

Written for the LADIES' PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

## In Memoriam.

ON THE DEATH OF SIR ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, MAY 24th, 1892.

Across the May-day sunlight falls the gloom  
Cast by thy Shadow, King of Terrors. Thou  
Ere that it dawned, hadst't, by thy stern decree,  
Muffled its joy-bells. Ere its noon was past,  
Instead of gladness, desolation reigned—  
Yet, dare we not to murmur. But rejoice  
That the rough road hath found at last the gate—  
Thy gate, oh Death!—that leads to endless rest.  
That from the burden all too bravely borne,  
Thou hast released him. Peace, eternal piece,  
Was in thy gift. We bow to thy decree,  
Oh, Death ill-named, whose truer name is Life!

LEE WYNDHAM.

## Old Hester's Tea-Talk.



FORTY odd years ago there prowled about the streets of the quaint little city of Perth Amboy, N. J., a queer character known as old Aunt Hester. She was a bit of driftwood from old colonial times, stranded on the shores of modern habits, and completely alien to her surroundings, although born in the place. It was hard to determine if she were white or black; though of course she was accounted colored, according to the strange law which classes as tall negroes, all those who may have the faintest strain of negro-blood, though they may be seven-eighths white. Still, old Aunt Hester was by no means so white as that; she was probably a quadroon, whitened somewhat by the pallor of extreme age.

At the time referred to, no living being claimed kinship with her; and but for the benevolence of a kind-hearted old clergyman, who allowed her a small apartment in his wide garret, she would have been homeless. The little she ate, and the few old rags she wore,—mostly the cast off garments of kindly parishioners—made no perceptible drain, even upon the pitiful clerical salary of those times. In return the old soul doubtless could render some light domestic services to nearly the last of her days.

However, it was her outer life that fell more under my view. On fine days her bent figure, clothed in motley garments of varied, though of varied hues, and comprising articles of both male and female attire, was a sight calculated to inspire terror in timid little hearts. She usually wore old masculine boots, and always had her head swathed in bright cotton handkerchiefs, surmounted by a man's straw hat, tied down over her ears by a string under her chin. She carried a stout stick with which she overturned all the rubbish of the gutters, selecting everything that was saleable, and stuffing therewith an old bag she invariably carried. In this way she doubtless earned a few pennies for tobacco or other little personal wants. She groped along muttering and munching, taking no notice of anything but her hunting fields—the gutters. Nevertheless, her appearance was always the signal for shy little girls, like myself, to fly to some safe shelter. Yet the poor old creature was as harmless as a babe.

One day when I was hanging over the old-fashioned Dutch half-door of our front hall, I saw the old woman hobbling by. A summer shower was falling, and my kind-hearted mother catching sight of her at the moment, said:

"There's poor old Aunt Hester out in the rain! She'll be worse with her rheumatism if she gets wet. Call her, Pet, and tell her to come under the porch till the shower is over."

Dear mother had no idea of my foolish fear of the old woman, and suddenly ashamed of it myself, I summoned up my courage and called:

"Aunt Hester! oh, Aunt Hester! Mother says come under the porch out of the rain, or you'll get sick."

The old creature looked up as if bewildered, but upon my repeating the invitation, she turned in at our gate, and came up on the broad, sheltered porch. This brought her nearer to me than I ever had been before, and I wondered that I had so long dreaded one so weak and feeble. Mother asked her to go to the kitchen to get something hot, but she declined; servants were not wont to be very considerate to her. So mother sent me to fetch a cup of hot tea and some biscuits, while she talked gently to the lonely old soul.

When I returned with my tray, I found her seated within the hall at a little table mother had placed for her, and while she sipped her tea, I resumed my seat by the door.

"Is it nice tea, Aunt Hester?" I asked.

"Yes, honey! nicest I've drank for many a long year. 'Most nice as the old timey guv'ment tea."

"What kind was that?"

"Oh! chile the nicest as ever was. Wat dey uster to hab in de ole Tea-House."

"The old Tea-House down by the shore? I know they call it the Tea-House, but I never knew any tea was kept there."

"Dere hasn't been none, honey, for many a long day; but dere uster be heaps ob it long syne."

"When?"

"Oh! afore de ole war."

"Oh, Aunt Hester! tell me all about it," I cried, all my child-

ish eagerness for a story awakened. "I'll get you lots more tea and toast."

Having replenished the tray, I asked, to set her going, "Where did all the tea come from?"

"Oh, honey, from ways off yonder," pointing with her cane over the broad bay. "The big ships uster come in, wid all dere wite sails set, looking so grand, jes' like big wite angels a-sailing in de clouds; and wen dey got up near de shore, de boys rowed out in de skiffs and bring de chists a shore and stowed 'em in de Tea-House. Dey come from ways, ways, far off," answered Aunt Hester, vaguely.

