



VAINT
NANTUCKET

BY

WILLIAM·ROOT·BLISS



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Quaint Nantucket

by

William Root Bliss

Author of "Colonial Times
on Buzzard's Bay"



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TO

GERTRUDE MOORE RICHARDS





This book relates to that quaint Nantucket which existed for two hundred years before the island was discovered by "the summer boarder." The materials from which it has been written comprise the original town and court records, various letters, account books, sea-journals, and other private manuscripts, including the record books of the Quaker Society of Nantucket. None of these valuable materials have been used heretofore for such a purpose.

For assistance in procuring them, I am indebted to Mr. Henry B. Worth and to Captain Thomas R. Rodman, of New Bedford; to many friends in Nantucket, and especially to Miss Helen Barnard Winslow Worth, whose kind services have been invaluable.

Not often does the world hear from Nantucket — except, during summer months, while steamboats from the mainland are carrying pleasure-seekers to the island, and bringing them away. Its history stopped nearly half a century ago; when

when prosperity had departed, and new men and new manners began to take the places of the old. It is to preserve its former life from oblivion that I have written the book.

W. R. B.

*Greystones, Short Hills,
Essex County, New Jersey.*

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Quaint Nantucket

I

The Beginning of All Things

THERE is a tradition that, near the end of the year 1659, an open boat, containing two men, a woman, and six children, sailed away from the little village of Salisbury, on Merrimac River, bound to an island in the Atlantic Ocean, of which the voyagers knew nothing except that it was inhabited by Indians and their innumerable dogs. It was a circuitous voyage of nearly two hundred miles. The boat encountered tempestuous weather ; and the woman, alarmed for the safety of herself and children, besought her husband, who was master of the voyage, to turn about and go back to their home. Like the usual hero of a tradition, he spurned a woman's prayers, and continued to drive the boat over a rugged sea until
it

it reached a little harbor on the western shore of Nantucket. Yet this master, Thomas Macy by name, was not a seaman, but a weaver by trade, and his mate in navigating the boat was a yeoman.

If the tradition is to be believed, these rustic mariners made themselves exiles from home, to be outcasts upon an island which was thirty miles distant from the mainland; where none of the comforts of life existed, where wintry gales blew with a roar like the roar of iron-mills, and sea-fowl sometimes perished in a struggle for life.

Midsummer — July 16, 1661 — is the earliest authentic date of the settlement of Englishmen on Nantucket. Then they were drawing lots for their homesteads. They had come from the frontier of the Massachusetts colony, where wolves, bears, and a stony soil made a farming life unprofitable. They looked upon their island estate as a vast farm securely fenced from wild beasts by the ocean. Its forests of oak, walnut, beech, pine, and cedar trees were ready to give timber for their houses ;
its

its creeks and marsh-lands were growing thatch for their roofs. There were springs of sweet water, whose overflows were gathered in many ponds; turf-covered downs blooming with heather; and a rich soil, scantily cultivated by Indians, who still possessed more than half of the island, and were squatting on that part of it which the Englishmen had bought.

The first need of the colonists was an interpreter, through whom they might speak with their Indian neighbors. So they sent to the island of Martha's Vineyard, and offered to give a half of one share of their estate to Peter Foulger, if he would come over to Nantucket and live with them. Peter was an Englishman, a teacher to the Indians of the Vineyard, and he knew how to measure and survey lands. He accepted the compensation, and moved to Nantucket. By him the colonists published a proclamation in the Indian tongue that "Whatsoever Indians do stay on ye land after ye 14 day of October 1662 shall pay to ye English five shillings per weeke, at the end of every weeke."

Then

Then four men of the company went abroad "to vew the land for laying out cornfields;" and after corn had been planted, with an alewife in each hill, it was found necessary for the interpreter to proclaim that "All Indians are to kill all their dogs, and if any dogs be found alive after ten days the owner shall pay to the English two shillings for every one." The Indians listened and stroked their dogs; but time went on and the dogs were still alive, pawing up the tender crops. Then it was ordered that a tax of "fourty shillings shall be pay'd to ye Constable by the one and twenty proprietors within a weeke" for the hire of men to kill the Indian dogs.

Lot-layers laid out the land, and Peter Foulger surveyed it. A favorite section was that part of the purchase which is described in the records as "the old fields that were bought of the Indians on Nanahumake Neck." This was a picturesque peninsula in the western part of the island, surrounded on three sides by a lake, whose waters were separated from the south sea by a narrow beach, alternately opened and closed

closed by the stupendous waves that broke upon it. The neck contained fresh meadows, through which a brook was running; patches of white-oak trees; and a great swamp skirted by cranberry vines. One and twenty lots were laid out in this attractive region; and an order was made that "no English man shall give liberty to any Indian to dwell on Nanahumake or to plant Indian corne there," and no person "shall fall any timber within its considerable woodland."

Thomas Macy was engaged "to supply the yland in the trade of weaveing," for which he was given a half of one share in the estate. Afterwards the proprietors gave a like interest to William Worth, to Joseph Coleman, and to Richard Gardner, on condition that they serve the colony as seamen; to Eleazer Foulger, son of Peter, on condition that he "supply ye occasion of ye yland in ye trade of a Smith;" to Nathaniel Holland, on condition that he "employ himself as a taylor for ye benefit of ye inhabitants;" to Joseph Gardner, on condition that he supply their wants "as a Shoemaker;"

Shoomaker;" to John Savidge, on condition that "he stay and follow his trade as a Cooper."

The proprietors had now so much business to be recorded, concerning lands and legislation, that they agreed to pay to their "clark for his wages Twenty Shillings per annum," with two years' back pay. Although they possessed no incorporated authority, they were already a town, whose right to make laws for governing all the inhabitants of the island rested on the fact that a majority of the townsmen were owners of the soil. No inhabitants except landowners were allowed to vote in the town meetings. They elected a constable, and they set up a police court; they issued licenses "to trade on the yland," and they prohibited unlicensed traders from landing. They appointed "Surveighers of the fences." They chose inspectors of highways, and gave to them power to call out the inhabitants to construct roads "as they se occasion," and "to fine any man not appearing on the day they appoint two shillings and six pence." At Wescoe,
"under

“under ye high Clift at ye mouth of ye Harbour,” they built a tide-mill for grinding “the townes corne.” Peter Foulger was the miller, and his multure was to be “two quarts for every bushel he grindeth.” Near the mill was a landing place at which vessels were moored, as I know from an item in the records of the island court, which says that, an Indian “being complayned of for stealling toe tarkees” (two turkeys), “he owened he sold them on bord a vessell at Wescoe.”

In June, 1665, a description was written, in a book, of the earmarks registered by forty-eight owners of herds and flocks then pasturing on the commons. It may be supposed that these herdsmen and their families constituted the English population of Nantucket at that time. In the same year, “a publike meeting of the towne” was convened to receive the sachem “Attapehat with all the Tomokonoth Indians,” who then acknowledged “ye English government of Nantucket,” and did “owne them selves subjects to King Charles the Second.” This ceremony

mony was done in presence of the famous sachem of Mount Hope, who was known to the English as King Philip.

As the farmers continued to be troubled by an increase of the dog population, the town ordered, in February, 1667, that "Every Indian shall kill his dogs before the 10th of March," or pay ten shillings for each dog found alive after that day. To insure the death of the dogs, two Englishmen and two Indians were appointed to collect and divide between themselves the fines. Then the wanton destruction of trees by Englishmen and Indians became, and was for years, a subject of legislation by the town. It was forbidden "to fall any more timber for rails and posts;" and no "timber for building howses at any time of ye yeare" was allowed to be felled, "except it be in May and the two first weekes in June." When the English came, the peninsula of Coatue, which is on the north side of the island, was densely covered with pines and cedars; and there Indians gathered firewood, claiming it by rights derived from their sachems. As the trees were a
shelter

shelter to English sheep when northeast storms descended upon the island, a town meeting declared the "neasesitie of preserving ye Seaders & pines & other groaths that are there, for ye Sucker of their Sheep in hard seasons;" and at last an order was issued "to stop ye Cutting of any more Wood of any sort off from Coatue."

The commons were stinted, lest, by continual grazing, the grass be destroyed. Men were sent out to enforce the stint; and when they found Thomas Tray's horses grazing "contrary to ye towne order," Thomas Tray was fined thirty shillings, which amount was cut down, at his earnest request, to fifteen shillings, "on condition that he pay'd readily." As he paid neither readily nor in any other way, one of his mares was taken for the fine.

Horses and goats were increasing so rapidly, and consuming the limited pasturage of the island, that a town meeting in the year 1669 said: "Horses are like to be the ruine of our neat cattel & the multitude of goats is very hurtful." It

was

was agreed that something must be done "about cleering the yland" of these animals, and an order was issued, which the people said "shall stand unalterable," "that all horses shall be taken off the yland or be destroyed before the last of November next, except one to every horse keepe;" and "that two yeeres time shall be allowed to men to abate their goats."

There was a bargain made "to set up a pound fourer rod square," and the record of the bargain says: "Stephen Coffin is to keep the pound when once there is a lock to it and he is to have two pence a time for turning the key for any cattel that come." Payments for making the pound were to be "in corne butter or cheese after the next harvest." The "general prises" of Indian corn were fixed; and, to prevent a competition between sellers, a large fine was decreed as the penalty for selling at other prices, "except for money or cotton wool." Wreck commissioners were appointed, and Indians were notified "to bring intelligence about all wracke goods found on the shore on any part of the yland;"

yland ;” such goods, if not perishable, to be kept “a yeere and a day before they are disposed of.” Then a reward of thirty shillings was offered to “whosoever shall kill the wild dog within a weeke.” It was described as a white dog, a ghost-like wanderer, mentioned in the records as “haveing bin scene several yeere about the towne ;” whose mysterious existence was talked of in town meeting, where it was condemned as guilty of destroying many sheep.

In the year 1668, the English made “a bargaine with ye Indians concerning all whales” that shall drift to the shores of the island. Subsequently the shores were divided into sections, over which sachems were appointed to oversee the cutting up of stranded whales and to divide the shares. This business produced quarrels between the claimants of a whale, and appeals were made to the island court ; as when “the Court do order that the Rack or drift Whale in the bounds of the bech upon the playnes shall be divided into eight shares,” and that “No Rack Whale that com ashore in any sachims bounds shall be

be cut up until all the masters of the shares that belong to that Whale do com together." Sometimes the court went into particulars, as when it ordered "that Washaman is to have the head of the drift Whale for his share and Desper is to have halfe along with him." A jury of six men tried a complaint of the Indian "Massaquat against Eleaser Foulger for stealing his Whale;" the defendant confessed that he "did dispose of the Whale in controversie," and the court adjudged him "to pay for the Whale the summe of four pounds in goods at the usual price of trading."

The island of Nantucket was within the limits of the province of New York, which, as New Netherlands, had been taken by the English from the Dutch in the year 1664. Six years later the English governor summoned the inhabitants of the island to appear before him and show the papers by which they claimed possession of it.

The story of their claims begins in the year 1635, when the Earl of Stirling, secretary of the Kingdom of Scotland, became owner of all the islands adjacent to the
coast

coast of New England. The Earl appointed James Forrett to be his agent for selling and settling the islands between Cape Cod and Hudson River. Forrett came over the sea, and in the year 1641, for the sum of £40, sold conditionally the island of Nantucket to Thomas Mayhew, of Watertown, in the Massachusetts colony, and to his son Thomas, who was a preacher to Indians on the island of Martha's Vineyard. Before the sale had been completed Forrett was called suddenly to England, and Andries Forrester came over the sea as the agent of the Earl of Stirling. He made promises of a settlement of the title to the Mayhews, but on a visit to New Netherlands he was arrested by the Dutch and sent as a prisoner to Holland, whence he never returned. The Earl of Stirling died; and, in the year 1663, James the Duke of York bought of the succeeding Earl of Stirling his American estate, which included the island of Nantucket. In the mean time, that is in the year 1659, — the date named in the tradition, — Thomas Mayhew (his son being dead) effected a
sale

sale of nine tenths of his interest to nine Englishmen of the Massachusetts colony, reserving one tenth to himself. Each of these partners in the property admitted another to an equal share of it; and in March, 1660, they made a first purchase of land from the Indians of Nantucket.

The summons of Governor Lovelace of New York was not expected by the Englishmen, who for eight or nine years had held a quiet possession of the island, and had ruled it as an independent state. They were men of strong minds, accustomed to deal with the realities of life, and their voluminous writings show that they were men of as fair an education as was to be found at that time in any English community. Prominent among them was Tristram Coffin, a Devonshire man, who came to America in the year 1642, who had been an inn-keeper and a political officer at Salisbury, in the Massachusetts colony, whence he migrated with his family to Nantucket. He was now sixty years old; a man of positive opinions, and of an experience which fitted him to take a lead in public affairs. The
numerous

numerous members of his family chose "our father Tristram" to answer for them, to the governor, while other freeholders chose Thomas Macy, and asked "Mr. Coffin to help him." Then a tax was levied on all to pay "the charge of the voyage to New York."

These men were summoned to submit their claims to the governor within four months from May, 1670. But they required a long time for preparation, and they did not reach New York until June, 1671. Governor Lovelace confirmed them and their associates in possession of "the Island called Nantuckett, that is to say so much thereof as hath by them made purchase of," and he approved their plan for establishing a regular form of government. This act constituted the first charter of Nantucket, which is to have a chief magistrate, who is to be annually selected by the governor of the Province from two nominations made by the islanders. They are to elect annually two assistant magistrates and all their inferior officers. They are to join with the people of Martha's Vineyard

Vineyard island in keeping a General Court, to consist of the chief magistrate of each island and four assistants. The General Court is to make all "peculiar lawes" that may be needed, not repugnant to the laws of England, and subject to the governor's approval. There are to be "private courts," consisting of the chief magistrate of Nantucket and two assistants, to determine cases of small value; while cases of a value from five to fifty pounds are to be determined by the General Court, and cases exceeding that value are to be sent to the assizes at New York. The private courts are to inflict punishments "soe farre as Whipping Stocks and Pilloring or other Public Shame," but great criminals are to be sent to New York for trial; and the Indians of the island are to be governed according "to the best discretions" of the English, "soe farre as Life is not concerned."

When Tristram Coffin and Thomas Macy left the governor to return to Nantucket, they carried his "Orders and Instructions for the well governing of the Place."

Place." They also carried the commission of "Tristram Coffin to be the Chiefe Magistrate of ye Island until ye 13th Day of October which shall be in yeare of our Lord 1672 when a new Magistrate is to enter into the Employment." As Thomas Macy had received neither honor nor profit from the expedition, the town voted, four months after his return, "that Tho Macy shall have for his time to New Yorke five pounds."

Selectmen were now chosen for the first time ; their names, as written in the book, were "Mr Edward Starbuck John Swayne Mr John Gardner Mr Coffin and William Worth." Their authority was defined in these words: "And the major part of those Select Men shal act in al things that ar Committed to them in writing by the Towne from year to year." They were directed to give first attention to agricultural affairs, especially, "concerning hearing of Cattel & horses also to Judg of fences and the Stray of Cattel & horses that may be among the Indians." They were authorized "to make Rates for the Towne ;" to pay the constable

constable "for his time" in warning town meetings, but with the understanding that he is to "serve frely in any busenes that concernes the King." The selectmen were directed to contract with William Bunker "to build a corne mill." He is "to git her going" by the first day of May, 1673, and is to be paid "fourty pounds in grayn one third in wheat one third in barley & one third in Indian Corne." Edward Starbuck, John Swayne, Nathaniel Starbuck, and William Worth are to "make a pair of milstones & bring them to ye mill & when they have finisht them they are to bring into ye towne a true accompt;" for their labor they are to be paid "two shillings & six pence a day in corne at harvest." Eleazer Foulger, the blacksmith, is to be paid "for making of the tooles" for cutting the millstones. All these details were written in the town book with a particularity showing their great importance to the islanders. The farmers were then required to "sow two bushels of hay seed upon every halfe an Aker by the end of March," or to pay a penalty of five shillings each. A public
harrow

harrow was bought, "and M^r Coffin and M^r Macy," so the record says, "is to see that every man do sow his seed;" and all goats are to be killed by the end of December, or transported so "that no more goats may be kept on the Island from henceforth." Peace and contentment reigned when the new administration began its life; but evil days were close at hand.

In addition to the tradesmen and seamen, already mentioned, to whom an interest in the island estate had been given for their services, the proprietors gave to John Gardner, a mariner of Salem, a half of a share on condition that he come to Nantucket "to inhabit and to sett up the trade of ffishing with a sufficient vessel fitt for the taking of Codd ffish."

At the time of his coming to the island he was considered to be a man of importance; for the town granted to him "liberty to set a house upon the hy way at Wescoe going down to the landing place," and the highway was made "so much the broader" for his convenience. The town also gave to him "twenty acres of upland
joining

joining to his houselot towards the Cliff behind his house."

