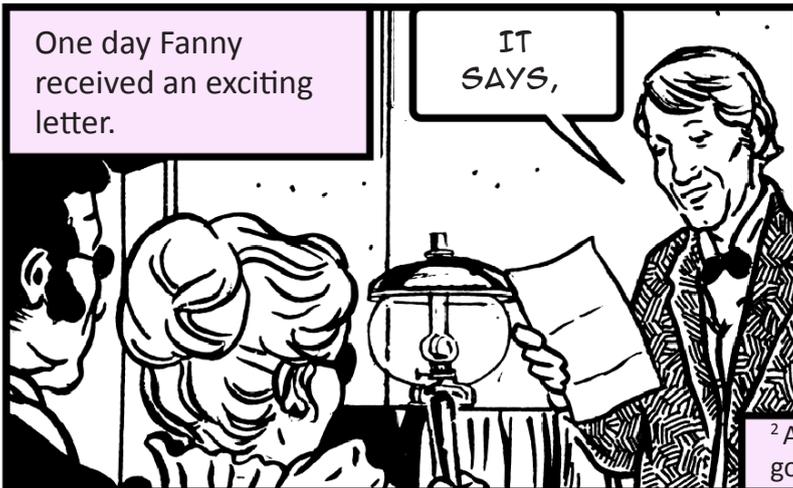
One day Fanny received an exciting letter.

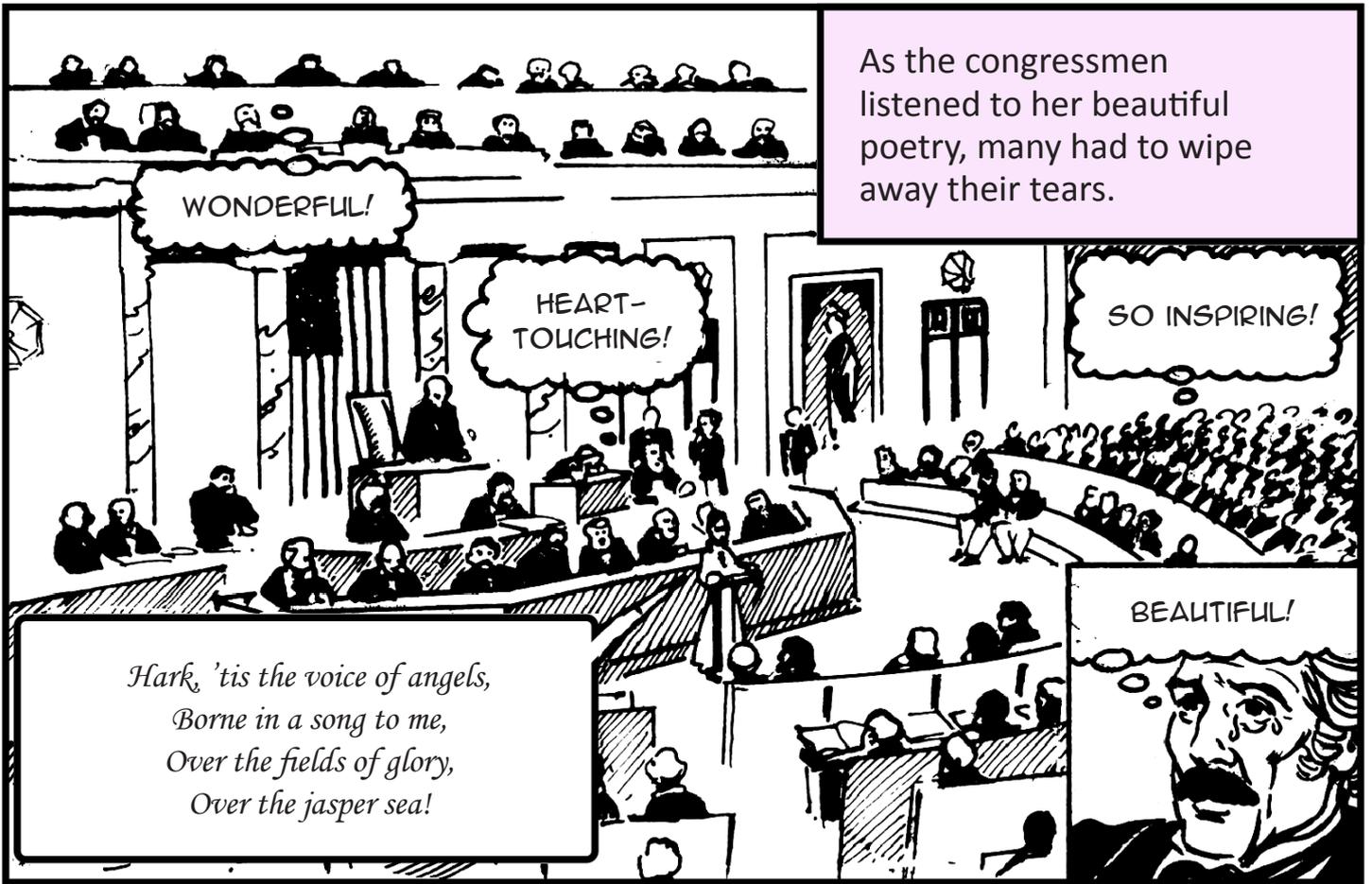
IT SAYS,

*My dearest Fanny,
When I left the Institute, I went into politics and am now a congressman.² I've arranged for you to recite your poems before the U.S. Congress. Please come!*

*Your dear friend,
Grover Cleveland*

² An important member of the United States' government.





