

The Centenarian's Reception.

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Lucy Karney, the old slave (a sketch of whose life appeared in the Republican of Dec. 7), celebrated her 116th birth-day by a reception at Mead's hall on the evening of Jan. 2. It was surprising that so few were present, as perhaps less than 100 persons in this community had ever seen a human being who had passed the centennial birth-day; but quite an interest was manifested by the audience, which was composed chiefly of young persons or those not past middle age.

At the appointed hour Lucy arrived in a hack, and was carefully conducted into the hall, attended by her grandchildren, where she was seated in a fine old-fashioned rocking-chair,—a birthday present. She was in excellent health and spirits, seeming to reap a quiet but intense satisfaction from her surroundings.

The exercises were opened by singing the old-time tune, "Sherburne," by a choir composed of some of the best lady and gentlemen vocalists of the city. Rev. Geo. Duffield then read a short historical sketch of Lucy and of New Jersey in the days of her early childhood. We reproduce such portions of it as were not previously obtained from Lucy by the reporter and published.

She was born in Freehold, N. J. Her mother had told her she was born the same year that the Britannia was wrecked on the Jersey coast. The vessel was laden with tea. The speaker had been unable to obtain information fixing the date of the shipwreck.

The first church she attended was the venerable Presbyterian church of Freehold, erected in 1752, on the site of a former one, and within whose walls preachers no less distinguished than George Whitefield, Wm. and Gilbert Tennent, and David Brainerd labored and prayed. Brainerd died in 1747, Gilbert Tennent in 1764, William in 1777, and Whitefield in 1770. The minister whom Lucy best recollects was John Woodhull, who succeeded William Tennent in 1779. Dr. Woodhull died at Freehold in 1824, in the 81st year of his age. She spoke of his son Spafford, and said she was well acquainted with a woman who lived in the household of William Tennent at the time of his famous trance. She relates the story substantially as it is found in Sprague's Annals, vol. iii.

The way she knew her age was from a record in her grandfather's bible, which was unfortunately burned. Her daughter, however, had it again certified by the grand-daughter of her old master.

June 28, 1778, the battle of Monmouth was fought between the American and British armies,—Washington and Lafayette commanding on the one side, and Clinton and Cornwallis on the other. Among the chief incidents was the heroic conduct of Moll Pitcher, who took her husband's place at a cannon, and whose remains now rest in the cemetery at Carlisle, Penn. Lucy was 16 years of age when this battle was fought, and distinctly recollects hearing the roar of the artillery. Colt's Neck being only five or six miles northeast of Freehold, this could have been easily done.

When the rebellion broke out in 1861, Lucy was living in Randolph county, Ind. Two of her grandsons joined a company of union volunteers, and the old lady enjoyed what she considered the greatest honor of her life,—that of presenting the colors to the company. In her 101st year she went into the field and bound a shock of wheat, and in her 103d year she spun flax. The date of her arrival in Michigan is unknown. She resided in East Saginaw previous to coming to this city.

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Bishop Burgess estimated that but one in 10,000 human beings, starting in life together, arrive at the age of 100 years; but here is the marvel of a woman who has exceeded that age by 16 years, and yet retains every faculty but that of sight. The speaker cited other instances of longevity, and stated that if this red-ribbon business continued as at present, some of our friends may live to be older than Mrs. Karney.

At the close of Mr. Duffield's address Lucy sang a temperance song, in a high-

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ly humorous style, showing that her memory is still good, and she fully entered into the spirit of the occasion. This was followed by "Auld Lang Syne" by the choir and prayer by Rev. A. Bryant.

"Old Father Little," as he is familiarly called,—a colored man who came to Lansing in 1847, the same year when the capital was located, and who, by the way, is a boy compared to the subject of this article,—made a few remarks, in which he feelingly adverted to the uniform kindness and spirit of fraternity which had ever marked the intercourse of the citizens of Lansing with the colored people in their midst; and thanked the audience in their name for the kindness and interest manifested on this occasion. This was succeeded by music and the benediction, and the audience dispersed, evidently gratified with the entertainment.