The admission of these half-share men as partners in the estate caused disorders which, in the course of time, divided the community in two opposing factions. One, under the lead of Tristram Coffin, represented a continuance of all things as they were at the beginning. The other, under the lead of John Gardner, represented equal rights for all the English inhabitants of Nantucket. Their quarrels enlisted the entire population of the island, and continued with varying severity for many years, as this narrative will show.

The quit-rent of Nantucket, payable yearly to the governor at New York, was eight barrels of codfish. There were two quit-rents due, and in the year 1672 "the towne did chuse M^r Richard Gardner to carrey the fish to New Yorke and to act as Agent in such busines as shal be exprest in the Selectmens order." One item of this business was to present "to the Governour of New Yorke M^r Edward Starbuck and M^r Richard Gardner ther names that
he

he may Apoynt one of them for Chiefe Magestrat for the year Insuing," in succession to Tristram Coffin.

They were a slow-moving people, with a habit of "waiting for the tide." Richard Gardner waited, and did not depart for New York until March, 1673. He delivered to Governor Lovelace the quit-rent of codfish; and, having finished the other business for which he came, he set sail for Nantucket. There were no buoys nor lights to guide a navigator through the intricate channels leading from Fort James into Long Island Sound; and I may imagine that his sloop was carried by a current upon the shoals of Corlear's Hook; that he threw out an anchor and warped her off; that a flood tide in Hell Gate compelled him to put back and anchor near Barrent's Island; that next day a northwester carried him safely through the Gate, but, meeting an east wind at the White Stone, he anchored and sent his boat ashore for water. The third morning, on a fresh westerly wind, with his topsail lowered and a reef in his mainsail, he resumed

sumed the voyage, and late in the afternoon he was off New Haven. During the night he found Falkner's Island close aboard, and he tacked ship just in time to escape the rocks. The next day he passed through Plumb Gatte with a spanking breeze, and, running south of Noman's Land, he made Nantucket before sundown.

He brought home several important papers from the governor. One was his own commission as chief magistrate of Nantucket; one was the commission of John Gardner as captain of the military company; another was "Additional Directions for the Government of the Island," which declared that all the "Ancient and Obsolete Deeds grants or conveyances of Lands on the Island shall be esteemed of no Force or Validity, but every ones Clayme shall bear Date from the first Divulging of the Patent by Authority of his Royall Highnesse." He also brought a license issued to Captain John Gardner and himself "to buy some Land by the Sea Side or else where of the Indyan Natives." He brought three constable
staffs,

staffs, having the king's arms on them; and a decree, dated April 18, 1673, that the town

Shall henceforth bee called and distinguished in all Deeds Records and Writings by the Name of the Towne of Sherborne upon the Island of Nantucket.

After Richard Gardner had moored his sloop at the landing-place, and had doled the news to one after another of his townsmen, everybody saw that he had done a large stroke of business while in New York with the codfish; but some time elapsed before everybody understood how great was its importance. At last some of the freeholders concluded that their rights had been violated by the decree making invalid their deeds derived from Thomas Mayhew and the Indian sachems, and also by the governor's license to John and Richard Gardner — new-comers — to buy land from the Indians. For in the year 1659 the original proprietors held a meeting at Salisbury, and made an order "that no man whatsoever shall purchase any land

land of any of the Indians upon the yland for his owne or other private use;" that every purchase "shall be for ye generall accompt;" and it was agreed that this order shall stand inviolable, as being "necessary to the continuance of the well being of the place."

The half-share men, being now in control of the government, proceeded to transact the public business with energy. They imposed a fine on "negligent parsons" who are "wel and on the Iland," if they come not to town meetings "within an hour after the time of meeting appointed." Fines were fixed for those persons who "shal turbulently and disorderly behave in the time of meeting after Silence being called by the moderator," and it was ordered that "thirteen persons being met at the place appointed shall be a town meeting."

As the raising of sheep had become the principal industry on the island, the new government took "into serious consideration the great benefit of keeping Sheepe and the great damag that com thereto by dogs destroying lambs;" and, as attempts
to

to destroy the dogs had been unsuccessful, a law was made that "all dogs more than foure months old shall wear a sufficent mussel that will keep them from biting." Even in an Indian heart there was love for a dog; and this love, which had preserved the native dogs from destruction, was at last recognized by the English in this humane law which allowed the dogs to live.

At this time England was at war with Holland, and a Dutch fleet sailed into New York harbor, landed eight hundred armed men, captured the province, and brought Nantucket under the rule of the Dutch. Their loyalty to the victorious flag was soon put to a test by the stranding of a Dutch ship on the north point of the island. Isaac Melyne, claiming to be owner and master of the ship, and also to be an Englishman, came ashore and made a petition to the "Worshipfull Governour & Chiefe Magestrate of this his Majesties Island," saying "that upon the 30th day of July 1673 the dutch fleet did arrive at his majestyes port of New York and then did

did take the place and brought it under the obedience of the States of Holland;” that on the first day of August he “fled with his ship for New England and was pursued with three pinances and armed men and brought back to New York where they felloniously Robbed and Ranged his ship and goods.” The Dutch then freighted his ship to go to Holland with “90 barrels of whale oyle 83 hhds of Tobacco 473 peces of Logwood 150 cowhides;” and now, said the petitioner, “the foreseeing providence of god has brought him to this his majesties Island, with the loss of masts, sayles, rigging, furniture, which your worships hereby may perceive.” He offered a letter from Governor Lovelace, dated in the year 1669, certifying that Isaac Melyne was an inhabitant and also “a free denizen” of New York.

His petition was referred to the island court to be held on the 20th of October, 1673. To this court he testified “that the ship was his own proper goods and himself a free dennison of his majesty the King of England.” His testimony was confirmed
by

by "the boson of the ship," and by his own body-servant, who said that Captain Melyne had been master of the ship for three years, "and never out of her." He claimed judgment against the ship because she had been "taken from him by the States of Holland." The case was committed to a jury of six men of Nantucket, who, not forgetting that they had become Dutchmen, rendered this verdict:—

We do not find he is a subject to the King of England, and concerning the ship we do not find it is his.

The Dutch governor at New York, hearing of the accident and not knowing the loyal verdict of the island court, ordered an armed vessel "to proceed with all speed to the cape of Nantucket," and bring away the stranded ship and crew. On return of this vessel its captain reported that the ship had been hauled off the Rip, and taken to Boston by an armed brigantine sailing under a commission from the King of England; and that he, in retaliation for this act, had captured and brought to New York four Massachusetts ketches with cargoes.

One

One of these was bound to Nantucket, loaded with rum, sugar, salt, and wine, belonging to James Coffin, who was on board. The governor immediately confiscated the vessels with their cargoes, and sent James Coffin and the captured crews to New England.

During the war between England and Holland, the half-share men of Nantucket were encouraged to claim an equality in all the rights of the original proprietors. When they heard "the news that Yorke was taken by the Dutch," wrote Thomas Mayhew, they said: "Noe Man had a Right to a Foot of Land before the Date of the last Charter, and they by the Book endeavour to dethrone our Libertys — announcing my Right obtained from the Earle of Stirlinge nothing, also the Indian Right nothing, my quiett Occupation there of 29 yeares nothing, the Grounding of the ten Partners upon my first Graunt nothing."

The war with Holland was ended by a treaty of peace restoring New York to
England;

England; and in November, 1674, Sir Edmund Andros became governor of the province. But the half-share men of Nantucket remained firm in their purpose to carry on the revolution.

II

The Triumph of John Gardner

WHILE yet the Dutch were in New York the freeholders of Nantucket held a town meeting, "and did vote to send to the Governour at the next covenant season to petition about what may Infringe the Libertyes of the Chartar." When John Gardner was nominated and "chosen to go to New Yorke" about the business, the meeting was in an uproar. Immediately, as the record says, —

Mr Tristram Coffin enters his dissent

John Swayne enters his dissent

Nathaniel Starbuck enters his dissent

Richard Swayne enters his dissent

Nathaniel Barnard enters his dissent

John Coffin enters his dissent

Steven Coffin enters his dissent

Nathaniel Wier enters his dissent.

By this action the lines were publicly drawn between the old and the new proprietors.

prietors. The latter were to windward of their opponents, and Captain John Gardner knew the value of that position. In due time a letter to the governor was written, and signed by Richard Gardner, Edward Starbuck, Thomas Macy, and William Worth, prominent citizens of the town, on behalf of the inhabitants, and then "the Town did vote that the Letter drawn up to be sent to the Governour of New Yorke shall be forthwith sent." To this, as before, —

Mr Tristram Coffin enters his dissent

John Swayn enters his dissent

Nathaniel Barnard enters his dissent

John Coffin enters his dissent

Richard Swayn enters his dissent

Steven Coffin enters his dissent.

The town also voted "that Peter ffoulger should go to New Yorke with Capitaine Gardner to assist him in any business that he is sent about by the Towne to the Governour." This vote was resisted, like the others, by Tristram Coffin and his band of followers.

It now became necessary for the dissenters

ers to be represented before the governor. Thirteen freeholders engaged to pay the expenses of sending two men; and they selected "M^r Matthew Mayhew for one, also M^r Tristram Coffin Sen^r and Major Robert Pike, or any two of them in case of any Providence preventing." They prepared a statement of their land titles, a copy of the Indian deed of the year 1660, and an account of all sales and transfers of land on the island since that year. These were to be submitted to the governor. When everything had been prepared that could influence him to revoke the decree of his predecessor respecting their "ancient and obsolete deeds," Tristram Coffin and Matthew Mayhew sailed for New York, where they landed in April, 1675, and presented to Governor Andros their humble petition. It was inscribed as made "in Behalf of the Major Part of the first Purchasers, Freeholders upon the Island of Nantuckett." Its complaint was that by the acts of the half-share men, now in power, "the first Purchasers have been damnified to the value of some hundred of Pounds;"

that

that they, the petitioners, "are not suffered to act in the Disposal of their Landes;" that the "Tradesmen and Seamen with some of the Purchasers being the Major part of the Island in Persones have elected into Authoritie some of themselves whereby they have presumed to dispose of our Purchase, deviding it one among another." The petitioners prayed for "a Process against the said Intruders," quaintly saying of them, "Every Card they play is an Ace and every Ace a Trump."

The next day John Gardner and Peter Foulger appeared at Fort James. They gave to Governor Andros the letter of the inhabitants of Nantucket, expressing their "Real and hearty Welcome as our Governour, which is to us as a rising Sun after a dark and stormy Night," and assuring him that their messengers "will give full Satisfaction and Information in whose mouths will not be found a false Tongue." The town's letter was accompanied by one from the messengers, in which they expressed a belief "that very false Things" had been suggested to the governor, "upon selfish
and

and sinister ends," by the two townsmen who were in his presence yesterday.

The difference in the motives of the opposing parties is shown by their position before the governor. On the one side was conservatism, selfishness, and a disregard of the rights of neighbors. On the other side was progress, loyalty, and desires for the general welfare of all the inhabitants of Nantucket. Both were courteously received, their statements were heard, and they were dismissed by the governor without any recorded result except some new instructions "for establishing of Courts;" his action followed later.

Soon after the return of these men to Nantucket came the outbreak of King Philip's War. Fearing that Indians would cross over from the mainland and extinguish the colony, a letter was sent to Governor Andros stating that there were not more than thirty Englishmen on the island "capable of bearing Armes," while there were of "ye Indyans 5 or 600 men;" and asking for "a couple of great Guns and halfe a Dousen Soulders." The governor
sent

sent a great gun, ten muskets, a barrel of powder, and three skeins of match. Captain Lee, of the sloop carrying these supplies, was instructed not to stay at Nantucket "above one Tyde unles it may happen that the Indiyans should flock over from the Maine and the Chiefe Magistrate desire yr Assistance for obstructing the same by water." A council of war was formed in the town, and it was ordered that "no parson shall furnish any Indian with powder or shot or any Instrument of war;" that "whatever parson shall sell or give any horse mare or Gelding to any Indian" shall forfeit five pounds in silver; and that no Indian corn shall be exported except to New York. These precautions were not needed, for the Nantucket Indians showed no sign of hostility. On the contrary, it is recorded that some of them "did come to the Court and did disown Philino, and did freely subject themselves to King Charles the Second." In their simplicity they brought guns and a cow to the Court, and left them "as a Testimony of their fidelity to the English."

The

The Indian war in New England caused many adventurers to fly to Nantucket for safety, some of whom became active in the political affairs of the island, and made trouble for the magistrates. Ten men recently landed attempted "to deliver a man by force" from the constable. One of these, named Edward Bennit, was fined ten pounds, put in chains, and was condemned "to Remyne in Chaynes unless he can prevayle with M^r James Coffin to tak him aboard the vessal and be bound for him." This action of the court seems to imply that the men had been imported by James Coffin and were heelers of the Coffin party. His brother, Peter Coffin, a resident of Salisbury, had fled to Nantucket in fear of the war, and had been nominated by the Coffinites as a candidate for the office of assistant magistrate of the island. The election was as boisterous as one of modern times. Peter Foulger, of the Gardner party, thus describes it:—

There came hither from Puscattaway
M^r Peter Coffin and some others to stay
here this Winter for fear of the Indians.

Then

Then another Meeting was called to chuse new Assistants. We knowing that we should be out voted sat still and voted not. The first man that was chosen was Peter Coffin. Stephen Hussey was the man that carried on the Designe in such a rude manner as this — Com Sirs, let's chuse Peter Coffin he will be here but a month or two and then we shall have tenn Pound fine of him. . . . In the like uncivil manner they chose two young men more, the sayd Stephen bringing his corn which betoken Choice in his hand and called upon others to Corn this man and that man.¹

Thomas Macy, the chief magistrate, and heretofore a follower of John Gardner, now faced about and whipped over to the other side. Some of his relations followed his example. These events gave a majority to

¹ It was a general custom to use corn and beans for ballots. In the Massachusetts Colony, A. D. 1643, "It is ordered that for the yearly chosing of Assistants the freemen shall use Indian Corn and Beanes, the Indian Corn to manifest Election, the Beanes contrary; and if any freeman shall put in more than one Indian corn or Beane he shall forfeit for every such offence Ten Pounds."

to the Coffin party, which now took possession of the government. In town meeting they appointed a committee to "view the town book," as they suspected that its writings had been tampered with, and they desired the committee to report promptly "How they find it:" they ordered three loads of posts to be set up "on the playne in convenient places for cattel to rub against;" and then they undertook to make their opponents as uncomfortable as possible by voting, in words which reveal the thought of Tristram Coffin:—

Whereas Capt. John Gardner was chosen to goe to New Yorcke to negotiate about som publicke concerns of the Iland and peter foulger chossen to assist hem — the towne doth now revoack the orders aforesaid and doe forbid the said Capt. Gardner and petter foulger to medal at all hence forward in any of the towns Consernes ether at Yorcke or elce where under any colour or pretence what so ever.

John Gardner wrote to the governor concerning the situation and said:—

M^r

Mr Macy and his Relations now joine with that Party and sum Persons now come out of the Bay as Sojourners for a Time by Reson of the Indian War. So they now haveing the biger Party hear mould all Things after ther Plesuer.

And Peter Foulger, writing to the governor in regard to the sudden success of the Coffin party, said:—

Now that your Honour may understand how they cam to be the greater pt; it was by Mr Macy his facing about and his Family—a Man who was so much for the Dukes Interest when we were with your Honour at New Yorke as any of us. But now for divers by Ends it is otherwise.

The writer of the letter from which this paragraph is quoted, who describes himself as “a poore old Man aged 60 years,” was clerk of the writs, and recorder of the General Court of the island, and when writing the letter he was a prisoner in Nantucket jail. Since the recent election, the court had taken a hand in the quarrel, and was pushing its influence in aid of the Coffin party.

party. It had questioned Peter Foulger about a court book which was missing; and he, remembering that "out of nothing nothing comes," as he said, kept his mouth shut, "tho the court waited on hem a While and urged him to speak." Whereupon he was condemned to give a bond of twenty pounds for his appearance at the assizes in New York. His letter tells what happened:

For want of Bond away the Constable carried me to Prison, a Place where never any English man was put and where the Neighbors Hogs had layd but the Night before in a bitter cold Frost and deepe Snow . . . the Constable told me I might ly upon the Boards and without Victuals or Fire. Indeed I perswaded him to fetch a little Hay and he did so and some Friend did presently bring in Bedding and Victuals.

When the court met in June, 1677, it had not procured the missing book; but the magistrates, as the record says, "were in great measure stilled from their rage with promise thereof," and they sent their marshal to the jail to request Peter Foulger to

to bring the book to the court. The prisoner sent back this reply:—

I doe certainly know that I have been a prisoner ever since the 14th of February last past and doe as certainly know why I was put in prison.

The disappointed magistrates, enraged by this reply, immediately issued a warrant “forthwith, to bring peeter foulger before the court to answer for his neglect to attend to his office.” When he was brought in, no satisfaction could be got from him; therefore, the court ordered a fine of five pounds to be levied on his estate, and “that he remain a close prisoner without Bayle until he deliver the said Book to the Authoritie of Nantucket; and likewise the Court do disfranchise the sayd peeter foulger.”