As the congressmen listened to her beautiful poetry, many had to wipe away their tears.

WONDERFUL!

HEART-TOUCHING!

SO INSPIRING!

*Hark, 'tis the voice of angels,
Borne in a song to me,
Over the fields of glory,
Over the jasper sea!*



BEAUTIFUL!

ON BEHALF OF THE U.S. CONGRESS, I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR INSPIRING US ALL WITH YOUR WONDERFUL POEMS! IT'S AMAZING HOW YOU'VE MANAGED TO OVERCOME YOUR HANDICAP.



THANK YOU, MR. CLEVELAND! BUT REALLY IT IS NO HANDICAP.

I AM THANKFUL FOR MY BLINDNESS, BECAUSE IT GIVES ME SO MUCH TIME FOR PRAYER AND QUIET THOUGHT. THERE WILL BE TIME ENOUGH IN HEAVEN FOR ME TO SEE EVERYTHING!



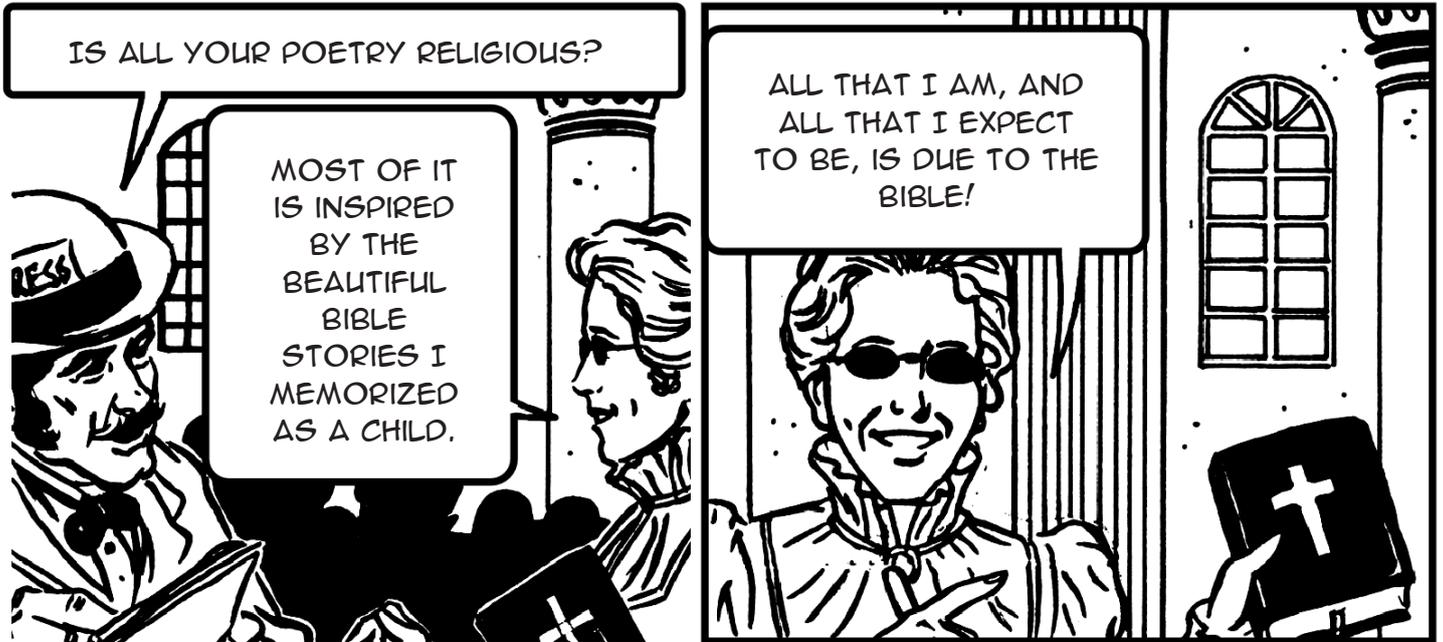
After the meeting.

LADY, ANYONE WHO CAN MOVE THOSE HARD-HEADED POLITICIANS BY READING THEM POETRY MUST BE AMAZING!

HOW DID YOU DO IT?



IT'S SIMPLY A GIFT FROM GOD.



As a result of her visit to Congress, Fanny Crosby made many friends in the government. Later she was thrilled when her friend Grover Cleveland became president of the United States!



The gifted poetess was always busy. When she wasn't writing, she was busy witnessing in missions and churches.

