

warned the players of their danger and duty. Under a divine influence she went straightway to the house of their cousin, Philip Embury, and "falling prostrate" before him, she appealed to him to be no longer silent, "entreatings him with tears." With a keen sense of the spiritual danger of the little flock, she exclaimed, "You must preach to us or we shall all go to hell together, and God will require our blood at your hand."

"I cannot preach, for I have neither house nor congregation," he replied.

Nevertheless, at her earnest appeal, he consented to preach in "his own hired house," and this mother in Israel sallied forth and collected four persons, who constituted his first audience.

"Small as it was," says Dr. Stevens, "it included white and black, bond and free." The name of Barbara Heck is first on the list, with her was her husband, Paul Heck; beside him sat John Lawrence, his "hired man;" and by her side an African servant called "Betty." Thus Methodism in America began its ministration among the poor and lowly, destined within a century to cover with its agencies a vast continent, and to establish its missions in every quarter of the globe.

At the close of this first Methodist sermon ever preached on this continent, Philip Embury organized his congregation into a class, which he continued to meet from week to week. This little company continued to increase, and soon grew too large for Philip Embury's house. They hired a more commodious room which was immediately crowded. "No small excitement," says Dr. Stevens, "began quickly to prevail in the city on account of the meetings." One day the humble assembly was a good deal startled by the appearance among them of a military officer with scarlet coat, epaulettes, and sword. The first impression was that he had come in the King's name to prohibit their meetings. They were soon agreeably undeceived. In the good and brave Captain Webb, they found a fast friend and a fellow-labourer in the Lord. He was one of Wesley's local preachers, who, sent with his regiment to America, lost his right eye at the siege of Louisburg, under Wolfe. At New York he found out the Methodists and gladly cast in his lot with them. He soon took his stand at Embury's preaching desk, "with his sword on it by the side of the open Bible," and declared to the people the word of life. The preaching of the soldier-saint roused the whole city. For the ten years that he continued in America he was the chief founder of Methodism on the continent, preaching everywhere among the seaboard towns and villages.

In 1767 the famous "Rigging Loft," in William Street, was hired for the growing New York congregation; but "it could not," says a contemporary writer, "contain half the people who desired to hear the word of the Lord." The necessity for a larger place of worship became imperative, but where could this humble congregation obtain the means for its erection? Barbara Heck, full of faith, made it a subject of prayer, and received in her soul, with inexpressible assurance, the answer, "I, the Lord, will do it." She proposed a plan for the erection of the church, and the first structure of Methodism in the western hemisphere

was a monument of this devoted woman.

A site on John Street, now in the very heart of the city, was procured, and a chapel of stone, faced with blue plaster, was in course of time erected. As Dissenters were not allowed to erect "regular churches" in the city, in order to avoid the penalties of the law, it was provided with a fireplace and chimney. Its interior, though long unfinished, was described as "very neat and clean, and the floor sprinkled over with sand as white as snow." "Embury being a skilful carpenter, wrought diligently upon its structure; and Barbara Heck, rejoicing in the work of her hands, helped to whitewash its walls." There were at first no stairs or breastwork to the gallery; it was reached by a rude ladder. The seats on the ground floor were plain benches without backs. Embury constructed with his own hands its pulpit; and on the memorable 30th of October, 1768, mounted the desk he had made and dedicated the humble temple to the worship of God. It received the name of 'Wesley Chapel,' and was the first in the world to receive that honoured name.

Within two years we hear of at least a thousand hearers crowding the chapel and the space in front. It has been more than once reconstructed since then, but a portion of the first building is still visible. A wooden clock, brought from Ireland by Philip Embury, still marks the hours of worship.

Methodism having now been established by lay agency in the largest city in the New World, it was soon destined to be planted, by the same means, in other parts of the country. John Wesley, at the request of Captain Webb and other Methodists in America, had sent from England as missionaries, to carry on the good work begun in New York, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmor, the pioneers of an army of twenty thousand Methodist preachers on this continent. To those Philip Embury readily gave up his pulpit, and shortly after, in 1770, removed with his family, together with Paul and Barbara Heck, and other Irish Methodists, to Salem, N. Y., near Lake Champlain.

Captain Webb had the honour of being the founder of Methodism in Philadelphia, and in many other places on the Atlantic seaboard. The honour of preaching the first Methodist sermon in Baltimore, belongs to John King, an English local preacher, who landed at Philadelphia in 1769. His pulpit on the occasion of his advent at Baltimore was a blacksmith's block, as represented in the picture on page

The grounds in the distance now comprise one of the finest portions of Baltimore, containing, among other notable structures, the famous Washington Monument, and the elegant Mount Vernon Place M. E. Church. Here in 1784 was organized the first Methodist Conference in America, an event which is now being celebrated by over 10,000,000 of Methodists.