Judicial tyranny had become rampant on Nantucket. Many persons were arrested for expressing their opinions about the tyrannous acts of the court, or, as the magistrates said, “for speaking evil of Authoritie.” One of these was Sarah, wife of Richard Gardner, convicted “for speaking
ing

ing very opprobriously concerning the imprisonment of peeter foulgier," but pardoned on being intimidated into repentance; one was Tobias Coleman, who was fined twenty-five shillings "for many vile and scandalous words" about the magistrates; one was Eleazer Foulger, who was fined five pounds "for defamation of the court by saying it was cruelty to put his father in prison."

On the same day the court concluded that it had good cause "to suspect Captain John Gardner to have an espécial hand in obstructing the proceedings by joyning himself to peeter fouldier in keeping back and concealing the records." A warrant to arrest him at his house was given to William Bunker, the marshal, who was authorized to "draw latch, break open doors, and all things else remove that may obstruct." He returned to the court alone, bringing this message from John Gardner: "I do not disown the king's authority, but I will not act."

The marshal, with two assistants, was sent back immediately, and the three men
fetched

fetches John Gardner by force into the court. When the magistrates spoke to him about his "contemptuous carriages," he listened in silence, and, without removing his hat, he sat down on a chest whereon was seated Tristram Coffin, who said to him:—

"I am sorry you do behave yourself as a Delinquent."

To which John Gardner replied:—

"I know my business; and it may be that some of those that have meddled with me had better have eaten fier."¹

The court sought for reasons to punish him. It said:—

We must maintain his Majesties authoritie espetially with the heathen among whom it was vulgarly Rumored that there is no Govournment on Nantucket; and haveing good cause to suspect the same to proceed from some English instigating them to the Great danger of causeing insurrection . . . we do therefore order that Capt. John Gardner

¹ From an affidavit by Tristram Coffin, June 13, 1677.

ner shall pay a fine of Tenne pounds in Mony or Something Equivolent thereunto, and is disfranchised.

No doubt Matthew Mayhew, secretary of the court and a zealous Coffinite, was in great glee when he signed these disfranchisements. But, two months later, orders were received from Governor Andros directing the court to suspend all proceedings against John Gardner and Peter Foulger, and declaring that their fines and disfranchisements "are void and null as being beyond your Authority." The intensity of the partisan spirit which possessed these people is shown in Mayhew's language and conduct as they are described in a letter addressed to Governor Andros by Captain Gardner after he had given to the secretary the governor's rebuke of the court:—

Hee came to my Logging in as great a Pashon as I judge a Man could well be . . . tacking this Opertunity to vente him selve as followeth: telling mee I had bin at Yourke but should lose my Labor — that if the Governour did unwind he would wind, and that he would
make

make my Fine and Disfranchisement to abide on me down the Governour what he would . . . that I had spoken against his Interest and I should downe, with maney more Words of like Nature.

But New York was a long way from Nantucket. So the governor's orders were disregarded by the court, under pretense that they had been given without a knowledge of the facts, and John Gardner's cattle were sold to pay the fine. The people, however, were more loyal than the politicians. In a town meeting of January, 1678, they rescinded the injunction, voted two years previous, "prohibiting capt. Gardner and Peter Foulger to act in the publick consernes of the Island at New Yorcke or Elce whare;" and at the next election they chose John Gardner an assistant magistrate. This act aroused the ire of Tristram Coffin, the chief magistrate of the island, who on the assembling of the General Court, October 9, 1679, caused to be entered on the records:—

Whereas they have received information against the Town for electing Capt John Gardner for an assistant in government;

ment; ordered that a warrant be issued forth to call the Town to answer for contempt of authority therein, he being under sentence of court Incapable of such office of trust.

The town was defiant of Tristram Coffin and his court. Many letters were passed between them expressing the bitterest feelings of each side. And when, on the first day of January, 1680, John Gardner appeared before the court to take the oath of his office, he bearded the lion in his den. The secretary recorded that " Mr. Tristram Coffin chefe magestrate on nantucket doe declare against the entry of Capt John Gardners oath as giving him power to sit as an assistant, he being under disfranchisement."

The controversy reached its climax at the town meeting of June, 1680, when " Mr. Richard Gardner was chosen by the towne that his name might be sent to the governour, and Capt John Gardner was chosen that his name might be sent also, to know his pleasuer as to choyse respecting a Chife Magistrate for the year ensuing."

Every

Every townsman present at this meeting voted for the choice, except one. Tristram Coffin "enters his protest against the choosing of Capt. John Gardner." It was the last effort of this obstinate man to stem the rising tide. He passed away during the next year, at the age of seventy-two; and after his death one of the first acts of the town was to appoint John Gardner, Richard Gardner, and another townsman to "new survey and bound every mans lands meadows or creek stuff on the island of Nantucket," and to record them "in a new booke for the purpose to avoyd futer troble."

The incidents of Tristram Coffin's public life show that Nantucket was not one of the Happy Isles. Its English population at this time was less than two hundred and fifty persons of all ages, of whom one half had been at difference with the other half. Its social life must have been of a low order. Its domestic comforts were few, as may be inferred from an inventory of "the goods and estate of Nathaniel Wier who deceased the 1st day of March, 1680." It shows
that

that all his worldly possessions were valued at £35, and consisted of:—

his wareing aparell, shows and stockings, 2 pare of halfe woven sheets and a pillow case, 1 flock bed, 1 pillow, 1 blanket & 2 old Coverlets, 1 tabel & 3 chars, 1 old bibell & 5 other books, 1 iron pot, 2 bras kettels, 1 scillet, 1 frying pan, 1 Iron cettel, 1 grid Iron, a tranell, fiere shovel, fire tongs, 1 lamp, 6 milch tres, 4 little tres, 4 trenchers, 3 old pueter dishes, 3 porrengers, 1 salt seler, 1 pint pot, 1 saser, 1 buterchern, 2 old chests, 2 boxes, 5 yds. Wollen cloth, the dwelling house, out houses, the ten akers of land, 2 steers, 1 cow, 6 heafers, 17 cheses, 20 weight of bacon, 3 busels of wheat, 8 busels Indian Corne, 1 busel malt.

There was an abundance of rum on the island, and, in barter for island products, supplies of it were renewed by the barrel. Steven Hussey, the most litigious of all the English inhabitants, petitioned to the governor in August, 1686, "yt if his Drink about ten or eleven Gallons of Rum so illegally taken from him must bee forfeit
yt

yt his Majesty may have it and yt it may not lay leakinge in the Hands of Joseph Gardner as it hath don for som years." It appears in the court records that Hussey smuggled this rum to the island in August, 1683, and that it was seized by Joseph Gardner, acting for the court. He complained that the seizure was done "no other wise than a privateare or pirat might doe," and when called to prove his complaint he refused "to prosecute in any pertickular," but spoke "Reprochfully in Derogation of the acts of the Court and Continued obstanet justifying himselfe;" whereupon he was fined ten pounds, and he lost his rum.

At this period, Sunday on the island is mentioned in the court records as a day of "much misdemeanure," — a day on which "vagrant persons are exposed to temptation." Samuel Bickford is indicted "for being from his home in company a drinckinge on a first day contrary to law." This man and his wife appear in the records as the keepers of a disorderly house; and the story recorded of an affair therein, between
Dennis

Dennis Manning and Katherine Innis, would be written up as the morning's sensation in a city newspaper of to-day. The site of Dennis Manning's house has been recently marked as one of the "historic sites" of Nantucket, — the dwelling-place of an ancient worthy. This fact furnishes a reason for mentioning his name in my narrative, and also for telling a part of what the court records of the island said of the man while he was living: —

August 19, 1678. Katterine Innis being examined by Mr Coffin Chefe magistrate saith that she is with child and being asked whose it is She answered it is Denis Mannings — speaking in his presence — which he denied. . . .

November 7th, 1678. Denis maning appears and is bound to ye Court.

June 24th, 1679. Where as Kattering Innis formerly did say that she was with child by dennis maning and now the child being born still affirmes the child is dennis mannings — The Court doth order that Denis maning shal take care for the mayntenance of the child and
mayntayne

mayntayne it as it ought to be, he being legally the father of it. And Katteren Innis is bound over to the next Court to make her appearance. The Court order that Katteren Innis shal nurse dennis mannings child which she laid to his charge, and the Court wil se her master William Worth paid.

September 30th 1679. Katteren Innis being bound over appeareth. The Court hath ordered that she shall be whipt fifteen stripes or pay five pound.

In the history of those times John Gardner stands as the greatest of all the men who had to do with the beginnings of Nantucket. He had the genius of a leader, and his ability was recognized by Governor Andros in appointing him, three times, the chief magistrate of the island. The people made him their agent "to act in all matters of the towne at New York," and they said, "Whatsoever Captain Gardner shall agree for, about hireing a vessel to go, the towne will pay it." He was made the leader of a committee "to consult for the publicke good of the island against
all

all invaders of the peoples Rights ;" and in May, 1687, he was chosen "to go to New Yorke to manege such afeares as the town shall intrust him with." On his return, he brought Governor Dongan's "Patent to Certain Inhabitants of Nantucket," which made John Gardner, with six associates, "One Body Corporate and Politiq to be called by the Name of the Trustees of the Freeholders and Comonality of the Town," with right of purchasing from the Indians all "Tracts or Parcels of Land" remaining in their possession, and to make such acts and orders "as they shall think convenient from time to time." For this charter they were to pay yearly "unto our Soverign Lord the King the sum of one Lamb or two shillings current money" of the province.

That one lamb was a token of the peaceful victory won by those who, under the lead of John Gardner, had persistently advocated equal rights for all the inhabitants of Nantucket.

In the ancient burial field, on a breezy hill-top west of the town, stands a granite monument,

monument, conspicuous above the bayberry bushes, the blackberry vines, and the hawkweed blossoms that surround it. On its face are cut these words : —

“ Here lies buried ye body of
John Gardner Esq^r, aged 82,
who died May, 1706.”

Near by are the unmarked graves of some of the men who stood with him and against him in the memorable struggle whose history I have briefly related : —

“ Tired of tempest and racing wind,
Tired of the spouting breaker,
Here they came, at the end, to find
Rest in the silent acre.
Feet pass over the graveyard turf,
Up from the sea, or downward ;
One way leads to the raging surf,
One to the perils townward ;
‘ Harken ! Harken ! ’ the dead men say,
‘ Whose is the step that passes ?
Knows he not we are free from all,
Under the nodding grasses ? ’ ”

III

The Nantucket Indian

THE island of Nantucket was annexed to the Province of Massachusetts Bay in the year 1693. The Earl of Bellomont, who was governor of the province at the close of that century, said of the island: "There is a great store of sheep on it, 't is 16 miles long and 6 or 7 broad, the English there are 300 souls and the Indians 800."

As soon as the English had established themselves on the island, it became necessary to put the Indian inhabitants under restraint. They were lazy and lawless, and reluctant to move off from lands which the English had bought. They burned the growing grass, hunted cattle on the commons, carried away English firewood, and stole English sheep. There was an Indian preacher named Steven, who, as the records say, was "complayned of by mr Coffin for killing a lam;" for this offense he was condemned

demned to pay "ten shillings and prison fees." The same Steven was complained of by Richard Gardner for "stealing one barrel and seven gallons of oyl;" the court gave to Steven an option of paying five pounds fifteen shillings and six pence, or "to serve Richard Gardner four whole years." Drunkenness became the Indian's predominant crime. In the year 1711, the owners of Tuckernuck¹ petitioned the legislature at Boston to transfer that island to the jurisdiction of Nantucket, which was but a mile distant, so that its authorities may arrest the Indians who, it was said, "run over to Tuckernuck in the Winter to avoid

¹ Another small island adjacent to Nantucket, and belonging to it, is Muskeget. Its history, ownership, occupancy, alienation of titles by inheritance and deeds, are enshrouded in uncertainty. The earliest purchase of the island by citizens of Nantucket, from a son of the elder Mayhew of Martha's Vineyard, was by deed recorded at Edgartown. The early probate records of Nantucket contain meagre allusions to it, and the early records of deeds almost nothing. It is almost barren of vegetation, and has been a favorite resort for sportsmen in pursuit of wild fowl; and from the remotest antiquity has been used as a free warren and piscatory, the waters around the island abounding in various kinds of fish and bivalves. Numberless inhabitants of Nantucket, known to be the descendants of the first seven purchasers of Muskeget, have ever claimed the right to frequent it as tenants in common.

avoid the payment of their Just debts ;” and, while they are there, “ Indians from Road Island and the main land carey over liquors and strong drink to them, when they get drunk and fight and make great Disorder.” Forty years later, Nantucket was placing before the legislature a picture of the condition of the Indians in which was shown to what degradation they had been dragged by the English. “ The Indians are so universally given to Strong Drinke,” said the town, — unconscious that it was condemning itself, — “ that as soon as their Corn is ripe the Greater part of them for the sake of Rum begins to make Sale of it, so that they are out of Corn before the Winter is past ;” and they “ often hire out their planting land for the sake of Rum of which their Desires are Insatiate.”

The hiring of their planting lands was sometimes a device by the English for getting a permanent possession of them. Similar devices were practiced in Governor Bellomont’s time, when three sachems of Nantucket sent to him a petition in which they

they affirmed that the English were claiming such "Interest in the herbage of the whole island that they have, on pretence of trespass done by our cattle, taken them and converted them to their own use;" that they cannot obtain any justice in the courts of the island because the judges are claimants for their lands. They said, "We are not versed in the English law, yet we are taught our wrong by the light of Nature."

This complaint referred to an act of the English inhabitants which the governor described as a "remarkable fraud that was put on the poor Indians on Nantucket Island." Writing about the matter to England, he said: —

The Representative that served for Nantucket (one M^r Coffin) came to solicit me and the Council to pass an Act to restrain the Indians on that Island from trading with Rhode Island. The Indians had complain'd to me how hardly they were used by the English, and M^r Coffin own'd the whole matter there, viz that the English had bargained with the
Indians

Indians that half of the Island should be for the use of the Indians to sow Indian wheat on, but that when the crop is off the land the grass on that land is to belong wholly to the English; so that these Indians, now that they would keep cattle, are not suffer'd so to do. This is such a circumvention and fraud as ought not to be suffer'd, and so I told M^r Coffin before the Council, and I declared I would not give the assent to any Bill that should put a further hardship on those Indians.¹

In the year 1706, five sachems of Nantucket complained to Governor Dudley at Boston that they "are very much wronged and oppressed" by the English, "who did over reach our forefathers in the purchase of lands and herbage, and carrying away all their wood." As they could not get justice in the island courts, they asked that a special court be constituted in Boston to try their claims. The governor referred the
the

¹ Letter of the Earl of Bellomont to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, in London, November 28, 1700.

the petition to James Coffin, the representative from the island. Thus was Æsop's fable illustrated: the wolf was made a protector of the sheep. And when in the year 1717 another petition was received at Boston, Governor Shute and his Council resolved "that the Island of Nantucket be annexed to Suffolk County," in order that a just treatment might be secured to the Indians; but the House of Representatives did not concur in this resolution, and thereafter Nantucket Indians petitioned the provincial legislature in vain.

The English inhabitants of the island had so intermarried with each other that judges and jurymen were related as first or second cousins, and in the trials of land suits they were naturally united against any Indian plaintiff. While Sir William Phipps was governor of the province, from the year 1692 to the year 1695, he received a letter from Matthew Mayhew mentioning this state of affairs, and saying that, in consequence of it, "the indians cannot expect anie justice in anie thing relating to their lands." This fact was reiterated in all petitions

tions sent by the Indians to the legislature at Boston; and their petitions were frequent for sixty years after the date of Mayhew's letter. In a petition dated December, 1751, they asked again for a removal of their trials for land to the courts of another county, because in Nantucket "both Judges and Jurors are all Interested." At previous times this request had been met by an opinion of the English that it would be unjust to put Indians to the expense of traveling to distant courts; but now it was stated that their deeds of land were forgeries.¹ At last the truth was confessed by the representatives of Nantucket when, in June, 1752, they answered a petition from

¹ . . . "And the said Indian claims a Tract of land by Virtue of a Writeing said to be Given by Nikanosso bearing date 1668, we have taken Considerable pains in Searching into that Writing and it Seems to us self Evident to be a piece of Forgery for it appeared Originally writ in Indian Translated into English by Mr. Experience Mayhew, whereas the Year that Said Writeing bears date there was not an Indian on Nantuckett that understood One letter in the Alphabett neither did there ever appear to be such a Writing untill about the time that it crept on the Records of Martha's Vineyard which was in the year 1745." — Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts, June 5, 1752, by Richard Coffin and Abishai Folger, "Guardians unto the Indians of Nantucket."

from the Indians to the legislature, and said: —

As to the Complainants Petitioning for the Removal of Tryals in Real Estate to some other County, that both Judges and Jurors are all Interested, we answer Tis fact as to the Justices but not as to the Jurors.

