

Choice Literature.

SALEM: A TALE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

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CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

The next one brought upon the stand was Tituba, the Indian slave-woman. As we have already said, this would seem to have been a stroke of policy. The fact of her having been one of their own number being calculated to disarm suspicion, while it is evident she had been in full council with the accusers, was under their control, and was well instructed as to all that she was to say and do.

To this end she begins, like the other two, by declaring her entire innocence, at which the children appear to be greatly tormented; but as she begins to confess, the children grow quiet, and she herself becomes afflicted before the eyes of the magistrates and the awe-stricken crowd, who look on in blind belief and shuddering horror.

The object of all this was undoubtedly to show that the moment she confessed her sin, and repented of it, she had broken loose from her compact with the devil, and her power to afflict others had ceased at once; and the devil was wreaking his vengeance upon her through some other of his many confederates.

By her confession and repentance she had passed from the condition of an afflicter, and had herself become one of the afflicted ones, an in-accuser, naming Sarah Good, Sarah Osburn and others as afflicting and tormenting herself and the children.

Her whole story is full of absurd and monstrous fancies of devils, etc., and we will give some portions of her examination, as it serves to show the character of the woman, her intimate knowledge of all the children had said and done, and also showing by her own wild and unnatural images the impure sources from which the pagan lore of the children was derived. The examination commenced exactly like the two others.

"Tituba, what evil spirits have you familiarity with?" And, like the others, she answered, "None."
"Why do you hurt these children?"
"I do not hurt them."
"Who is it, then, that does?"
"The devil, for aught I know."
"Did you ever see the devil?"
"The devil came to me and bid me serve him."
"Who have you seen?"
"Our women sometimes hurt the children."
"And who were they?"
"Goody Osburn and Sarah Good. I don't know who the others were. Sarah Good and Osburn would have me hurt the children, but I would not."
"When did you see them?"
"Last night at Boston."
"What did they say to you?"
"They said 'Hurt the children.'"
"And did you hurt them?"
"No. There is four women and one man—they hurt the children, and they lay all upon me. They tell me if I will not hurt the children, they will hurt me."
"But did you not hurt them?"
"Yes, but I will hurt them no more."
"Are you sorry that you did hurt them?"
"Yes."
"And why, then, do you hurt them?"
"They say, 'hurt the children, or we will do worse to you.'"
"What have you seen?"
"A man come to me and said, 'Serve me.'"
"What service?"
"Hurt the children. Last night there was an appearance that said, 'Hurt the children.' And if I would not go on hurting the children, they would soon do worse to me."
"What is this appearance you see?"
"Sometimes it is like a hog, and sometimes like a great dog."
"What did it say to you?"
"The black dog said, 'Serve me. But I said, 'I am afraid. He said if I did not he would do worse to me.'"
"And what did you say to it?"
"I will serve you no longer. Then he said he would hurt me."
"What else have you seen?"
"Two cats—a red cat and a black cat."
"What did they say to you?"
"They said, 'Serve me.'"
"When did you see them?"
"Last night. And they said, 'Serve me. But I said I would not.'"
"What service?"
"Hurt the children."
"Did you not pinch Elizabeth Steward this morning?"
"The man brought her to me, and made me pinch her."
"Why did you go to Thomas Putnam's last night, and hurt his child?"
"They put and hurt me, and make me go."
"How did you go?"
"We ride upon sticks, and are there presently."
"Why did you not tell your master?"
"I was afraid. They said they would cut my head off if I told."

"Did you go through the trees, or over them?"
"We see nothing; but are there presently."
She also describes "a thing with a head like a woman, with two legs and wings, and a other all hairy, but with only two legs, and growing upright like a man."
But it is needless to continue these extracts any further. It seems strange, indeed, to us that at this senseless babble—which really appears too ridiculous to take pains to transcribe—grown men, of fair average common sense and education, could ever have winced and shivered and turned

pale in shuddering horror as they listened; and yet it undoubtedly was so, for puerile and monstrous as it appears to us, it seems to have been fully conclusive to the mind of the learned court, for the prisoners were all three committed to gaol to await further examinations.

These followed upon the 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 7th of the month, when they were sent to Boston gaol, where Sarah Osburn died in the following May. The child of Sarah Good, a little girl of five years of age, who had also been accused, died while in confinement.

As to the other two—Sarah Good and Tituba—as they will have no further connection with our story, we shall not return to them, and it may be as well to finish their histories here.

At one of the subsequent examinations of Sarah Good, one of the afflicted girls cried out that the prisoner, Good, had just stabbed her, and had broken the knife in so doing, in corroboration of which statement she produced a piece of a broken knife blade. Upon which a young man then present produced the rest of the knife, which the court then examined, and declared to be the same. He then affirmed that he had broken the knife the day before, and had thrown away the piece, the accusing girl being present at the time. Upon which clear proof of her malicious mendacity, the court merely bade the sinful and falsified witness "to tell no more lies"; and after this plain exposure of her guilt, she was still used as a witness against the unhappy prisoners.