Many of her hymns were inspired by her witnessing experiences, great hymns like "Rescue the Perishing" and "Behold Me at the Door."



Ira D. Sankey, the great gospel singer at Moody-Sankey³ revivals, helped to make Fanny's songs world famous.

³ Dwight L. Moody was an American evangelist in the nineteenth century who won many to Jesus.

*I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith,
And be closer drawn to Thee.*

*Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious bleeding side.*



Fanny had a great love for children. They included her in their games, told her of their joys, and came to her for comfort.

HELLO,
CHILDREN!

AUNT FANNY!
PLEASE
COME OUT
AND PLAY
WITH US!

AUNT
FANNY,
YOU'RE OUR
VERY BEST
FRIEND!

AUNT
FANNY,
YOU'RE SO
MUCH FUN
TO TALK TO!

PLEASE,
AUNT
FANNY,
TELL US A
STORY?

I HEAR YOUR
SWEET VOICES
ASK ME THAT
SO MANY TIMES
A DAY! SO I'VE
WRITTEN YOU A
SPECIAL SONG
THAT GOES:

*Tell me the story of Jesus,
Write on my heart every word.
Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard.*

*Tell how the angels in chorus
Sang as they welcomed His birth.
"Glory to God in the highest!
Peace and good tidings to earth."*

*Tell of the cross where they nailed Him,
Writhing in anguish and pain.
Tell of the grave where they laid Him,
But tell how He liveth again.*



One day.

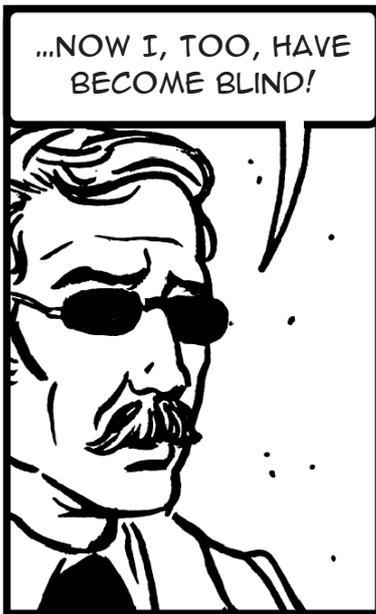
EXCUSE ME, MA'AM. THERE'S A MR. SANKEY HERE TO SEE YOU.



IRA! WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE!



DEAR FANNY, I'VE COME TO YOU FOR COMFORT! RECENTLY I BECAME ILL, AND...



...NOW I, TOO, HAVE BECOME BLIND!



IT MUST BE A TIME OF GREAT DIFFICULTY FOR YOU, IRA.

BUT OUT OF LIFE'S SUFFERINGS COME SOME OF OUR RICHEST REWARDS.

Together the two blind workers for the Lord sang the hymns which the one had written and the other had made famous around the world.

*Take the world,
but give me
Jesus!*



On the evening of her ninetieth birthday, Fanny's friends had a party in her honor.



A TOAST! TO A TRULY GIFTED WOMAN, FANNY CROSBY!

AMEN!

YES!

FANNY, I THINK IT'S A GREAT MISFORTUNE THAT THE LORD DID NOT GIVE YOU SIGHT WHEN HE SHOWERED SO MANY OTHER GIFTS UPON YOU!



NOT AT ALL! YOU SEE, PASTOR, GOD HAS THE POWER TO TRANSFORM ALL "MISFORTUNES" INTO GODSENDS.



IN FACT, DO YOU KNOW THAT IF BEFORE BIRTH I HAD BEEN ABLE TO MAKE ONE REQUEST, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THAT I SHOULD BE BORN BLIND.



BECAUSE WHEN I GET TO HEAVEN, THE FIRST FACE THAT SHALL EVER GLADDEN MY SIGHT WILL BE THAT OF MY SAVIOR, JESUS!



On February 11, 1915, at the age of 95, Fanny Crosby went to be with the Lord. Long before the funeral service began, the church was packed with ministers, statesmen, songwriters, boys and girls.—All of them Fanny's friends!

She had 8,000 published hymns, and many were sung that day.



AND NOW WE'LL SING A HYMN THAT EXPRESSED FANNY'S HEART'S DESIRE, "TO SEE MY SAVIOR FIRST OF ALL!"

*When my life's work is ended
And I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;
I shall know my Redeemer
When I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.*



*Oh, the soul-thrilling rapture
When I view His blessed face,
And the luster of His kindly beaming eye!
How my full heart will praise Him,
For the mercy, love and grace
That prepare for me
A mansion in the sky!*



*Oh, the dear ones in glory,
How they beckon me to come,
And our parting by the river I recall!
To the sweet vales of Eden
They will sing my welcome home;
They will sing my welcome home;
But I long to see my Savior first of all.*



*Through the gates of the City
In a robe of spotless white,
He will lead me where no tears will ever fall.
In the glad song of ages
I shall mingle with delight;
But I long to see my Savior first of all.*