A few quotations from court records will reveal the character of that mixed life of the English and Indian inhabitants of Nantucket which continued for nearly a hundred years after the settlement of the island: —

25th March 1679. Mr Coffin Complaynes against Philip Cumes for lying and other rude carages, the sentance of the Court is that this Endian shall set toe ours in the Stocks next trayning day.

At another time the same Indian was “severely whipt for sundry storrys and lyes.” If the lying was confessed the culprit gained no mercy. Sara Nesfeld, a squaw, “being Inditted for Telling severall lyes she owning her fault the Court saw
good

good to fine her ten shillings." Will Cow-keeper, an Indian (so named because he drove cows from the commons to the town gate, at evening, to be milked, and drove them back at morning), was convicted with Jack Never of "breaking a ware house of Nathaniel Starbuck and carrying away several goods." Each Indian was fined "nine bussels of Endian Corne and twenty toe shillings and six pens." Jack Never was a persistent thief, frequently before the court, to which on a certain occasion

He confesseth that he went in to Capt John Gardners house About the midel of the night and tooke out of M^r Gardners pocket by the bead side five shillings in mony and allso open'd a case and caried away a bottel with a bout a pint of Licquor in it; the sentance of the Court is that he shal be whipt twenty strips upon the naked body of Jack never above said.

Rum was given to Indians in payment for services in fishing-boats; the return of the boats caused a prevalence of drunkenness on the island difficult to be suppressed.

" Five

“Five shillings for being Drunk” is the court’s oft-repeated sentence on Indian culprits. The selling of rum was a business licensed to Englishmen by the court; but Indians undertook it without a license, and were punished. For example: —

Whare as Dare was complayned of for Retayling drinck contrary to law, and Powpashon for Resisting the constable, the Sentance of the Court is that Dare pay for Retayling thre ponds and Powpashon for Resisting forty shillings.”

Branding the flesh was a form of punishment inflicted on Indians, although it was not authorized by the charter, which limited punishments to “whipping, stocks, and pilloring, or other public shame.” The sentence imposed upon two Indians, who had confessed the charge of stealing sheep, was, “Isaack shall be branded on the hand and Petter shall be well whipped.” There was more cruelty than justice in some acts of the court against “the heathen,” as Indians were sometimes called in the records. When an Indian named Julaps confessed the theft of five bushels of grain and two
bags

bags from Joseph Meader's mill, he was fined eight pounds, and was branded "on the forehead with the letter B." An Indian called Samcook, who stole "about five quarts of Rum" from Richard Coffin's vessel, was sentenced to pay one pound six shillings and six pence, "and he shall be branded with the letter B." Two Indian lads convicted of stealing were condemned to pay seven pounds and six shillings, and to "be branded on the forehead with the letter B." Thomas Bunker prosecuted the Indians named Tooth Harry and Jobone "for breaking open his house and stealing about three gallons of Rum and breaking his windows and carrying away a paile and a Rundlet." They confessed the theft, excepting the runlet, and each was fined a sum amounting to three times the value of the articles, and "they both," says the record, "were branded with the letter B."

The courts dealt with various domestic matters of the Indians, from a divorce down to the return of a borrowed pot. I quote from the records some examples between the years 1673 and 1683. Quench, the
Indian,

Indian, complained against the conduct of his wife ; the result of the complaint was : "The court findeth her guilty and a divorce is granted, and the woman that was his wife is fined twenty shillings to hem in Regard to his trobell." When the Indian Nakatootanit "put away his wife," the court ordered him to take her back and "live loveingly with her or else he shall be severely punished ;" and the "woman Kuhapetaw that he last companed as his wife" was condemned to be whipped ten stripes.

Another case of similar kind was that of Wosoak's wife, who complained against her husband "for leaving of her." The court "findeth him guilty of having to doe with an other woman in an Evill way," and ordered both Wosoak and the woman to be whipped. Then Desier complained against Tuckernuck "for abusing his wife ;" he "owneth he was with her," and he was condemned to pay Desier twenty shillings. Now and then there was a breach of promise before the court. For example, a squaw complained of John Fisherman's son "for non performance of his covenant with her
he

he having Promised her marrag, and the sd John owned he had don soe." The court ordered that "if John doe not marry the Squaw he shal be whipt twenty strips and pay the woman thirty shillings."

At the same session came up the complaint of Patience, a squaw, who, as the record says, "being with child layeth it to a Gentelmans Son, and the Court orders that he shall be whiped or pay a fine of twenty shillings, and the sd Patience, when she is delivered and well, to be whipt fifteen strips and pay costs."

Nanespepo was an Indian who complained to the court that his wife "hath forsaken him about a yeare and followed other men." The court issued a proclamation, and the public crier went about the island repeating it, that "If the Nanespepo wife return not unto her husband within six weeks after ye day, Nanespepo is freed from her." This was a quick method of divorce.

The court busied itself with all kinds of complaints from Indians; as, when Jepta complained that the sachems Nicanoose
and

and Wowinet "did hinder him of his share of a drift whale," the court ordered that he should have his share of the whale in spite of the sachems; and when Wosoak complained that Matakeken had taken his canoe in the fishing season, when he wanted it, Wosoak was compelled to pay twenty shillings for the use of the canoe.

The pot cases are a mystery to a student of the records. The clerk of the court wasted no words in explanation of his writings, sometimes stating a complaint without the decision and sometimes a decision without the complaint; for he could not suppose that, two hundred years later, there would exist a desire to know what was going on at Nantucket during his lifetime, and why Englishmen and Indians were then borrowing and lending pots.

Capt Gardner complaineth against Coshomadamon for disposing of a pot lent him.

Cutuaram widdow of Thomas an Indian complaineth against Coshomadamon for taking and disposing of her pot.

Sesepana

Sesepana complayns against a squaw called Cuddusue for holding his pot.

Zackery complaines against Wowinet for not Returning a borrowed pot.

Tomasos wiffe complayned against Roag for with holding her pot.

The mystery increases when I find this opinion written in the court records, as sequel to a decision about land : —

The case of the pot is thus ended, the pot is to be divided, he that hath the pot must pay the other half the price.

This reads as if the court had been engaged in a game of poker.

There was also an Indian court, whose acts were subject to review by the English. For what special purposes it was formed, or how long it lasted, does not appear. Evidence that it existed is found in the appeals from it which are mentioned in the records of the English court, and which show that it did not stand in high favor with the Indians. In June, 1677, before the English court, Obadiah was charged "with resisting the authority of the Indian court in Nantucket in that he came with several persons

persons with hem and endevord to Resque one that was to be whipt a way out of the constables hands — also he fought with a padel, using Reviling Speeches against the members of the Court.” Obadiah gave as reason for his conduct that “the magistrates are not Right or doe not that which is Just.” They could not be just if they were like the Indian magistrate named Sasapane, who was removed from his place by the English court “for being drunck and also fighting.”

Quoquasha, a squaw, appealed to the English Court concerning “goods that were taken from her by order of the Indian magistrates to the vallew of twenty shillings and six pence;” the court directed that the goods were to be returned to the squaw. Waquaquenaway appealed from the Indian court “because they took away his wheat to buy clothing for his wife, when he said he was willing to doe it himselfe.” The English court ordered “that he shall have his wheat againe and shall provide his wife clothing according to a man of his Rancke.” Sometimes the Indian magistrates were
punished

punished for their injustices, as, when Shanapetuck complained because she had been whipped "for gathering gooseberries," the English court ordered "that those magestrats Imqueness and Sam shall pay the woman ten shillings."

When Indians had neither money, corn, oil, nor feathers with which to pay their fines, they sometimes pledged a canoe as security. The records of the year 1690 say:—

Aspachamo in open Court delivereth his Canoe unto William Worth for secuerity for his fine, being twenty shillings, which he ingageth to pay in fish, and William Worth engageth to pay sd fine.

When they were unable to pay anything they were sold into slavery; or they were bound to the English, or to the sachems, in a servitude which was equivalent to slavery. An Indian named Moab, convicted of stealing sheep, was condemned "to serve John Macy three years;" another Indian, for stealing eighteen sticks of whalebone, was condemned to serve Thomas Macy
seven

seven years; Alewife, convicted of stealing "three payles of strong beer one Galon of malases, two galons of Rum," was condemned to serve Nathaniel Starbuck and Peter Coffin, from whom the goods were stolen, "the time of six whole years." It was an easy way of securing a house servant, to catch an Indian in the act of theft. Damaris, an Indian girl accused of "stealing sundry goods," valued at less than five pounds, was condemned to return the goods, pay ten pounds, be whipped ten stripes, and to serve John Gardner four years.

The Indian named Coottas stole and killed sheep; the court condemned him to pay "a fine of fower pound and ten shillings or to ly in prison tel the Court do find a way to sell him for payment" of the fine. An Indian named Jasper came up and engaged "to pay in to the Court by next harvest" the £4 10s., and thereupon Coottas was set free. The next year he was convicted of stealing "a considerable quantity of Sheep." The record says that, as "the court find him very Incouragable
there

thare Sentance is that he Remeane a prisoner in mr Starbucks custody till oppertunity present for his being sold." His confederate thief, named Kessasume, was condemned to "pay thirty shillings presently or be sold; and if he Run away from his master then he is to be whipt every time he so Runs away." As Kessasume could not pay "presently," that is, on the nail, the sachem Wowinet paid the fine and took him "as a servant."

There must have been many attempts to get free from this slavery by escape from the island; for it was ordered in the year 1670 that every Englishman or Indian shall be fined twenty shillings who "shall carry away in any vessel any Indian servant off this Iland without an order from his master to do so."

IV

The Dominion of the Quakers

“WOULD’ST thou know,” says Charles Lamb, “what true peace and quiet mean; would’st thou find a refuge from the noises and clamors of the multitude; would’st thou enjoy at once solitude and society; would’st thou possess the depth of thine own spirit in stillness, without being shut out from the consolatory faces of thy species? Come with me into a Quakers’ Meeting.”

The Quaker meeting-house of Nantucket was an unpainted building, as destitute of external ornament as a farmer’s barn. It was painfully simple within; the smooth pine benches had been so frequently washed that they were as clean as a scrubbing-board; the floor was sprinkled with white sand; there were no cobwebs on the windows; there was no dust in the corners. The worshipers came in softly, and when
they

they were seated the stillness of the house was like the stillness of a desert.

If it was "a first day," the women were dressed in silks, satins, and camlets of quiet colors, — brown, gray, and white; the men were dressed in broadcloths of the same hues, wearing their hats, which they removed only during prayer. Girls were dressed like matrons; and they naturally felt that the sober apparel and emotionless habits of Quakerism were a restraint upon their lives, tempting them at times to turn away dissatisfied with the universal calm.¹

Now and then the trembling voice of a woman was heard, rising gently out of the congregation,

¹ In early times Quakers did not wear a uniformly plain apparel. George Fox, the apostle of Quakerism, bought a scarlet gown for his wife, and she adorned herself with laces and gay ribbons; his daughter was particular to have her gowns made "very civil and as usually worn." Quaker girls of those times wore blue stockings, red petticoats, and bright-colored aprons. In love emotions there was a warmth corresponding with the colors of the clothing. It was more than two hundred years ago when Thomas Lower, loving Mary Fell, wrote to her: "Now, my dearest, to whom my heart is perfectly united, do I heartily embrace thee in the arms of pure affection and seal it unto thee with the lips of Truth."

congregation, offering a few words, "as the spirit moveth," on a chance that they "may suit the condition of some one present." Sometimes the assembly remained mute during the hour of worship, and this "silent waiting on God" might continue Sunday after Sunday.

The early Quakers of Nantucket were noted for exactness in religious knowledge; for habits of order, prudence, and thrift; and for careful attention to the intellectual education of their children. Some of them were born into Quakerism, some were converted to it, and some assumed it under a pressure of circumstance; for wherever the Quakers of colonial times became numerous, the power of their inexpensive religion was felt, because it suited the frugal habits of those who had no affinity with other sects. Curiosity led them into the meetings, and without effort or persuasion they accepted the faith and the speech of the Quakers.¹

In

¹ "You professors nicknamed us by the name of Quakers in the year 1650, which name one Bennet of Derby gave us when he cast us into prison, . . . who was the first that called us Quakers

In the year 1701, John Richardson, a Quaker preacher from England, accompanied by Public Friends, as they were called, came to Nantucket in a sloop from Newport. Peleg Slocum, the Quaker captain of the sloop, losing his course in a summer fog, ran her ashore on an uninhabited part of the island, where the company remained all night. The next morning they ascended a bluff and discovered many people approaching them, for the sloop had been seen, and was suspected to be a French vessel bringing armed men to invade the island.¹ John Richardson advanced, holding

Quakers because I bid them tremble at the word of the Lord.”
— GEORGE FOX.

¹ There was war between England and France, and Nantucket had been already invaded by French privateers from the West Indies. John Gardner wrote to the Governor of the Massachusetts:—

WORSHIPFULL SIR— This is to enform you that this night the french landed on our Island, plunderd one House and corred away a man & his son and are now about the Island, of what sort I know not, it is but a small vessell. They said at the House there was 2 more of which we know not.

We thot Good so far to signifie that by post out to Boston which is all in haste.

Your Servant

JOHN GARDNER

NANTUCKET, the
3d day of May 1695.

ing out his arms, and said that he and his companions had come to visit the island in the love of God.

Foremost of these Nantucket people was a woman named Mary Starbuck, the mother of four sons and six daughters. Of all the women of colonial times who were influential in public affairs, she stands pre-eminent. But little was known of her beyond the horizon of Nantucket, for she lived in a period when the towns of New England were as isolated as if they were islands in the Atlantic Ocean. Richardson met her in the house of one of her sons. He says in his journal: "Mary Starbuck came in, whom the islanders esteem as a judge among them for little of moment is done without her. At the first sight of her it sprang to my heart — 'To this woman is the everlasting love of God.' I looked upon her as a woman that bore some sway on the island; and so I said to her, 'We are come in the love of God to visit you if you are willing to let us have some meetings.'" "

When he asked, "Where shall the meetings
ings

ings be?" she paused awhile, and then replied, "I think at our house." The order of her house, says Richardson's journal, "was such in all parts thereof as I had not seen the like before; the large and bright-rubbed room was set with suitable seats or chairs for a meeting, so that I did not see anything wanting according to place but something to stand on, for I was not free to set my feet upon the fine cane chair lest I should break it." During the service Mary Starbuck "strove against the testimony, sometimes looking up in my face with a pale and then with a more ruddy complexion. When she could no longer contain she lifted up her voice and wept. She stood up and held out her hand, and spoke tremblingly and said — 'All that ever we have done is pulled down this day, and this is the everlasting truth.'"

Four years later, a Quaker missionary named Thomas Story visited Nantucket. He wrote in his journal that there were no settled religious teachers of any kind on the island; that several "had made attempts upon the people, but were disappointed,

pointed, for there was one Nathaniel Starbuck whose wife was a wise discreet woman well read in the scriptures, and not attached to any sect, but was in great reputation throughout the island for her knowledge in matters of religion; and an oracle, in so much that they would not do anything without her advice and consent thereon. . . . One night my sleep was taken away from me under a concern of mind for the settlement of a meeting. The chief instrument pointed to in my thoughts for this service was Mary Starbuck to whom I made it known. I proposed it likewise to her children; being all convinced of the Truth, they were ready to embrace the proposal."

She lived long enough to see the prosperity of the work which she undertook, and then it was written in the town book: "Mary Starbuck departed this life ye 13 day of ye 12 mo. 1719, in ye 74 year of her age, and was decently buried in Friends burying ground." I have found no personal memorials of her save this letter, which she wrote to a grandchild, Eliza Gorham,

ham, in Boston, who had suffered losses by fire:—

NANTUCKET ye 17. 1st mo. 1714.

DEAR CHILD ELIZ— These few lines may certifie thee that thou art often in my remembrance with thy dear husband & children; with breathings to the Lord for you that his presence may be with you that therein you may find rest in all your visitations & trials; as also that here is a trunk fil'd with goods, which is intended to be put on board Ebenezer Stuart's vessell, which are several tokens from thy friends, which thou mayest particularly see by these little minutes here inclosed & by some other marks that are upon the things— thy Aunt Dorcas is a new piece of oxen-brigs, thy aunt Dinas is a pair of blankets, thy Grandfather intends to send thee a barrell of mutton, but it is not all his own for cousin James sent hither 17 pieces; cousin James said he intended to send thee 2 or 3 bushels of corn; there is likewise sent from our womens meeting 7 pounds which thy uncle Jethro said he
would

would give an order for thee to take at Boston; sister James told me she intended to send thee 2 bushells of corn & some wool, & likewise said that justice Worth said that he would send some corn. More meat & corn will be sent which will be in greater quantities which thy uncle Jethro Starbuck will give thee an account of or to thy Husband. I should have been glad if he had come over with Stuart, but I hope we shall see him this summer if not both of you. So with my kind love to thee thy Husband & children & to all friends, committing you to the protection of the almighty who is the wise dispenser of all things, I remain thy affectionate Grandmother —

MARY STARBUCK.