It has also been recorded that at the execution of this Sarah Good, Mr. Noyes, the Salem minister—whose zeal certainly outran his discretion—followed the wretched woman even to the gallows, vehemently urging her to confess, and calling out to her, "You are a witch, you know you are a witch." But "the hidden worm will turn at last," and conscious of her own innocence of the dreadful crime, and maddened to desperation by his false and cruel accusations at such a moment, standing upon the very verge of that world where there is no respect of persons, the miserable creature cried out, in a frenzy from the steps of the ladder, "You are a liar! I am no more of a witch than you are a wizard; and, as you take away my innocent life, may God give you blood to drink!"

When, nearly twenty-four years after, Mr. Noyes died of sudden and violent internal hemorrhage, bleeding profusely at the mouth, what wonder if it were long a commonly-received tradition that the frantic words of the wronged and dying woman were thus fearfully verified?

The only record we find remaining of Tituba, the Indian woman, is that she afterward testified that her master did beat and otherwise abuse her, to make her confess and accuse the others; and that what she had said in confessing and accusing others was in consequence of such usage from him; that he refused to pay her prison fees, and take her out of gaol, unless she would stand to what she had said; and that consequently she remained in gaol, until she was finally "sold for her fees."

If this is true, and there seems no reason to doubt it, it bears a fearful testimony against Mr. Parris, her master, as having been the unseen but moving power of this great tragedy.

The fearful delusion had now reached its height; its lamentable effects were widespread, and the whole country felt its horrors. All business was interrupted or set aside, farm labours were neglected, cultivation was forgotten. "It seemed," said the historian, "to strike an entire summer out of the year."

All contemplated improvements were given up; farms and homesteads were sold out or abandoned; and the terrified people, checked at what had taken place, and still more in terror of what was yet to come—dreading where the bolt might strike next—hastened to quit the doomed neighbourhood.

CHAPTER VIII.—ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS.

"The earth no longer can afford
Its old-time feuds and quarrels—
Hence I with the warrior's dented sword,
The victor's blood-stained laurels!
The world has had enough of war,
Of bloodshed and of clamour;
Honour to him who guides the saw,
To him who wields the hammer."

Great, almost ineffably great, was the delight of old Winny when she heard of the expected arrival of the feared red inmates. But if her delight could not find adequate expression, neither could it be wholly repressed.

"Wal, now, dat are is nice," she said, complacently. "Dat are is sumpen like a present. Dat seems like as if we wuz folks—it makes a place look a much more respectable-like to see dem sort o' critters round. I will say to't, hens are mighty respectable animals—specially the roosters. An den de eggs—why, goodness a massy! I tink eggs is allers the first fruits ob de season, I really do. I dun'no," she added, looking down reflectively, rubbing her arms alternately, and thoughtfully scraping up the said where she stood with the broad side of her old, square-toed shoe—"I don't no; a pig may be a more sociable bird in his feelin's—I won't say dat he isn't. But den, yer see, he isn't so talkative-like, an' he isn't sich an easy boarder—he wants a deal more food, an' a deal more watter 'n' us, he coos, an' he's a deal meaner-like too. A hen, now, she's kinder honest an' industrious, an' free-hearted, an' generous—she pays her board as she goes along—an egg mostly allers every day, an' now an' den, if she has a chance, a brood of chickens. Wal, dat are is right; she couldn't do no better. But a pig—oh! he's a mighty fine gemmen to be waited 'on, an' takes his ease like a gemmen, but he nebber pays a cent on his board bill as long as he libs—no, not till he dies; an' he wouldn't; then if he could help himself—not he—indeed! If he could have his will drawed up by a lawyer, I don't believe he'd leabe yer as much as a sa-singer or a hassler!—mean thing—ha! I spize him. But, Alice, where wuz you keep yer critters?"

"I don't know just now, Winny. That is what I came out to ask you about. Don't you think we could contrive

to make a hencoop out of the farther end of the wood-shed? I mean if it were parted off. You don't make much use of that end of it, do you?"

"Not a bit ob use. I only keep my soap-barr'an' my ashes ober there; I kin fotch my soap ober this side jest as well as ober an' my ashes. Folks talks 'bout not wantin' to hab their ashes 'sturbed; law for me, I don't mind it a mite. 'Sturb 'um as much as yer like."

"Well, then, if we could get it parted off, wouldn't it make a nice hencoop?"

"I should say it would be splendorous!"

"But, Winny, do you think gramma-mother will be willing?"

"I guess she won't be 'ginst nuffin you want—she don't use to."