Meanwhile the Hecks and Emburies in their new home sought to scatter the good seed of the kingdom in the hearts of their neighbours. Embury continued his labours as a faithful local preacher, and soon among the scattered settlers was formed a "class." Embury seems to have won the confidence and esteem of his rural neighbours no less for his business efficiency

and judgment than for his piety, as we find him officiating as magistrate as well as preacher. He received, while mowing in his field, in the summer of 1775—the year of the outbreak of the Revolutionary War—so severe an injury that he died suddenly, at the early age of forty-five. He was buried, after the manner of the primitive settlers, on the farm on which he had lived and laboured. After reposing fifty-seven years in his solitary grave without a memorial, his remains were disinterred with solemn ceremonies, and borne by a large procession to the Ashgrove burial-ground, shown in our engraving.

The loyal Irish Methodists would not share the revolt against the Mother Country. On the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, therefore, they removed to Lower Canada, in 1775. Here they remained for ten years, chiefly in Montreal. Although we have scanty record of that period we cannot doubt that the religious fervour of Barbara Heck did not slumber during that long period.

In 1785 a number of the exiles removed to Upper Canada, then newly organized as a colony, and settled in the township of Augusta, on the River St. Lawrence. Among these were John Lawrence and Catharine his wife, who was the widow of Philip Embury; Paul and Barbara Heck, and other Irish Methodists. True to their providential mission, they became the founders and pioneers of Methodism in Upper Canada, as they had been in the United States. A "class" was organized, of which Samuel Embury, walking in the footsteps of his sainted father, was the first leader.

The first Methodist meeting-house in Canada was built at Hay Bay, Adolphustown, on the beautiful Bay of Quinte. It was a barn-like, wooden structure, thirty-six feet by thirty, two stories high, with galleries. On the subscription list appear the names of Embury, Buckle, and others whose memory is associated forever with the introduction of Methodism to this continent and to this Dominion. The same year also died, at his home at Augusta, in the faith of the Gospel, Paul Heck, aged sixty-two years.

Barbara Heck survived him about twelve years, and died at the residence of her son, Samuel Heck, in 1804, aged seventy years. "Her death," writes Dr. Stevens, "was besetting her life; her old German Bible, the guide of her youth in Ireland, her inseparable companion in all her wanderings in the wilderness of Northern New York and Canada, was her oracle and comfort to the last. She was found sitting in her chair dead, with the well-used and endeared volume open on her lap. And thus passed away this devoted, obscure, and unpretentious woman, who so faithfully, yet unconsciously, laid the foundations of one of the grandest ecclesiastical structures of modern ages, and whose name shall shine with ever-increasing brightness as long as the sun and moon endure.

Many of the descendants of the Embury and Heck families occupy prominent positions in our Church in Canada, and many more have died happy in the Lord. Philip Embury's great-great-grandson, John Torrance, jun., Esq., long filled the honourable and responsible position of treasurer and trustee steward of three of the

largest Methodist churches in Montreal.

On the banks of the majestic St. Lawrence, about midway between the thriving town of Prescott and the picturesque village of Maitland, lies a lonely graveyard, which is one of the most hallowed spots in the broad area of our country. Here, on a gentle rising ground overlooking the rushing river, is the quiet "God's acre" in which slumbers the dust of that saintly woman who is honoured in two hemispheres as the mother of Methodism on this continent in both the United States and Canada. This spot known as the "Old Blue Church Yard," takes its name from an ancient church, now demolished, which once wore a coat of blue paint. The forest trees which cover this now sacred scene were cleared away by hands which have long since ceased from their labour and been laid in the quiet of those peaceful graves. Thither devout men, amid the tears of weeping neighbours and friends, bore the remains of Paul Heck and of Barbara his wife. Here, too, slumbers the dust of the once beautiful Catharine Sweitzer, who, in her early youth, gave her heart and hand to Philip Embury, and for love's sweet sake braved the perils of the stormy deep and the privations of pioneer life in the New World. Here sleep also, till the resurrection trump awake them, the bodies of several of the early Methodists and of many of their descendants, who, by their patient toil, their earnest faith, their fervent zeal, have helped to make our country what it is to-day.

The Methodists of the United States worthily honour the memory of Barbara Heck on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the organizing of Methodism in that land.

"Barbara Heck" writes, Dr. C. H. Fowler, "put her brave soul against the rugged possibilities of the future, and throbbled into existence American Methodism. The leaven of her grace has leavened a continent. The seed of her piety has grown into a tree so immense that a whole flock of commonwealths come and lodge in the branches thereof, and its mellow fruits drop into a million homes. To have planted American Methodism; to have watered it with holy tears; to have watched and nourished it with the tender, sleepless love of a mother, and the pious devotion of a saint; to have called out the first minister, convened the first congregation, met the first class, and planned the first Methodist church edifice, and to have secured its completion, is to have merited a monument as enduring as American institutions, and, in the order of Providence, it has received a monument which the years cannot crumble; as enduring as the Church of God. The life-work of Barbara Heck finds its counterpart in the living energies of the Church she founded."

As we contemplate the lowly life of this true mother in Israel, and the marvellous results of which she was providentially the initiating cause, we cannot help exclaiming in devout wonder and thanksgiving, "What hath God wrought!" In the United States and Canada there are at this moment, as the outgrowth of seed sown in weakness over a century ago, a great Church organization, like a vast banyan tree, overspreading the continent, beneath whose broad canopy ten millions of souls, as members or