The conversion of Mary Starbuck and her children was the beginning of Quakerism on Nantucket. A majority of the islanders, influenced by this woman, were opposed to a hired ministry, as being contrary to the practice of the apostles; but she consented that when a “hireling minister” came to the island, and was agreeable
to

to the people, and stayed some time, and took pains to benefit them, the people might give what they pleased for his sustenance, — “such as Indian corn or other provisions, as they happened to have at the time to spare, and wool for clothing, but nothing certain or settled.”¹

In her house the Quaker church was formed, and there it worshiped for four years. A record book was bought in April, 1708, and the first writing in it was a petition to the Rhode Island Yearly Meeting “to be joined unto” some Quarterly Meeting, and to have on Nantucket “a general meeting of worship once in ye year;” which acts were to make a connection with the Quaker societies of New England.

At the same time it was agreed “to take care for a piece of ground for a lot to set a meeting-house on & for a burial ground.”

Patience

¹ William Penn exhorted Quakers to “cultivate a universal spirit,” because recognizing the universality of Divine spiritual visitation. And this sense of the priesthood of the individual man, and of every one’s responsibility direct to God, led the Quaker to object to all hierarchical or priestly assumptions.

Patience Gardner, Ann Barnard, and Miriam Worth were "appointed to regulate the conduct of children in meeting," — a more suitable appointment than was customary in the Puritan churches of New England, where this duty was assigned to men. Next year, they agreed to build the meeting-house "as fast as we can;" eight years later, they paid Jabez Macy for enlarging it "by adding twenty feet more in length;" and the congregation increased to such an extent that, in the year 1730, men were selected "to make choyce of a place to set a new meeting house on." This house was built during the next year, and was paid for as soon as it was finished.

From its beginning the church had money in hand, and was liberal in gifts to help its poor and to maintain its faith. At every Monthly Meeting "to inspect ye affairs of ye Church," or, as the records sometimes say, "to inspect ye affairs of Truth," shillings and sixpences were collected "for ye servise & use of Friends." Out of the meeting's stock thus collected, five pounds were given to help to build

a meeting-house in Providence town; five pounds to help to build one at Smithfield; two pounds to help "ye purchase of a Certain piece of land at boston" for a meeting-house; twelve pounds were given "for ye procuring an unjust law made null and voyd whereby Friends suffer much in the loss of their goods;" money was paid "for Friends passages from the main to our meetings;" fifteen pounds were given to Thomas Hathaway "towards repairing his loss of his house by fire;" four pounds were given to Joseph Hamlin, "he being poor and craving help;" twenty pounds were sent to England to get the disapproval of "a law in New England by which Friends suffer persecution and are greatly oprest by ye presbitereans."

The time for opening the book of discipline came soon to this little church. Let us read from its records of May, 1708: "Our visitors having treated with Sarah Darling respecting her marrying with a man of another persuasion, and dont find any disposition in her to condemn herself, It is the judgement of the meeting that she

she be set aside." And let us read from the records of April, 1709: "Phebe wife of George Bunker is set aside for going with another man. Eunice Alley is set aside for marrying contrary to the good order of Friends and refusing to give satisfaction." But Lois Lacey and Lydia Folger, who were guilty of the same transgression, stood up in meeting and told of their sorrow and were forgiven. So, too, with William Swayne, who, to save himself from disownment by the Quaker church, confessed his sins, "for which," he said, "I am truly sorry & begg pardon of God, desiring also to be forgiven by his people whom I have grieved, brought truble & reproch upon by my scandelouse behaviour. I do Declare yt if I had kept to ye Light & Truth as held & profesed by ye people called Quakers it would have preserved me out of yt evil."¹ Other acts besides immoralities were punished by disownment. The principles of the Quaker Society forbade its members to contend with each other in law-suits ;

¹ Records of the Quaker Society, October, 1715.

suits ; and when Stephen Hussey, who had become a notorious plaintiff in the courts, had caused the arrest of three of the town's trustees, and expressed no regret for his action, the church immediately disowned him.

Although many of the Quakers of Nantucket were slaveholders, the church deliberately recorded this opinion about slavery in June, 1716: "It was ye sence & judgement of this meeting that it is not agreeable to Truth for Friends to purchase slaves & keep them term of life." This ambiguous opinion exhibited the worldly shrewdness of Quakerism. It did not condemn slavery as a sin ; it merely protested in a mild manner against the purchase of more slaves, and the keeping a slave during the "term of life." It fell short of the general sentiment about slavery existing in other parts of New England at that time. In the year 1701, the town of Boston instructed its representatives at the General Court to use their influence to procure the abolishment of slavery. The Quakers had no thought of its abolition. Indian and African slaves were valued as
merchandise

merchandise in their inventories, and were mentioned as in their possession, down to the end of the colonial period. Stephen Hussey's will, made in the year 1716, bequeathed —

To my wife a negro woman named Sarah.

To my son Silvanus a negro boy named Mark.

To my daughter Theodata a negro girl named Dorothy.

The Quaker church records of the year 1760 say : —

We have treated with Timothy Folger and he says that he is bound over the sea and is determined, before his departure, to put his negro girl in a position of living free at twenty-five years of age.

The account book of William Rotch, Quaker merchant, says, that in August, 1770, he paid "the cost and court charges on my negro George for stealing three geese."

The Quaker church showed its worldly shrewdness, also, in giving an opinion about
the

the wearing of periwigs. A Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting of the year 1721 advised a general examination of the question, "What method or measure may be most easy and effectual to prevent Friends wearing extravagant wiggs?" The opinion of the Nantucket meeting, given a year later, was evidently not intended as an offense to its wig-wearing members: —

That all such who propose they have need of a wigg ought to take ye advice & approbation of ye visitors of their meetings before they proceed to get one. . . . That all be careful not in a careless or overly minde to cutt off their hair (which was given them for a covering) to put on a wigg or indecent capp which has been a gaining practice to ye Trouble of many earnest Friends.

Having satisfied their consciences by this recorded opinion, the Quakers expressed some concern about the renewed activity of their neighbor, the little Presbyterian society, which for some time had been in a comatose state; and they threw a stone at it by affirming "our antient & christian
testimony

testimony against paying towards ye maintenance of a hireling ministry."

In the Quaker society, love, courting, and marriage were regulated, so far as was possible, by the Book of Discipline. The man and the woman intending marriage were required to declare their intentions to the Monthly Meeting. In the silence of this assembly the man rises and says, for example, "I intend to take Margaret Gardner to be my wife if the Lord permit;" then Margaret rises and says, "I intend to take Jonathan Folger to be my husband if the Lord permit." From that moment, as the book declares, "they do not dwell in the same house together until the marriage is consumated." A committee is then appointed to ascertain "the conversation and clearness of the parties;" to ascertain if either of them has previously made an engagement to marry, or has had any entanglements with men or women. If the report of these inspectors is favorable, "the continuance of their intention of marriage" is permitted, and they are said

said to have "passed meeting." But the inspectors' report sometimes disclosed unpleasant facts. For example: "Robert Gardner and Judith Folger appeared before the meeting and declared their intentions of marriage. Elihu Coleman and Benjamin Barney were appointed to inquire into Robert Gardner's clearness from other women."¹ The committee reported: "We do not find that he is altogether clear, there being a scandalous report of him on ye accusation of a young woman." For this he offered to condemn himself, and after his condemnation had been read in meeting he was allowed to marry Judith Folger. This seems to have been the usual way of getting out of a sinful mire. When Mary Paddock was about to marry Francis Swaine, the committee to examine into their clearness made a very unfavorable report. The two stood up in the meeting of next first day and read a self-condemnation by which their sin was to be expiated, and the queasy conscience of
Quaker

¹ Records of the Quaker Society, A. D. 1729.

Quaker society was to be appeased. It was simply this: "Friends, we are very sorry for our transgression, and desire mercy from God, and beg forgiveness of the people of God whom we have offended." Then the past was buried, and they were allowed to marry.

Marriages were made in the meeting-house before witnesses, who subscribed their names to a certificate of the act. George Fox, the apostle of Quakerism, said, "We marry none, but are witnesses of it." He taught that marriage is "God's joining, not man's;" that no human priesthood, no "man-made minister," had a right to perform the ceremony, which was like a piece of simple machinery. There were no orange blossoms, no music, no veils, no gifts. Alongside the bridegroom were placed "two judicious, grave and weighty men," and alongside the bride were "two such women," as the book calls them, whose faces may have been solemn enough for a funeral. At the proper moment these guardians told the young man and the young woman to stand up. Rising and taking

taking each other by the hand, the man said, "in an audible and solemn manner," as required by the book, "I take this woman to be my wife, promising through divine assistance to be unto her a loving and faithful husband until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us;" the woman then repeated similar words respecting the man, and thus they became husband and wife.

No one kissed the bride, no one smiled as if heartily approving the marriage; and as she retired from the silent meeting-house, no one threw the slipper with which she was to stroke down her husband, as Omphale stroked the head of Hercules with her sandal when he became unruly. They hastened to a place where, with only their intimate friends, they enjoyed a celebration of the marriage. But even to this retreat the Quaker meeting sent its spies to see if the joyousness was decent and orderly. I quote an illustration from the church records of the year 1769:—

"The members appointed to attend Francis Barnard's marriage make return
that

that it was pretty well conducted excepting that some of the young people were very disorderly; whereupon William Coffin & Samuel Starbuck are appointed to inquire into the case." They reported "that they have treated with the young man and with the master of the house where the entertainment was, who say they disallow of such disorders & hope to be more careful in the future."

The records do not describe that "very disorderly" conduct which the spies discovered; but, however disorderly, it was probably nothing more than a spontaneous outburst of joy for their brief freedom from the shackles of Quakerism.

Many of the marriageable girls of Nantucket were born into the Quaker society, and it was necessary for a young man of "the world's people" to ask for admission, or, as the phrase was, "to be taken under the care of Friends," if he would take under his own care the blooming young Quakeress upon whom his affection had been fixed. Joseph Nichols, for example, declaring his desire "to be taken under
direction

direction and care," is admitted; and soon thereafter his intention of marriage with Mary Ann Barnard is announced in meeting.

Discipline in the Quaker church was never relaxed. The members were surrounded by a mysterious surveillance which was alert to catch every rumor, and to uncover every act offensive to what was called "the good order of Truth." The necessity frequently arising for an exercise of discipline was doubtless painful to those of the communion who strove to maintain its reputation for purity and sobriety. But their theory of a righteous life was ill-fitted to struggle with all the evil tendencies of human nature; and this fact was acknowledged when forgiveness was offered and "unity was restored" to penitent sinners. Some were so bold that they would not make their repentance to an assembly which assumed the divine right to forgive. Such was the case of Rebecca Bunker, the wife of George Folger, of whom the visitors reported: "Not being able to come at her we treated with her mother and she told

told us she had consulted with her daughter and she had rather be disowned than to make them any satisfaction " for her immoral offenses.

Of the many meetings of the society, designated by various names, one was called the Select Meeting. It was composed of ministers and elders of both sexes, selected because their lives and conversations were "clean and blameless amongst men," because they were "sound in word and doctrine," and "in unity one with another." When a man or a woman was found to give testimony in an acceptable manner, and appeared to be "duly anointed and qualified," the Select Meeting approved such a one as a minister or as an elder, and referred the nomination to Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. The society was greatly troubled when it became necessary to discipline these trusted teachers; as, in July, 1725, it called up Stephen Wilcock for his disorderly walking, which, as the record says, "hath been to yt degree yt his testimony is become inconsistent & burdensome to ye meeting ;
&

& ye meeting having had a sence of his being not fitt to preach, Nathaniel Starbuck and Batchellor Hussey are desired to go to him & let him know yt ye meeting desires he would be silent and not offer his gift." It was recorded in the year 1760 that a preacher, John Macy by name, "delivered in meeting several censures which are disorderly, and he asserted divine authority for a fact which proved to be not so." He said he was willing "to make a verbal acknowledgment in meeting of the miss he made in asserting divine authority." This was not satisfactory, and three months later his career as a preacher was ended by this brief record: "John Macy to bear no more publick testimony." According to tradition, the real offense of this minister was too many visits to the Presbyterian priest.

When Boswell told Dr. Johnson that he "had been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers," where he heard a woman preach, Johnson replied: "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all."

Women

Women preachers often visited the Nantucket meeting.¹ On winter Sundays there was a wood fire in the chimney at each end of the meeting-house, but it was difficult for the worshipers to keep themselves warm. Women carried foot-stoves, and filled them with coals from the fireplaces before taking their seats. Tradition tells of a woman preacher from England who visited Nantucket in midwinter, when the meeting-house was so cold that women were constantly going to the fireplaces to refill their stoves. This confusion shocked her sense of propriety, and she arose and said: "Friends, when I came here I expected to find a race of hardy women, able to endure cold, but I see you are not so; and I have felt while sitting with you that before I would disturb a religious meeting like this, by going to the fire so often, I would come to meeting with my feet wrapped

¹ Women preachers were recognized by the Quaker church, because it was not thought proper for human wisdom to determine through whom the Spirit should speak. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," was often quoted from the Book of Proverbs; the evidence of Divine authority was "the witness of the Spirit."

wrapped in sheepskins." Then a woman arose and deliberately walked to the fireplace, slammed her foot-stove on the hearth, took the tongs, knocked off a bed of coals from the logs, filled her stove, and walked back to her seat, with an action as if to say, "That 's for thee!"

Thomas Chalkley, a Quaker minister who visited Nantucket in the year 1737, says in his journal: "The people live in such a way that lawyers who plead for money, and doctors who prescribe for money, and preachers who preach for money have no employment on the island." This was the scrimping condition of living during the early years of the Quaker society, which had become the popular form of religious life; cheap in its cost, easy in its profession, it now numbered a thousand members, nearly nine tenths of the English population. In the year 1755, it numbered two thousand, and included the wealthiest people. Samuel Fothergill, a Quaker preacher who visited Nantucket in that year, says in his journal: "As the richest of the inhabitants embraced the principles of Truth
from

from conviction, the others thought the expense of maintaining a priest would be too heavy for them, and they have turned Quakers to save money."

In the mechanism of political life there was no place for the faithful Quaker. His principles forbade him to acknowledge any duty to the state. He refused to fight, or take up arms to defend the flag under whose protection he was living, nor would he voluntarily pay any part of the cost of employing soldiers and sailors to defend it.

"I do not see, sir," said Dr. Johnson, "that fighting is absolutely forbidden in Scripture."

"The Quakers say it is," replied Boswell; "'unto him that smiteth thee on one cheek, offer him also the other.'"

"But stay, sir," said Johnson, "the text is meant only to have the effect of moderating passions. We see this from the context, where there are other recommendations which I warrant you the Quakers will not take literally; as, for instance, 'From him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.' Let a man whose credit is
bad

bad come to a Quaker and say, 'Well, sir, lend me a hundred pounds,' he 'll find him as unwilling as any other man. So in 1745, my friend, Tom Cumming the Quaker, said he would not fight, but he would drive an ammunition cart."

"A Quaker," says Coleridge in his "Table Talk," "is made up of ice and flame. He has no mean temperature. Hence he is rarely interested about any public measure but he becomes a fanatic, and oversteps, in his irrespective zeal, every decency and every right opposed to his course."

In the year 1757, a tax was levied upon the inhabitants of Nantucket for expenses of the French and Indian War. A part of this tax was known as "soldiers money;" and, as many Quakers refused to pay it, the town tax-collector distrained it. The Quaker church records give this "account of what has been taken from Friends to pay that part of the tax called soldiers money:"—

from Jethro Folger; four silver

spoons

£2.18.11

other silver spoons

13. 2

from John Macy; sundry pew-

ter

ter things and looking glass, worth	1.12. 0
from Silvanus Worth; oval ta- ble and pair of hand irons worth	2. 4. 0
2 pewter platters worth	9. 9
from Nathaniel Coleman; one silver spoon	10. 0
from William Hussey; one sil- ver pepper box	1.12. 0
from Barnabas Coleman; 3 sil- ver spoons	1.16. 4
from William Russell; 1 silver cup	2. 8. 0
from Joseph Russell; 1 silver cup & spoon	2.13. 9
from Jonathan Gardner; 1 oval table, 1 pair hand irons, 4 chairs, all worth	2.12. 0
from Nathaniel Gardner; six silver spoons	3. 3. 4
from William Starbuck; three silver spoons	1. 0. 0

In the year 1772, Stephen Hussey, a member of the Quaker meeting, was elected representative from Nantucket to the

the General Court of the Province of Massachusetts Bay. The meeting noted this fact in its records and said: "No Friend can, consistent with the rule of Friends' Society, sit in that assembly." Committees were sent "to labor with him respecting his sitting in the General Court," and, as they reported "we don't find him disposed to make Friends satisfaction," he was publicly set aside.

