

ESTHER MARIAH HAYES HORN

Mrs. Esther Horn, whose serious illness was mentioned in our last issue, died in her home on Main Street early Friday Morning (March 28, 1914). Funeral Services were held from the home Monday afternoon, Rev. A. G. Gates officiating, with interment in Rochester Cemetery.

At the request of the family and many friends I undertake to write a short sketch in memory of one whose long life among us has been as an open book for all to read.

Esther Mariah Hayes was born in the town of Clinton, Dutchess County, NY, August 14, 1829, and was the third of a family of eight children of James and Charity Hayes. At the age of ten years she came, with her parents, to Avon Township, where, as pioneers, they settled and she grew up to womanhood in this new but rapidly developing portion of the west. She always thereafter was a resident of Oakland County. She early associated herself with the Baptist Church, continuing her membership therein for many years. At the age of twenty-two she was married to Abram Horn. He was at that time a farmer. For some years they continued to reside in the country, but in 1855 came to Rochester, where they afterward remained throughout their respective lives. Three children were born to them, two of whom are still with us, and present on this funeral occasion.

Almost as soon as they settled in Rochester, from force of many circumstances, their home became a center of social influence; and probably few families in Oakland County have maintained a larger circle of acquaintances than they. They never seemed to seek the distinction of social leadership, and yet from the beginning, their influence as members of society was very great. Centrally located, it fell to their lot to entertain large numbers of people from various quarters, and their generous, genial and entirely unselfish entertainment gradually served to collect about them the best men, women and children of the time in this locality. The old people who composed the pioneer settlers of this region were just beginning to pass away, and in sickness as well in death, and at the last sad rites, Mr. And Mrs. Horn were always helpful and reliable.

Young people who were just coming on seemed glad to seek their home as a place of entertainment, and from that home went out into the world, to school, to general activities, to the Civil War, and to many widely diversified scenes. As they returned from time to time they found the family home still existent, still maintained upon the same generous lines; the same latchstring outside the door, the same welcome inside. While accumulating burdens which seemed almost too heavy to bear in this generous manner of living strength must have been given them to continue through a period of nearly 60 years, not only in an unchanged home, but an unbroken line of life

Some years after coming to Rochester they connected themselves. Mrs. Horn taking the initiative, with the First Congregational Church of Rochester which was the first church of that denomination in Michigan. Ever after, while they lived, both were among its most

loyal, active and influential members; and right well they stood with the church through all of its trials and vicissitudes, as well as in its more prosperous and triumphant days.

The writer came here about 45 years ago, a youthful stranger, and was received by them in their household and made to feel for several months of sojourn as if he was in his own home. Their kindness created impressions upon him that have never been effaced. And yet he was only one of a long list similarly treated, some preceding and some following him, which will never be made full and complete until the last great time of accounting arrives.

Abroad in the village, and farther out in the country, whatever needed, they might be found, literally ministers of grace and goodness to everyone.

I believe that their lives, in these respects which I have mentioned, were extraordinary. I doubt if there were other families, or at least many of them, in Oakland County or Michigan, who so quietly, unostentatiously, unambitiously contributed to the upbuilding of church, society, home and general development as did these two people. Their steadfastness to their home, to their village, to their church was unusual. Here they lived in this one house, pursuing practically the same daily round for more than half a century; here their children and grandchildren came and grew up, and yet this woman, though a devoted mother and grandmother, was really mother, sister and friend to everyone in need. She seemed to have no desire to have others follow in her train; she never seemed to have an ambition to follow those who were ambitious of social leadership. She was simply her own unostentatious, useful, hopeful, helpful, active self. Naturally she became so well known in this vicinity, and so much beloved, and so much the center of everyday life, that if she had been taken at any time in her earlier years, the loss would have been almost irreparable; but on and on she went always the same.

We are accustomed to clothe strong characters in rugged and sometimes harsh exterior. We expect to apologize for noteworthy people who have become too strenuous in their treatment of their fellows, by saying that you must not expect leaders to be too gentle, amiable and easy in manner. And yet this lady was always amiable, gentle, forgiving and kind, but an unconscious leader. With her I never knew an exception to this rule. She had many occasions for indignation throughout her career, yet she never seemed indignant. Often she had good right to complain, but was never complaining. Her moral worth and her spiritual devotion were such that it seemed as if she grew to carry about her the atmosphere of the sermon on the Mount, and always she seemed to combine within herself the three chiefest virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity.

Her birth was a golden promise; her life became a beatitude, and her death is a benediction.

It happened to be my lot not long ago to convey her in a carriage to the cemetery where she will now be laid at rest. I have had long and exceedingly varied experiences in life, but this was a memorable and impressive one to me. There was not the slightest appearance of awe or solemnity in her face. Undoubtedly she realized that soon the event

which has now transpired must in some form take place; but as we drove among the graves of her former neighbors, friends, acquaintances or associates, she seemed to take an almost delighted interest in the thought that the part of her which was mortal would again be a neighbor and in the life beyond she would resume her pleasant associations with them. Her face was fairly radiant, and yet she was not demonstrative or different in her manner from that in her daily life. The calmness and contented expression of her face was not that of the stoic who has deliberately decided to take that which may come, since it will come but once, but was rather the effect of an inward glory which has been characterized as 'the abiding faith' the simple and absolute trust that whatever might come would be a change, but it would bring with it no pain, no terror, no regret.

About a year ago her husband, Abram Horn, the associate in her married life for nearly 60 years fell just outside this door and suffered injuries which led to his death. It is a singular coincidence that after remaining during the succeeding year, as it were, to finish his work, a week ago she fell just inside the door and sustained injuries which have eventuated in hers. So now they will soon be together, that is, in all that is mortal of them, in the cemetery on the hill; and of that which is spiritual, we may safely believe will be joined in whatever sphere is prepared for those of their kind. Like Evangeline and Gabriel, in their places of rest

'Daily the tides of life will go ebbing
and flowing beside them;
Thousands of throbbing hearts, where
theirs are at rest, and forever
Thousands of aching brains, where
Theirs no longer are busy;
Thousands of toiling hands where theirs
Have ceased from their labor;
Thousands of weary feet, where theirs
Have completed their journey.'

M.C.B.

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Mt. Avon Cemetery Records