"What became of them," I asked.

"Well fust off, wen I was quite little, de rich folks uster buy it, do' it was pretty dear; but bime-bye it got dearer and dearer 'cos de tax was so high, and no one couldn't or wouldn't buy it no more. And it jes' stayed dar in de chists, and at las' some ships cum, and dey wouldn't let dem land no more tea anyhow, and dey jes' had to sail back again widout unloadin'. And I heern Mass'r Dunlap—my old mass'r—tell one mornin' 'bout some fellers down to Bridgeton, ways off Souf, who dressed up like Injins and bruk into dere Tea-House, smashed up de chists, and trew heaps of good tea into de ribber."

"I thought that was up at Boston," I said, remembering my history lessons.

"Mebby so," acquiesced Aunt Hester, "but dey did it at Bridgeton too—leastways Greenwich close by—for Mass'r Dunlap had been dere wisiting, and seen 'em wid his own eyes."

"Did they ever spill any in our river?"

"No, chile, not as I ever heerd on; but after the war bruk out dey selled it widout no tax. Dat was de time I uster git a cup now and den; and it was good," she added with gusto.

I laughed; my unfounded fear of the old creature had vanished, and I now regarded her as a well of delightful narratives; all the more fascinating for being true, and of native growth. To think that the old "Tea-House," now let out in rooms to poor families, and whose basements were used for oyster opening and packing, had actually played its part in the glorious Revolution, that we studied about in our histories. Oliver-like I thirsted for more.

"Was Amboy different then, Aunt Hester, from what it is now?" I asked tentatively.

"Laws, yes, honey, heaps different. De streets 're pretty much de same. Here's High street and dere's Smith street, wid de ole town well jes' where dey cross. And up yon's de market-house, on de green mound. Dere ain't no markets held dar now; but in dem days, afore de war, dere uster to be markets twict a week, Chews-days and Sat'days, and big fairs twict a year; and all de farmer folks come in airy in de mornin', and tied dere horses by de railin' round de town well, and selled dere truck in de market. And all de mass'r's and misseses took us boys and galls wid baskets to bring home wat dey buys, and we had rollicking and frolicking, and lots to eat."

"Were there many people here then?"

"Heaps more dan dere is now," answered the old woman, "and heaps grander. Dere were my folks—de Dunlaps—and de Kearneys, and de Parkers, and de Rattorne's, and de Bells, and de Marshes, and de Gordons, and de Hallidays, and more yet. And dey mostly had heaps of us 'people,' my mass'r more'n all."

"You had good times then?"

"Yes, indeedy! Dere were grand times at Brighton House where de Guv'n'r lived. De carriages would stream troo de windin' abenue, under de big trees, and cum sweepin' up to the great porico, filled wid fine-dressed ladies, and officers wid gold lace on dere coats. All cum to dinner, and a dance afterwards, ofen and ofen. I uster to go wid Miss Dunlap to see she was all right before goin' down-stairs, for I was her maid. We all had our own good times too, in de big servant's hall down stairs."

"Where did the officers come from?" asked I, who had never seen a soldier in all my little life.

"Why from de barracks, jes' out ob town, to be sure. Dere were heaps of soldiers dere den, hundreds of dem in dere red coats. And dey drilled mornin's and ebenin's, and had bands; and sometimes dey marched troo de streets, and didn't we chilluns lub to see dem! And on Sundays 'twas best of all. How dey marched wid dere band playing, and flags and banners; and passed up de aisle ob ole St. Peter's, and filled 'most all de pews; and Dominic Preston, de chaplain, preached powerful, and 'n ost made de gold dove fly of de top of de big sounding board ober his head. Oh, dem was de fine times!"

"And so you were really living all through the Revolution, Aunt Hester?"

"Yes, chile, but dem wasn't nice times no how. De rebels cotched Guv'n'r Franklin and sent him off to Connecticut; and de pretty church was turned into a hospital, and afterwards into a stable; and dere were heaps of drunken soldiers cum here—Hesians dey called dem—and Mass'r Dunlap got scairt, and we all moved to New York for awhile, till the wust was over."

"But, Aunt Hester, the Revolution was grand," said I, my patriotism aroused. "It gave us freedom."

"Well, yes, I know folks talk dat way now," admitted Aunt Hester. "But 'twasn't nice while it lasted, any ways. And as for freedom, we 'people' had heaps better times afore."

I did not comprehend the fond hankering of the old for the scenes and times of their youth; and my ideas of the glorious Revolution and its effects were somewhat shocked. To turn the subject a little, I asked:

"Did you ever see Gen. Washington, Aunt Hester?"