The Quaker church believed that those who never use the sword will never need the sword, and so the War of the Revolution was a trial of its principles. William Worth, a member of the church, was disowned "for going to sea in a prize vessel taken in the present war, which we think," as was written in the church records, "is joining too much with that spirit of plunder whereby such things are acquired." Paul Hussey was disowned "for being bound to sea & intending to carry guns to defend himself and interests." And in pursuance of its policy of peace the church disowned many of its members at this time, for reasons which were stated thus:—

For

- For "sailing in an armed vessel."
- For "going to sea privateering."
- For "attending a vendue on a captured vessel."
- For "being down at Brandt Point among armed men, and he had a gun."
- For "enlisting in the East India Company's service at the island called St. Helena."
- For being "in some office connected with the war in the western parts."
- For "sailing in an armed vessel from London."
- For "being engaged in service on board a man of war and taking wages."
- For "taking up arms in a warlike manner."
- For "taking a small arm in pursuit of some prisoners who had broken gaol of the county."

Visitors of the Quaker society were ever alert to find transgressors, and the number of transgressing members whom they caused to be disowned, during the latter part of the last century, was very large. A committee appointed to report "how far back"

back" offenses may be searched for, reported that "no time be set;" and so they trailed Nantucket fore and aft, disturbing many people who had been quietly living immoral lives under the sober-colored cloak of Quakerism.

The visitors were men and women who had outlived the pleasures of youth, and whose constant fear was "too much lightness among young people." They called John Coffin to account "for keeping in his house a musical instrument called a spinnet, and permitting his daughter to play thereon." A few months later, John Coffin stood up in the meeting and showed his penitence by the unmanly declaration that he "had no hand in bringing the spinnet to his house, and has forbid it ever being used there, and is sorry it was brought into his house, and that he was a little short and rough with the visitors." But Keziah Coffin, when taken to task "for keeping a spinnet in her house and permitting her daughter to play thereon," refused to repent, and was disowned by the Quaker church. Jethro Pinkham was
disowned

disowned merely "for keeping a violin to play upon."

Quakers cherished the Puritan's hatred of music, merriment, and sports.¹ Dances, picnics, and moonlight excursions for pleasure were interdicted on Nantucket; and therefore Ichabod Paddock and Latham Gardner were disowned for sailing about the harbor "in a vessel where dancing was performed," and keeping company with young women "not of our society." In summer time the cliff and beach at Siasconset had the same attractions for young people as now. They went there to see the ocean rolling towards the island in long ridges of deep water, curling over the edge of the shoals, and breaking in cataracts of foam along the shore. Here the view is unbounded:—

" Eastward, as far as the eye can see,
Still eastward, eastward, endlessly,
The sparkle and tremor of purple sea
That rises before you, a flickering hill,
On and on to the shut of the sky."

For

¹ John Banks, the Quaker preacher, spoke like a Puritan when he wrote to his children: "be quiet and sober, not wanton, nor given to play, nor laughing; but mind your books and go to meetings!"

For "allowing a company of young people to dance in his house at Siasconset," Thomas Coffin was disowned by the Quaker church. Jethro Hussey was disowned because "he was refractory" when the visitors reprov'd him for "attending where fiddling and dancing were carried on;" he confessed "barring my doors, getting my pen ink and paper, and forbidding them to preach to me, and making a comparison between Quakerism and Free Masonry." Eunice Worth and many young women were "set aside for persisting in going to places of amusement where there was fiddling and dancing;" but Phebe Bunker, being penitent and in tears, is forgiven because she is "suffering for having been to places of music and dancing tho not a partaker therein."

The discipline of the church compelled conformity to certain styles of apparel and to peculiar phrases of speech. John Hussey was disowned for "inconsistent appearance in dress particularly in wearing his hair, and no disposition to make alteration therein." Several young men, deciding
not

not to wear their hair "as straight as a pound of candles," tied it in cues; they were disowned for "deviating from our principles in dress." Deborah Smith was set aside because she did "not use the plain language," —

"The thee and the thou of the Quaker."

Visitors of the church reported that "Deborah said she did n't think she ever should."

Discipline fell upon trivial and upon important offenses alike. Reuben Gardner was disowned for "refusing to submit a controversy with his brother to indifferent men." Andrew Worth was disowned for "throwing oysters out of a vessel without authority." Timothy Folger was disowned because he "qualified himself for a magistrate;" Philip Chase, for "having been long in the practice of playing cards;" Hepzibah Russell, for "unbecoming treatment of her husband;" and Rachael Worth, for "turbulent and outrageous behaviour to hers." Seth Ray was disowned because he had "gone out in marriage with a woman in New Jersey." Others were
disowned

disowned for "partaking too freely of spirituous licquors;" for "launching into business beyond his ability to manage it;" for "marrying too nigh of kin."¹

Edward Allen was disowned for putting his son as an apprentice "to a man who is not a Friend." This discrimination against persons of another faith was a bigotry of Quakerism. It was like the Pharisee's pretensions to superior sanctity. It appears in the compulsion of every man and woman intending marriage to marry in the meeting-house, and to marry a member of the communion. Solomon Coleman was disowned for "permitting his daughter to be married in his house after the manner of the world, and also joining in prayer with a priest of another persuasion." Mehitable Coffin was disowned because she "assisted her daughter on being married in her house by a hireling minister."

Mary,

¹ Marrying "too nigh of kin" troubled other consciences besides the Quaker conscience. In Judge Sewall's Memoranda of a visit to Martha's Vineyard, April, 1702, he says: "Mrs. Thacher on her death bed troubled abt her Marriage to Mr. Kemp her first husband. Some smell of Relation between y^m."

Mary, wife of Nathan Coffin, was disowned "for being present at a marriage performed by a priest." Ann Hussey was disowned for "justifying her daughter in marrying a man not in membership with us;" and Peleg Hussey was disowned for "being present at the marriage of one of his children performed contrary to the order of Friends." Thus, with its laws and conventions, begetting artificial virtues and punishing artificial sins, Quakerism had become a tyrant.

A home-bound whaleman, running in towards the island on a foggy morning, anchored his ship outside the bar. When the fog lifted, it was meeting time. Looking through his spyglass, he saw crowds of people going from all parts of the island to the great meeting-house, and he said, "I could not keep from shouting at the inspiring sight." They who see in Quakerism, as it was then represented, a high form of religious and social life, must feel a shadow coming over them as they now walk about the island and recall its departed power. But, after all that may be said in its favor,
it

it was a power that suppressed the natural emotions, dulled ambition, destroyed manliness, and reduced the thoughts and actions of men to such a uniform level that one searches in vain for any individual greatness during the period of its dominion over Nantucket.

Those plain, square, shingle-sided, unpainted houses, whose cold and barren look tells of the nearness of the sea, are reminders of the Quakerism which ruled Nantucket for more than a hundred years. It reached its highest grade as the last century ended, and soon thereafter it began to decline. As it went down the hill it was split by internal quarrels into three hostile sections, each one calling the other spurious. It continued to dwindle and dwindle, until at last it was gone from the island as completely as "a wind that blew a thousand years ago."

The Missionary from Boston

WHILE Thomas Story, the Quaker preacher, was visiting Nantucket in the year 1704, he found at one of his meetings a smaller number of people than usual; and he says in his journal that "two priests, an elderly man and a young one, the first from the isle of Shoals and the other from Martha's Vineyard, had a meeting near us and several were curious to hear the new preacher in the Presbyterian way." Other efforts like that mentioned in the Quaker's journal were made to establish Presbyterianism on the island; but owing to the growth and cheapness of Quakerism, which paid no wages to its preachers, they were not successful until the year 1711, when a little Presbyterian meeting-house was built near Nobottom Pond, and a little congregation began to worship in it.

In May, 1725, a young minister who had
been

been educated at Harvard College was sent to Nantucket to revive the drooping faith of the Puritans represented by this feeble society. His name was Timothy White. He came from Boston, a missionary zealous for good works, and soon after his arrival he fell in love with an island girl named Susanna Gardner, who was a granddaughter of Captain John Gardner, already mentioned in my narrative. In this new condition of existence he neglected to write to his friends at home; and one day he was aroused by a letter from his sister, Mistress Abigail White, who had heard that he was "far gone" in an occupation unknown to her own experience. To this letter he replied: —

NANTUCKET, Sept. 15. 1725

Sister Abi — I must confess you did eno' to shame me, by catching at an opportunity to write, while I was careless to improve the many which presented. But you have heard I conclude, altho' you don't know by experience, that when Persons are stiffly engaged in Courting,
they

they are very forgetful of those lesser things.

I know not to whom you were beholden for your Information, but I can inform you that I was not so far gone in it but that I had determined to quit the place & all the things in it, till I heard from Boston, when your Letter came; and I have not laid my self under such strong obligations yet, but that I can easily let the action fall if you have anything material to object.

Whether the reason is because my Company is so very delightful & charming, or what it is I cant tell, but it has been my Portion to be honour'd with such suspicions, wherever I have yet lived for any time.

But if this be not true, I could wish it were for I am no enemy to proceedings of this nature.

He advises his sister "to improve every opportunity for the advancement of your temporal good," which may have been interpreted as a suggestion that she also should be "stiffly engaged in courting;"
but

but above all, he says, "you are to be solicitous for the prosperity of your soul." This was an advice commonly offered by religious letter-writers of those days.

If Timothy White had "quit the place" at that time, he might have been better off in the end. The longer he stayed, the gloomier became his prospects; and at the close of two years' living on Nantucket he was intending to return to Boston, an unmarried man, when a letter came to him from Benjamin Coleman, minister of the Brattle Street Church, in that town, written on behalf of a committee of "Honorable and Reverend Gentlemen," and inclosing a gift of £100, with promise of £50 more in two years, to be accepted on these conditions:—

First That ye said M^r White do willingly devote himself to ye service of Christ & Souls on the Island of Nantuckett, seriously endeavouring by ye help of God for ye space of five years to come, to introduce & establish the Settlement of a Church state there.

And secondly, That ye People of Nantuckett

tuckett to whom he is & has been ministering due signify to us their desire of Mr White's continuing & labouring among them to this end.

This encouragement satisfied him; and in September, 1728, he married Susanna Gardner, who was seventeen years of age; he was twenty-eight. The next month he wrote in his note book: "The Commissioners for Indian affairs at Boston made known to me their desire of my taking upon me the charge of a Lecture to the Indians upon Nantucket; on my understanding of which I sent an answer in the affirmative, and accordingly I begin today." He preached to the Indians once or twice a month for ten years, and received for this labor from the Commissioners £25 yearly in poor money. During this period he wrote in his book the date of each preaching, and the number of Indians in his audience; for example, "1733, began a 6th year at Miacomet; November 1st there were 23 Indians present; 27th of December, 23 Indians; 20th of January, 60 Indians; 10th of February, 70 Indians; 24th of

of February, 80 Indians ; 10th of March, 60 Indians ; 14th of April, 70 Indians ; 20th of April, 60 Indians.”

His popularity with the Indian congregations provoked the ignorant native teachers, who interfered with his work in such a manner that it became necessary for the Commissioners at Boston to write to them, saying : —

This is to signify that the Honorable Commissioners, of whom His Excellency the Governor is one, from whom you receive your yearly Salaries, have appointed the Rev^d. Mr. Timothy White to preach Lectures to you, to oversee counsel & advise you from time to time as occasion shall require, and to inspect the Schools & Churches & to catechise the children & such as are proper for it, & you & all concerned are to pay a proper regard to him accordingly.

Pursuant to a vote of the
Commissrs this is ordered
to be sent to you.

ADAM WINTHROP

Nov. 17th. 1733.

In the second summer after his marriage he was building a house on land given
to

to him by his wife's father; it was on the highway near Josiah Coffin's house, and the garden was "four rods square in the swamp near by."¹ Two years later, he assumed the office of minister to the little Presbyterian society. For his help in this position there came to him from Boston a bundle of books, with a letter saying:—

These four volumes of ye Practical works of ye Rev^d Mr Richard Baxter are given by Samuel Holden Esq^r, Governor of the Bank of England, by ye Special Disposition of Benjamin Colman Past^r of a Church in Boston to the Presbyterian Congregation at Nantucket, now under the ministry of the Rev^d Mr Timo^y White, on the following conditions — that ye s^d Mr White & some of ye principal members of ye Congregation do receive them & keep them safe for ye benefit of ye Teacher & Society of ye Presbyterians on sd Island, & will be responsible

¹ On the south side of Cliff Road, a little east of the Josiah Coffin house, is the site of the house built by Timothy White, almost due north from the house with the horseshoe chimney. Between the White house and the house with the horseshoe chimney is the swamp, where was located his garden.

responsible for them so as to return them in Case the public Worship according to the Presbyterian method fails. If there be a number of People that tarry at the Place of Worship after Sermon, one volume shall be kept there for their use if it may be with safety.

The congregation was small and poor, paying the minister by voluntary gifts of wood, corn, wool, fish, labor, and sometimes money; so he had to look beyond it for the means of living. He opened a school, which had no vacations. Quaker children did not attend it, as they were confined to the schools of the Quaker society. The largest number of scholars at any time was thirty-four; from each scholar he received about ten shillings for a term of three months, paid in money or its value in hay, corn, firewood, cheese, tallow, or molasses. I copy from his account book some of the payments:—

Recd of James Gardner for	
Schooling 1 Gall molasses	5s.
Recd of John Bunker for School-	
ing 60 lbs Cheese	6os.
	Recd

Recd of Josiah Coffin for School- ing Tallow	4s.
Recd of Sam Ray for School- ing 2 tubs	19s.
Recd of George Brown for schooling in Oyl	£4.15.8

Continuous preaching and teaching produced for the poor missionary and his family only a small maintenance, which he increased by trading in merchandise. Friends on the mainland sent to him invoices of cloth, bed-ticking, cotton, flour, religious books, almanacs, Watts's Hymns, and cider. His account book says:—

April 1733. Recd from Mr. Brown

5 bls Cider which is thus sold:—

John Gardner 1 bl — at 22 shillings

John Coffin 1 bl — at 22 “

Josiah Coffin 1 bl — at 22 “

Robert Coffin 2 bl — at 42 “

	£5.8.0
Freit on cyder	17.6
	—————
Neat proceeds	£4.10.6
	—————

Recd

Recd of above debts

in wool 50 shillings and
six pence ;

in fish 40 shillings = £4.10.6

June 1733. Recd from Mother White
one coverlett sold the same to Josiah
Coffin to be paid for in wool, £3.
Recd the wool and sent it.

July 1733. Shipped aboard Capt Wood-
man for John White of Haverhill to
be paid for in apples or cyder or
both —

on John Coffins acct —

4 lb of wool — £1. 2.0

on John Gardners acct —

10 lb wool — 1.10.0

on Timothy Whites acct —

37 lb wool — 3.14.0

At same time shipped for mother for
her cloth 166 lb wool.

He appears to have had the genius of a
trader. In the year 1735, he sold twenty-
five almanacs at sixpence each, and fifteen
“Evidences of Christianity” at two shillings
and sixpence each, and “laid in for a whal-
ing voyage” eight barrels of beef. His
share

share of the whaling sloop's oil on her first cruise was ten barrels, and on her second cruise fifteen barrels. From that date he was annually shipping whale oil and whalebone to the Boston market. Some of his slabs of whalebone weighed eight hundred pounds.

A few extracts taken here and there from his book reveal some of the peculiar circumstances of his life:—

Let Eben Cain (an Indian) have 5 shillings which he promised to pay in Feathers within 8 or 10 days. He paid the Feathers.

Let Zach Hoit have a pair of Breeches Shirt and Hat. Paid by carting Wood. Let Zach Hoit have a Jacket for which he is to pay ye next Fall $6\frac{1}{2}$ Bushels of Corn.

Cleared with James Ribbin for the Boys breaking his window—paying 4 shillings and in ye Spring 1 shilling. In all 5 Shillings.

Paid to Jos Daws for Labour 1 pair of knee Buckles 4 shillings. Paid to his wife for Weaving 20 shillings.

Bourt

Bourt of John Bunker 100 lbs of Chees @ 1 shilling and pd in cash 40 shillings & Schooling 60 shillings.

Sold to Sylvanus Hussey 722 lbs Whalebone besides the 200 weighed out by himself.

Put on board Sylvanus's schooner for Boston 34 bbls of Oyl.

Put on board Andrew Gardner's sloop for Boston 18 bbls Oyl.

Pd to John Coffin Freit of wood to Newburg and apples & cyder from thence for sale 80 shillings.

Sent by Bro Cragie to Pay Couz. Wm White for a Piece of Callico and to get Sundries for sale £8.

Recd from Bro Cragie Sundries to the value of £17 for sale.

Sent to Rhode Island 20 shillings to get vin treacle & cocheneal & a piece of striped Cotton.

This day Thomas Dagget of Edgartown informed me that the money (£18) which I sent to him the last year for a Cow was delivered to him.

Pd to Mary Barnard, Doct^r, £5.1.8,
and

and for Physick then had 2 shillings (June 21, 1749).