"That is true enough, Winny. She is very indulgent. The next thing is, how can we do it?"

"Wal, we must get boards, an' nail 'um up. Dar aint no odder way, as I knows un."

"Oh, yes, I know that. But who shall we get to do it?"

Winny reflected a moment. "I dun'no; lem me see. Don't yer tink ole Drosky kin do it?"

"Drosky! I don't know. Who is Drosky, Winny?"

"Why, my ole dad."

"Your dad? What do you mean?—your father, Winny?"

"Why, I never knew you had a father."

"You didn't now? Dat's queer. Why, I've had him eber an' eber so long. I had him when I warn't higher dan dat stool. Oh! longer; I've had him eber since I ken remember. I ruther tink I had him afore I war born. Lordy! I guess I've alters had him."

"Oh! I dare say. Only it seems strange I never heard of him before."

"Wal! really, it does now. He aint nuffin to boast ob."

Drosky aint. But I never made no secret ob 'um. I aint 'shamed ob it; coz it's my misfortin', it ain't my fault. I didn't buy 'im, nor beg 'im, nor steal 'im; fac', I don't know jest how I did get 'im; I never went a step out ob my way to pick 'im up. The Lord has sent him to me, I s'pose; an' I'm sure I wish he hadn't tort on t—I never asked for no faders. I never wanted none; an' I've sure sartin I'd be better off widout 'im."

"I don't know about that, Winny," said the laughing Alice. "But, Winny, what is he?"

"What is he? My fader? Why, an ole nigger, ob course. What else did you tink he wuz? Look at me—do I look as though I 'longed to white folks?"

"No, no; you do not understand me, Winny. I meant what does he do for a living?"

"Bress us an' sabs us! he don't do no hum. I haz to do de hum' for 'im; an' it's an awful sight o' him he takes too, I ken tell yer. Why, bress yer soul! dat are ole nigger he'd eat a whole cabbage an' a peck ob 'taters in a day, ebery day ob his black live, an' more too, if I'd let 'im. He aint got no conscience."

"Where does he live, Winny?"

"Oh! I've got a bunk for 'im out in de paster, an' he libs dar."

"But why did I never chance to see him before? Why does he never come here?"

"Cox I won't let 'im. Sez I to 'im, 'Drosky, you ole sinner, look a here! if you eber come a niggerin' roun' de house whar I libs, I'll sot de tidy-man at yer, I will.' Oh! I tell yer I haz'er make 'im n'nd—he'd be awful impudent if I didn't. But I keeps 'im down; he's awful leard o' me. If I jest clapp hands an' cry, 'Tidy-man! tidy-man! hist-st-st!' he'll run like rats."

"Winny, do you think he could build our hencoop?"

"Clare I dun'no why not. If a nigger can't build a

op nor a pig-sty, what on arth kin he do? You go an' ask leabe ob yer granny, an' if she says so, I'll go an' get ole dad, an' we'll see what he kin do."

Permission to build being readily obtained from Mrs. Campbell, Winny went out, and soon returned, followed by her venerable parent; and of all the strange objects ever beheld in the shape of a man, old Drosky, take him all in all, was the most strange and singular.

He was evidently immensely old, and was not more than four and a half feet high, and stooping at that. It seemed as though he had originally been a man of large frame, and possibly of proportionate height; but in the long course of his very protracted existence, every part of him that could shrink had shrivelled up like a mummy, while the bony portions of his frame—his head, hands, feet and joints—still retained their normal size, and looked, of course, unnaturally out of proportion.

The effect of the disproportionate size of his head was absurdly increased by an immense quantity of snow-white wool, which was pulled out at each side, till his head was as big as a peck measure. Beneath this snowy apex, his great black face, with its rolling, blinking eyes, was wonderfully effective. His body had been so bent by the weight of many years that it was nearly at right angles with his attenuated lower limbs, and yet his motions had all the snowy spryness of a cat.

His dress was clean and whole—no, not whole, for its entirety consisted of patches of nearly every shade, of black, blue, green and brown, skilfully applied by Winny's frugal and industrious hands. If the two covetous sons of Jacob had been gifted, like their world-renowned brother, with dreams prophetic and visions, and, looking down the long roll of centuries, could have beheld old Drosky's many hued garment, possibly the "coat of many colours" which their too partial old father gave to his favoured "ling" would never have tempted them to envy, hate and frade, the exodus into Egypt might never have taken place, and the world would have lost one of the sweetest and most pathetic of its Bible stories.

"Make yer manners, nigger! What yet tinkin' 'bout?" said Winny, authoritatively; and at once the old man began to scrape his foot on the ground, and humming with his woolly head like some vicious old ram, though evidently with more friendly intentions.

"Why, what a wonderfully old man! Why, Winny, how old is he?" said Alice, not knowing what to say.