"No, Missey, but I seen Lord Howe and Lord Cornwallis heaps ob times. Lord Howe, he libed ober on Staten Island a while, wen he wasn't on his ship, in de ole Billop house on the Pint, jes' opposite. And Lord Cornwallis, he libed here in de Castle on de bank. Dey both a-wisited my mass'r, for we was king's

folks, not rebels," answered she, with a scornful note on the last word.

"But, Aunt Hester," I urged, "the rebels, as you call them, were right. Gen. Washington was one, and so was my grand-father."

I could not bear to have any reflection cast upon those I honored with all my childish enthusiasm.

"Well, honey," conceded the old woman, in an apologetic tone, "so dey says now; and perhaps dey's right. But in dose days all de grand folks heral-outs were king's folks mostly."

Just then mother appeared saying:

"You and my little daughter have had a nice long chat, Aunt Hester. I hope you enjoyed your tea."

"Yes, Misstis, thank ye," answered the old woman, rising and courtesying with dignity, notwithstanding her queer array, "and it was mighty good; and your little Missey has cheered up old Hester powerful."

"Well, come in again whenever you like, and you will always find a cup waiting for you," said mother, dismissing her kindly, for the shower was over; and so was my silly dread of a simple and harmless old woman, whose heart was buried in the past.

MAIDA BURTON.

## Our Weekly Sermons By Celebrated Divines.

Written specially for the LADIES PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

## Faith.

"Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."—Luke v. 4.

"Launch out into the deep." This was a call to new and untried effort, a call to go forward in faith, faith in Him Who spoke to them, faith in the fuller stores that God might have hidden in the depth when the inshore fisheries had failed them, faith in the love and power of the Lord which thus far they had tested only in the shallows, the edge that lay along the beach. Push forth now in a new venture of faith, for the deep is in God's hand and is full of God's mercy.

And this word, "Launch out into the deep," comes as a call to faith in a thousand different forms. Faith is called to make ventures, to push forward, to explore and to possess new fields. This is a characteristic feature of faith. It looks out into the unseen and wants to explore it; it scans into the wide ocean and wants to cross it; it sees the dream, the vision of new lines of enterprise and effort, and wants to turn the vision into reality, the dream into solid fact. We all tend to become custom-ridden, stupified by routine, moving day after day in old ruts, and so to decay through the stagnation of habit, the dry rot of use and wont. But faith steps out of the old familiar ruts, and moves forward to possess new fields, confident that there are always better things yet to be disclosed, richer treasures yet to be secured. It is faith that keeps life fresh; old customs tend to grow corrupt, but faith turns up new soils, brings to light the wealth of hidden depths, and puts forth like Columbus across strange, untravelled seas to open new lines of intercourse and to possess new continents. "Launch out into the deep" is thus the constant call to which faith is ready to respond, and this answering effort of faith, as it moves forward to test the untried depths of God's love and power, is the spring of what is noblest in human life. Let us try to illustrate this.

Christ's call to launch out into the deep, comes, for instance, to each of us in the field of personal religion. When He calls us to cease from trusting in ourselves or in any earthly connection and bids us trust in Him and in the abundant grace of God, is not this a call to launch out into the deep? We cling to the shore, we linger in the shallow waters, as if we were safer as long as we can trust the land. We rely on our friends, on the familiar influences of our homes, on the social helps and buttresses that may be round about us; and yet, so far as any spiritual good is concerned, any true religious experience or blessing, our life may be as barren as the labor of the disciples when they had toiled all night and had caught nothing. It is not until we answer Christ's call to put out that we reap any return. God's grace flows round about us like the wide and inexhaustible sea; but you cannot learn the fullness of its glory and of its treasures by lingering in the shallows where the sea plays upon the beach; to know these you must push out where you will feel nothing round about you or beneath you but this great, rich, sustaining sea of God's grace. Faith in that grace is like a boy's effort at swimming; as long as he lets even a tiptoe touch the earth, or clings to any support, he is not a swimmer; he must strike out, trusting only to the water to bear him up, and as he does so he finds that the water justifies his faith.

Or faith in Christ might be likened to the stroke that sets free the newly built vessel to move down the launch-ways into the sea. Months have been spent in building, but at last the hour has come when all is ready for the launch. The sea lies waiting in sunny brightness to receive the ship; one final decisive blow is struck; and she moves gently, yet resistlessly, into the water, to float there in her fitting element and to fulfil by many a voyage the purpose for which she was built.

So the soul needs but the sharp, decisive stroke of faith to slip into the ocean of God's abundant grace, where alone it can fulfil the purpose and perform the work for which it was created. And is there not many a soul that, from lack of this decisive act of faith, remains useless as a ship on the stocks, in danger of nothing there through long delay? All the work spent on the ship is labor lost if she never leaves the stocks; and all the love and labor banished on a human soul is love's labor lost unless that soul will launch forth and make personal proof of the grace of God.