Thomas Hubbard, a merchant of Boston, had collected £24 from a convention of ministers, and sent the money to Timothy White, with a letter dated in June, 1748, saying:—

Sometime ago D^r Sewall put into my hands a letter from yourself representing the low circumstances of life your situation in the world had exposed you to, upon which I communicated the same to several of the members of the General Court, but found it was beyond their power to help you in a public station, w^{ch} I am persuaded they would gladly have done if they could; whereupon I returned your letter to the doctor with four pounds cash from myself to be sent you at the first opportunity. . . . Doct Sewall after this communicated your letter to the convention of ministers who readily voted you twenty pounds (old Tenor) out of the collection. . . . At last he put it in my care, & now by Mr Abijah Folger I have sent you twenty four pounds.

pounds. . . . I heartily wish you health & prosperity in your Lord's work & hope that some door or other may be opened for your comfort and relief.

But the poor missionary had already discovered that it was useless to contend against the power of Quakerism which was ruling Nantucket; and writing to the Rev. John Webb, of Boston, his "dear brother in the Lord," he said his discouragements were so great and many that they will compel him in a little time "to take leave of the poor people" in whose service he had spent a great part of his life. A reply from his friend promised that the ministers in Boston would "use their interest that you may have a more comfortable support." It was only a promise. In June, 1750, he departed from Nantucket, carrying with him as a memorial of his missionary life the four volumes of Richard Baxter's works. "These books," said he, "are in my hands, there being no preacher on the island when I left; and as I supplied that pulpit for more than eighteen years after they were put into my hands, and
during

during this term of years lived chiefly upon my own means, I am justified in accounting them my own."

Soon after leaving Nantucket, he undertook a commercial business at Haverhill, his birthplace, on the Merrimac River. His first venture was in loading a vessel bound to Philadelphia. For assistance in obtaining a return cargo he wrote to Joseph Rotch, a Quaker merchant of Nantucket, whose reply reflects the nature of Timothy White's business, and reminds him that, although he had been a trader, he has not yet learned "the way amongst merchants."

NANTUCKET, July 3, 1750

RESPECT^d FRIEND TIMOTHY WHITE —
I remember that I tould thee I would write to my friend at phelladelphia to fill Capt Chase up & so I have wrote to John Misselin, but if thou art affrade to trust to that thou must tell what part of the vessel I shal load & gitt a Charter party writ for. If I know what part I have to load my friend can be gitting it Reddy while Capt Chase is doing what
he

he will have to do, but if thou means to load what part thou pleases, and not tell what part it is, I know no other way than to write to my friend to put in what is wanting, which I have done. As for sending order for such thing it is not the way amongst merchants. When I sent Capt Chase last year I never had any agreement with any man but sent him to John Misslen & desired him to load him back. Therefore I must have a certain part of the vessel or quantity of goods now before she goes on. Thou must trust to me & my friend to fill the vessel up. I am thy friend

JOSEPH ROTCH.

In the year 1752, he was doing business at Haverhill in the name of Timothy White & Company, and was writing to Messrs. Stork & Champion, merchants in London, that "Being about 150 miles from Nantucket I can but seldom get any Intelligence from there of the management of my Partners in the sloop Susanna of which I own an eighth part." The sloop had carried a cargo of oil to London, and he
desired

desired the consignees to balance the account of his share, and ship what was due to him in goods "by Capt. Andrew Craigie who is bound to Boston." He writes:—

I am now scituated in the countrey upon Merrimack, commonly called Newbury River, about 15 miles above Newbury, where we abound with the best of Plank & ships timbers, and carry on a large stock at building which increases yearly, having expert workmen, and do build cheaper than either Boston or Newbury. We abound also with staves both white & red oak, & with boards, clap boards & shingle, and are getting into the Tarr & Turpentine trade. A large countrey just upon our back and plenty of some kind of Furr which are transported to England. . . . What suits best with us are woolens & Linens for mens & womens wear, but none high prized, white and black Gloves & other mourning, soft Pewter, nails, cutlery & Haberdashery. The Liverpool merchants send over their Iron as well as Canvas & Riging for what vessels they
build

build here, this place being very well suited for trade upon Merrimack river. I've made a small beginning but find money to scarce have thots of entering partnership with one or two skillful & successful traders especially if it will suit you to trade with us for shipping of any kind.

Your humble servant

TIMOTHY WHITE & COMP.

At the end of his account books I found this paragraph, written by an unknown hand: —

Mr Timothy White Dyed at Haverhill about 11 o'clock Lord's Day Evening, February 24th, 1765.

Although he labored during the best part of his life to benefit the people of Nantucket, his name is not mentioned in their annals.

VI

Sea-Journals and Sea-Rovers

“ With sails let fall, and sheeted home, and clear of the ground
were we ;
We crossed the bar, stood round the point, and sailed away to
sea.”

“ A JOURNAL of an intended voyage from Nantucket by God’s permission, ” — so run the opening words of these old books. Following this recognition of Him “ who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand ” are the records of daily events at sea ; the direction of the wind, character of the weather, run of the log chip, courses steered, the latitude and longitude, the occupations of the ship’s company. Then come the last words of the day : “ So ends this 24 hours all on board in health through the blessing of God.”

The pages of these journals have been polished by the friction of oily hands ; the language is picturesque ; and here and there quaint words, which passed out of
use

use long ago, come upon the reader like a flash-light from the last century. The sea-rovers who wrote them were revolters against uniform spellings, as if uniformity were "a strife against nature."¹ In this they were not wrong, for the meaning of words is determined not so much by their orthography as by their combination and place in the text. Voltaire, who derided both English and French orthography, said: "Writing is the painting of the voice; the closer the resemblance the better the picture."

The threads that made up the strand of Nantucket life were not diverse; in one way or another they all wove themselves into the sea. For a Nantucket boy, there
was

¹"The process of compelling a uniform orthography is, in fact, a strife against nature. It is the fault of our current orthography that it is too fixed already. This fixity it is that lends force to the clamor which rises from time to time for a revolutionary phonetic change. In proportion as spelling is rigid, in the same degree it must be unnatural, and therefore liable to a breakdown of some sort sooner or later. Language is a product of life, and, if not exactly a living thing, it certainly shares the incidents of life. Of these incidents none is more pervading than abhorrence of fixity." — *Professor J. Earle, University of Oxford, 1896.*

was no outlook except across the weltering ocean; and on these journal pages he worked out his life problems in the mathematics of navigation. There he wrote whatever he ought to know about building, rigging, and handling a ship; the regulations of foreign ports; the latitude and longitude of noted headlands and harbors; the value of foreign moneys computed in pounds sterling; the methods of drawing bills of exchange on London. Ambitious boys, who began in these journals their education for the sea, were thinking of the day when they were to take commands and become managers as well as navigators of ships.

Such, for example, was George Gardner, who was born on the island in the year 1731, and, having fitted himself for sea, he sailed as a sharer in whaling cruises. His book begins with his preparatory studies ashore; then follows his sea-journal; and then the record of his services as a justice of the peace and collector of the port of Nantucket. I will copy a day from his journal:—

Saturday

Saturday January 21st, 1757. The first part of This 24 hours fresh Breases of wind S W Intermixed with Rain & Snow. wee Spake with Capt John Brown from Newfoundland Bound for New Lonnon. The wind blew that wee Had not much Talk with him but he Told us he had been Chased by a French Privateer but by Good Luck Lost her in the Night. Latt 36-10. Saw 2 large Ise Islands hove out our boat and got 8 Bbls of Ise. Caught several Cod fish & had Fry'd Cod heads for supper and a glass of wine. So no more at Present all being in Health by the Blessing of God but no Whale yet.

Peleg Folger's sea-journals show a Nantucket sailor of another sort. His name was pronounced Pillick, and it exists in an old crooning song of Nantucket fishermen, of which this fragment remains:—

“Old Uncle Pillick he built him a boat
On the ba-a-ck side of Nantucket P'int;
He rolled up his trowsers and set her afloat
From the ba-a-ck side of Nantucket P'int.”

He began to go to sea when he was
twenty-one

twenty-one years old, cruising yearly below the Bahamas and beyond the Grand Banks of Newfoundland in pursuit of sperm whales. In those days whaling voyages were made in sloops, each manned by thirteen men, with two boats. In the spring they departed from Nantucket, returned to discharge their oil, and sailed and returned again three or four times before winter came. The largeness of the fleet in Peleg Folger's time is indicated by a remark in his journal of the year 1754:—

We sailed from Nantucket May 6th in company with about 30 sail of whalemens and when we anchor'd under the East End of Nantucket we appear'd like a forest.

This young sailor was an innovator in the current style of sea-journals. He opened his first pages with the words:—

Peleg Folger his hand and Book written at sea on Board the Sloop Grampus May 1751. Many people who keep Journals at sea fill them up with trifles. I purpose in the following sheets not to keep an overstrict history of every trifling

fling occurrence that happens: only now and then some particular affair, and to fill up the rest with subjects Mathematical Historical Philosophical or Poetical as best suits my inclination —

“Qui docet indoctos licet indoctissimus esset,
Ille quoque breve ceteris doctior esse queat.”¹

This preface denotes an individuality, which shone out beyond the range of other sea-rovers, and leads me to quote liberally from his journals. His habit of using Latin phrases in them caused many jests by his shipmates, one of whom wrote in his book: —

Old Peleg Folger is a Num Scull for writing Latin. I fear he will be Offended with me for writing in his Book but I will Intercede with Anna Pitts in his Behalf to make up for ye same — Nathaniel Worth.

The Grampus sailed from Nantucket the 10th of April, 1751. The young sea philosopher

¹ “He who teaches the unlearned may be most unlearned, although he is only a little more learned than the others.” This maxim was rendered by Pope as follows: —

“Content if here th’ unlearn’d their wants may view,
The learn’d reflect on what before they knew.”

philosopher kept silence until May 3d, when he wrote:—

This day we have killed a Spermaceti whale which is the first since our Departure from our good Isle of Nantucket.

May 10th annoque Domini 1751 we are bound home, having three small Spermaceties in our hold. Latt. 38 North. We spy'd a sail and Draw'd up to her but the Clown would not speak with us bearing off S E.

“When Drake and Cavendish sailed the world about,
And valiant heroes found new Countries out,
To Britain's Glory and their Lasting Fame,
Were we like minded we might do the same.”

May 15th. This day we fell in with the South Shoal & made our Dear Island of Nantucket and thro Gods mercy got round the point in the afternoon. So we turn'd it up to the Bar by the Sun 2 hours high. In the night we got over the Bar — Laus Deo.

May 18th we have got all ready for a Second Cruise and Sail'd from our wharfe round the point and anchor'd
under

under Sankety Head and the next day at 4 o'Clock in the morning we weigh'd anchor & Stood off to sea.

June 7th We have got one large Spermaceti and have met with nothing remarkable. But Content is a continual feast. We are headed North and hope to be home soon. Deo volente atque adjuvente.¹

June 23^d. We sailed from Nantucket Bar through Miskekit channel on our third cruise, bound South.

July 1st. Nantucket bears N E 324 miles. We had a Good Breakfast upon meat and doboys & we are all merry together. A Shuffling kind of Breeze — only wish we Could get Some Spermaceties.

July 6th. This day we spy'd Spermaceties & we kill'd one. If we get Whale enough we may be able to go home in a fortnight. Death summons all men to the silent grave.

July 9th. Lat. 36-18 Longt. 73-2.
Nothing

¹ God willing and assisting.

Nothing remarkable this 24 Hours only dull times & Hot weather & no Whales to be seen. Much toil and labour mortal man is forced to Endure & little profit to be got by it.

July 10th a gale of wind and a large sea. We lay by under a trisail. It is tiresome to lay by so much, rowling and tumbling like the conscience of a wicked man.

July 11th. The wind died out and the sloop began to rowl and rowl'd her lee gunwail under and several times fairly floated our boats and stove one. Nothing to be seen but the circling skies above and the rowling seas below. No Whales or Whales tails to be seen nor any Whalemén.

July 14th We have killed two Spermaceties. Now for home Boys! We have 70 barrels full in our Hold—*ex beneficia divina.*¹

In April, 1752, Peleg Folger sailed from Nantucket “with a smart wind at north-west,”

¹ From the divine clemency.

west," beginning the cruise with a perilous experience : —

April 4th we Spy'd Spermaceties and we toss'd out our Boat and we row'd about a mile and half and then a Whale came up under us & stove our Boat and threw every man overboard. And we all came up and Got hold of the boat & held to her till the other boat which was two miles away came up and took us in.

April 27th we spoke Beriah Fitch and we mated with Beriah and we Struck a large Spermaceti and kill'd her. We Got her between both Vessels and Got a Parbuckle under her and tackles and runners to her and we hoised her head about 2 foot above water and then we cut a Scuttle in her head and a man Got in up to his Armpits and dipt almost 6 Hogsheads of clear oyle out of her case besides 6 more out of the Noddle. He certainly doth hit the right that mingles profit with delight.

May 10th we spy'd a scool of Spermaceties in the morning and hove out our
boats

boats and struck two and kill'd one but the other ran away with one iron in her tail. That which we kill'd fill'd 11 Hogsheads.

May 13th. We heard a Spermaceti blow at 1-2 past 3 in ye morning and it still being Dark we hove out our Boats and row'd towards ye Sound and about 20 minutes before the Sun rising we struck her. But we could not get in a Second iron and so she ran away to the Southard & got clear of us. And so one Day passeth after another & every Day brings us nearer to our Grave and all human employments will be at an end.

May 16th. in latitude 36:30 North We spoke with a cape man who told us oyl bore a very Good price in Boston — £140 old tenor per tun to be paid in Dollars on the spot and the small pox which hath been in Boston still continues. We spy'd Spermaceties & toss'd out our boats & kill'd one which filled 12 Hogsheads. We stood to the northward

ward having Got a Good voyage ex divinâ beneficia.

May 21st. a very hard Gale at north-east. We carried a trysail foresail & Gib and the wind coming on we hall'd down our Gib & reef'd him then sat him again. But the wind tore him sadly & we hall'd him down again and unbent him & Got him into the Cabin & mended him and stood off under a trysail and foresail till night.

May 22nd. A very hard gale & a topgallant sea going. We lay to under a trysail all day. It is five weeks since we left Nantucket, but I am remembering all the Girls at home and I hope to see them soon.

“Oh that mine eyes might closed be
To what becomes me not to see;
That deafness might possess mine ear
To what becomes me not to hear;
That truth my tongue might always tye
From ever speaking foolishly.”¹

In June, 1752, he sailed in the sloop *Seaflower*, bound to Newfoundland seas; and
on

¹ From *Ellwood's Wishes*.

on the 14th of the month he made the land and entered "Misketo Cove." There, says his sea-journal, —

the Irishmen curs'd us at high rate for they hate whalemens in the Harbour. We lay at anchor two weeks and in that space of time bore many an oath of the Paddies & bog trotters — they swearing we should not cut up our Whale in the Harbour. But we cut up two and then they rais'd a mob under Pike an Irishman who call'd himself Captain of the Harbour, and fir'd upon us & tho the shot struck all around us, but through mercy hurt no man. While the sloop was anchored we cruised in our boats after Whales. We struck a yearling and the mother Whale kept by its side and presently she was struck. We kill'd her by much lancing. In her flurry she came at our boat and furiously ran over us and oversot us & made a miserable rack of our boat in a moment. A wonder it was that we all had our lives spar'd for divers of us were sadly puzzled under water.

August

August 15th. Yesterday we set sail from Cape Race for Nantucket. There was a fresh gale of wind right aft and we took two reefs in the mainsail and she went like a Blaze all night.

In May, 1753, Peleg Folger sailed from Nantucket in the sloop Greyhound, bound for Davis Straits. Soon after leaving port he fell in with a schooner from the West Indies bound to Boston, and he wrote in his journal: —

We went aboard the schooner and got two bottles of Rum and some limes and sugar and oranges. Then we spy'd a scool of Spermaceties and Kill'd one. There hath been a jumbling sea today.

May 26th we struck soundings on y^e Grand Banks of Newfoundland. We saw several ice islands and we saw several ships. The weather is freezing cold, days long, nights short, our Cabins our delight, the fire pleasant, our allowance to every man his belly full & more if he wants. Alas! if it were not for hopes the heart would fail. Lat 58:57 Long 51:46.

June

June 20th We saw eight whales and our skipper struck one which stove his boat so that she oversot and the Whale ran away. We struck another which also ran away. So there is two shot of craft and a stoven boat in one day.

June 21st We saw some whales and struck one and we soon made her spout Blood and she was a long time dying. But at last she dy'd and we cut her head off. The wind blew so that we could not cut her up — a large swell going, the cable parted and the Whale is gone with about one third of the blubber.

June 24th. We cleaned our Whale-bone and stowed it away. It measured 8 foot 3 inches. We chased right Whales and Spermaceties today but could not strike.

A Right Whale is very large, hollowing on the back, all slick & smooth, having no hump at all as other Whales. The bone (of which is made stays and hoop'd petticoats) doth grow in their mouth. The tongue is monstrous large & will commonly make a tun of oyl. He
has

has two spout holes and makes a forked spout whereby he is distinguished from other Whales at a distance.

A Spermaceti will make from 10 to 100 barrels of oyl. He has no bone in his head & his brains is all oyl. He has a hooking hump on the after part of his back, one spouthole, and his under jaw is full of ivory teeth and his tongue is very small.

June 26th. Ye wind at N E with some snow, we handed our mainsail and set our trisail, and let her jog to the eastward under trisail, foresail & Gib in hopes to find our Dead Whale. At 6 A. M. while we were pouring some Chocolate down our bellies, our partner Elisha Coffin, who was lying by, hove out a Boat & rowed to windward & when we came to discover what they was after it proved to be our Dead Whale which we lost the other day. So we soon got her alongside. Lat. by obs. 60-24.

We are all in health & so oylly yt we are in a Doleful Pickle (ut aiunt)¹ We had

¹ As they say.

had a haglet stewpye for supper; about 8 at night we finish'd trying out our Blubber & put out the fire of our caboose. We sandrove our oyl and stow'd it away in the hold, & quoined it; our Whale made 68 barrels.

June 30th. This day we had corn'd fish for dinner Pancakes for supper & Chocolate for Breakfast, the sea a little chopling and we lay under a trysail.

July 2^d. We lay to all this 24 hours under a trisail & drove to the Northward. The sea broke like a surfe & appear'd like a snowdrift. And we ship'd many tuns of water; our lee boat had been stove had we not manhandled her when she kanted on her gunnel & lash'd her. Our quarter deck was sometimes ancle deep & our tub of gravel got stove to pieces so we shall be forced to kill our fowl for fear they 'l die. We had pancakes for supper. Lat. 60-30.

July 14th. We spoke with a ship from Glasgow. Elisha came on board of us & we had a fowl stewpye and a great Plum pudding for dinner. Then
we

we spy'd whales & we kill'd one large spermaceti & we got her alongside & began to cut upon her.

July 17th. We spoke a Dutch ship & our skipper & mate went on board her. They had an Indian & his Canoe on board & intend to Carry him to Holland & bring him back next year.

August 20th. Whales plenty. Hove out our boats and killed one. We struck two that ran away. We struck another off the bow and put two irons in her. She going to windward broke a warp and so away she went. We sot the tryworks agoing and we soon had a flaming torch under the caboose, but seeing Whales we put out our fires and went off & kill'd a large Spermaceti.

September 10th. It is 124 days since we have seen any land until to-day. Cape Race bears West by North 4 leagues. We are bound home & the wind is right ahead, but we must be contented let the wind be as it will.

September 19th. Rain and thunder and lightning. We hall'd down our
mainsel

mainsel and balanc'd & reef'd him and let the sloop jog along. At night it was as blacke as ink. So we lay a hull. Lat. 42:9 — Long. 61:52.

September 22^d. This day we struck Soundings on St. Georges Bank. Nantucket bears west 50 leagues. We shall soon see the land — even our Dear Nantucket — So dayday both latitude and longitude.

Let us make one more whaling cruise with Peleg Folger. I will quote from his sea-journal of the year 1757, in the time of the French and Indian War: —

June 18th. We saw a very large Scool of Spermaceties but they Ran like Horses insomuch that tho' we hove our Boats & Stroved faithfully yet we could not Strike. We saw a Ship off in the S E and she stood for us and rather wind fretted us — she being an extraordinary good sailer. So we stood into the N W and the wind starting in our favour we wither'd him about a mile. At Sunset we brought to under a Trysail.

July 1st. This day Whales are very
plenty

plenty and we kill'd one that fill'd 15 Hogsheads. We saw a topsail vessel and we immediately made sail. It being very windy and a large sea going we carried away one of our shrouds. But we got up our tackles and runners in the room of our Shroud & setting 3 sails atanto we made our sloop buckle again. At the first hank we wither'd our suppos'd Frenchman about 3 miles & then we discovered a vast fleet of Ships & other vessels to leeward. They appear'd like a meer forest on the Ocean. How many there was we know not. We judg'd them to be an English fleet bound for Canada or Cape Breton.

July 3^d we saw a Snow but we did not care to Speak with her so we Sprung our Luff and wither'd her about a mile. We judg'd her to be some Fellow bound into Virginia or Somewhere Else.

July 10th. Very rough Weather & we are under a Square sail right before a fresh S W wind. We spy'd a Spermaceti close under our Bow & we got out 3 lances in order to kill her if we could
but

but She went down just before we got up with her. Experience may teach us that Nothing can make a man happy save a Quiet Conscience. About Sunset the wind had dy'd and the Sea had grown very smooth. We let run our Deep Sea Lead & had about an hundred & ten fathoms with the Stray which might be ten fathoms. We brought up on our Lead 3 or 4 Living Creatures a little more than an Inch long. They have four horns growing out from the Crown of the head: they had two Claws or Legs forward & Six towards his hinder parts: their Legs are very full of Joynts & appear to end in a Perfect Point & toward the end looked like white ivory.

July 13th. We were on the Grand Bank of Newfoundland & we stood off to the Eastward and about Sunset by the sound of the Horns — it being very thick of fog — we found two vessels who were Timothy Gardner and Richard Gardner who told us John Coffin had got about 100 Barrels and Uriah Coffin about as much. So we stood off in
company

company with our mates & at 11 o'Clock we let run our Lead and found no Bottom & so we Brought to under a Try-sail & Foresail, being very thick of Fog and a small wind.

July 18. We spoke with two French ships who were fishermen & told us Cape Race bore Northwest. We saw divers more ships that we did not speak with & at 10 P. M we brought to for fear of them — it being exceeding dark. We took ye Sun's amplitude at his setting & found ye variation of the Compass to be $1\frac{1}{2}$ points nearest. Lat 45:19 Long 48:50 (848 miles from Nantucket).

July 30th. We struck a large Sperm-aceti & put into him three irons & one towiron. As soon as the towiron went into the whale he gave a flauk & went down, & coming up again he bolted his head out of water, as far down as his fins, and then pitch'd the whole weight of his head on the Boat and stove ye Boat & ruin'd her & kill'd the midshipman (an Indian named Sam Samson) outright. A sad & awful Providence.

August

August 7th. Fine weather but no Whales to be seen. From 11 o'clock to 12 at night the sky glitter'd with the Northern Lights, appearing Very bright & luciferous like streaks of lightning.

August 20th. We spy'd a Spermaceti and struck her off the Bow & then we hove out our Boats & kill'd her & got her along side & cabled her and began to cut her up. There was a chopping sea going & but little wind. Our sloop girded most Violently & we parted one of our Runners twice & split the blocks & hurt one of our men & made most Rucking work. At midnight the wind began to blow hard at N E and soon raised a bad sea. We parted our cable and lost our Whale from ye Bow. At 5 in the morning we Blew away our trisail & tore him out of the Boltropes and Ruined him entirely.

August 21st. We made sail & found our Whale and cut up the Remainder. Her body fill'd 24 hogsheads. Lat 45:52. We blew away our foresail & we got a new one out of the hold & bent him,

him, but did not set him for the wind shifted all at once and blew like a Scum. After a while we set our foresail and went like a Blaze to the westward.

August 30th. Running to the westward, being thick of fog & we saw a noble Right Whale close under our counter, We hove out our Boats to strike but she soon ran us out of sight in the fog. We spoke with a sloop from Barnstable. He told us Fort Henry was taken. I hope soon we shall have a free wind and go with flowin sheets for we know not how far we are to the Eastward of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland.

September 1st. A smart gale of wind at N E & We are scouting merrily west by Compass. In the afternoon We struck soundings on the Grand Bank and catch'd 20 noble codfish. We have run 168 miles today. We are all in health and hope to see our Dear Nantucket in a short time.

This sea-rover ends his journal by quoting from Francis Quarles: —

“My

“ My Sins are like the hairs upon mine head,
 And raise their audit to as high a score.
 In this they differ — these do dayly shed ;
 But ah ! my Sins grow dayly more and more.
 If by mine hairs Thou number out my Sins,
 Heaven make me bald before the day begins.

“ My Sins are like the sands upon the shore,
 Which every ebb lays open to the eye.
 In this they differ — these are cover'd o'er ;
 But ah ! my Sins in View still open lie.
 Lord, if Thou make my head a sea of tears,
 Oh ! that would wash away the sins of all my years.

“ My Sins are like the stars within the skies,
 In View, in number, full as bright, as great.
 In this they differ — these do set and rise ;
 But ah ! my Sins do rise but never set.
 Rise, Son of Glory, and my Sins are gone
 Like clouds or mists before the morning Sun.”

There was a young sea-rover of Nantucket who began his first journal, in the year 1754, with these words : —

“ Peter Folger his Book
 God give him Grace therein to Look.
 Not only to Look but Understand
 That learning is better than House or Land.
 The Rose is Red the Grass is Green
 The days have past which I have Seen.”

This inscription tells how much of a boy this rover was when he first went to sea. In time he grew manly, and his sea-
 journal

journal of the year 1761 begins with these words: —

A Journal of our Intended Voyage by Gods Permission in the Good Sloop Endeavour. We sot Sail from Nantuckett the 9 day of July and went over the Bar and Come to Anchor and waited for our Indians.

July ye 26 we saw a large School of Spalmocities. They ran so Fast we could not Catch them.

July ye 27 we saw 3 Sparmocityes & killed one and Cut Her up.

July ye 28 we saw 4 or 5 Spalmocityes we Tryed our whale Her Boddy made 38 bb^{ls}. Her Head 12 hh^{ds}.”

July ye 29 we Stood away our whale. We saw 2 Sloops to the Easterd of us and we saw divers Sparmocities and we struck one and maid Her Spout Blood. She went down and their came a Snarl in the Toe line and caught John Meyrick and over sot the Boat and we never saw him after wards. We saved the whale.

August ye 14 we killed a Sunfish and
we

we saw a School of Sparmocityes and our Partner killed one and Got her kableed and we killed another and saw two Ships to windered ye wind at S W and our Partner cut from his whale and we cut from ourn abute 9 of Clock in ye morning. We stood to ye N E and our Partner stood to ye S E — one Ship took us in Chase and ye other took our Partner in Chase. We clapt away large and sot our Square Sail and Topsail and got our fairsail under the Boom and made all ye Sail we could and brought her to winderd and we held her toit and she fir^d a Gun at 4 O'Clock in ye after Noon and at 6 under English Coulers She left us and stood to ye S W and we stood to N E. We have lost our Consort because these Ships they chased us from 9 in ye Morning till Sun Sett. So ends ye Day all in Good health by God's Blessing.

In the latter part of the last century, ships of three hundred tons burden took the place of small sloops in cruises for whales; they went below the equator, and
at

at last found their way around the capes into the Pacific and Indian oceans. Two of the ships that brought the obnoxious tea to Boston, in December, 1773, were whaling-ships of Nantucket. They had carried their catches from the South Seas to London, and were returning home with general merchandise by way of Boston. After unloading cargoes at that port, — excepting the tea, which was thrown into Boston harbor by a mob disguised as Indians, — the ships sailed to Nantucket, where one of them, the *Beaver*, was fitted for a cruise in the south Atlantic; and another, the *Dartmouth*, was loaded with sperm oil and sent to London just before the American Revolution began.

Nantucket whalers were ruined by the Revolution. After the war was ended, sperm oil, for which England had been the principal market, was taxed an alien duty of £18 sterling per ton; and therefore it became necessary for the people of the island to make some new adjustment of their whaling business. There appeared no alternative but to transfer it to England.

With

With this object in view, William Rotch, a successful merchant of Nantucket, sailed for London in his ship *Maria*, July 4, 1785, accompanied by his son Benjamin. He visited the Channel ports in search of a suitable location for the whaling business, selected Falmouth, and then made his proposals to the British government. Not meeting with success, he crossed the Channel to Dunkirk in France, where, aided by Shubel Gardner, of Nantucket, who had been a prisoner in England, and by a native of Dunkirk, named François Coffyn, who served as an interpreter, his proposals were written to the French government and sent to Paris. He stipulated for liberty to emigrants from Nantucket to worship as Quakers; for their exemption from military duty; for a bounty per ton on Nantucket ships engaged in whaling from French ports; the free entry of their oil; and that the ships should be commanded by Nantucket men. His proposals were accepted, and he sailed for home in December, 1786, to prepare for a transfer of his whaling business to France.

England

England reduced the import duties on oil, and France failed to pay the bounty; then the French Revolution came, with its compulsory oath and military service, bringing trouble to the Quakers at Dunkirk. On the 10th of February, 1791, William Rotch, Benjamin Rotch, and a French Quaker named Marsillac appeared (with their hats on)¹ before the National Assembly at Paris, over which Mirabeau was presiding, and asked permission to present a memorial explaining the Quakers' objection to taking an oath and bearing the arms of war. Their memorial was referred to a committee, and in the following September the original engagements with Nantucket whalemén were confirmed by the Assembly.

In March, 1788, the ship *Penelope*, of
Nantucket,

¹ "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin." From these words of the Epistle by St. James, George Fox taught that it was forbidden by the Lord to bow to any person ceremoniously, or to remove one's hat as a token of respect. His followers accepted this teaching; and for a long time it was a question, marked by bitter strifes in the Quaker churches, whether it was right for men to remove their hats during the time of prayer.

Nantucket, sailed from Dunkirk for the Arctic Ocean, in pursuit of whales, and passed beyond the high latitude of seventy-nine degrees. I copy a few passages from the sea-journal of Tristram Gardner, of Nantucket, commanding the ship:—

Wednesday March ye 26th 1788, at 2 in the morning Left ye Port of Dunkirk & Anchard in ye Road. at 2 Past meridⁿ waid ancher & Stood S by E with ye wind at E by N. at 6 we ware 6 Leges from Dunkirk.

Tuesday aprel ye First Day 1788 trying for A harber at Shetland. at 6 ye wind Shifted from S W to N W blod fresh. at 12 ye wind died we maid Sail wirking in with ye Land. at 6 Pilot came on board at ye mouth of ye harber. Came to ancher in Brase bay whare we found 24 sail of ships.

Wednesday Aprel ye 9th 1788 at 10 waid ancher & Put to sea from Brase bay in Company with 4 ships wind S W bound for Greenland. A crabed sea from ye westward. Latt. 62:13. Long 34 W

Thirsday Aprel ye 24th Fresh wind
at

at South we Lying to ye W S W under Close Reef Topsails in company with a number of ships. Saw Ise & Spake with a Ship from London. at 4 Past Meridⁿ saw ye Land bairing E by S we Run through sum Ise & found clear water. Lat 77 Long 10 No whales.

Friday May ye 2nd ye First Part of ye day ye wind N E. Clost Refd our Topsails. at 12 ware Clost beset with heavi Pack Ise so that we had No yuse for sails but Got 2 warps to ye Ise to bring our ship starn to ye wind. Later Part still Clost beset & 20 Sail of Ships in ye same Condison. Latt by Obs. 77-07 ye Land in Sight. Saw one Rite whale.

Wednesday May 7th brought our Ship by ye starn & mended our Cut-water whare ye Ise had Cut it to ye Stem & Stove of two Knees. 50 Ships in Sight & all in ye Ise. Stowd down our water Fil'd some salt water for bal-lace. Lat. 77-22.

Monday June ye 2 Day Saw Sum whales hardby but the weather being bad could not Ingage — bloing hard with

with snow. Lay back & forth under Clost Reef^d Fore Topsail, Saw two Racks wich was Stranded ye Last Gale one was ye London of London ye other was a Ship belonging to Whitbe — ye Men saved. Saw whales among ye Ise could Not come at them. 100 sail of Ships in sight. Lat 78.

Sonday June ye 8th Kil'd a ten feet bone Whale. Mated with Capt Mooers & Strook a Whale that run out our line. Got our Whale on board. Bloing fresh we maid Sail ye Ise near by to Luard & very heavy.

Saturday June ye 14th we Kil'd two Whales. A trying our whale. A fresh wind and Snow. Lat. 78-44.

Sonday June ye 22 A rugged sea. Plenty of Snow. Saw ye Ise to ye S W of us. Thick weather. Saw a number of Ships but no Whales. Lat. 79-02.

Monday July ye 21 Maid ye Land which Proud to be ye Norway Shore 10 Leags Distant. Spake with a Brig from Sligo. Caut sum mackerill. Spake with a Ship from Norway bound to Hull.

Saturday

Saturday August ye 3 day Course S by W at 9 o'Clock maid ye South Foreland so we bore away for Dunkirk at meridian took our Pilot on bord ye tide being up we Put over ye bar, and so came to an Anchar.

The men of the little island of Nantucket were natural sea-rovers, for whom the charms of home were charming only in the short intervals between their voyages. After they had gone to sea their wives adopted a penurious style of house-keeping, in order to save money for the beloved sea-rover against his return. Perhaps he did not return at the expected time; born with an instinct for adventure, his absence may have been prolonged by repeated cruises on distant seas, and wanderings on distant shores, until the Nantucket home had been effaced from his thoughts. And when, like a new Ulysses, he came back to it after many years of absence and silence, there was no reason for surprise if Penelope, tired of waiting for him, had finished her weaving and had
accepted

accepted an importunate suitor to fill his place.

Shubel Worth, a sea-rover of the true blue, was cruising in the South Seas when the War of the Revolution began. On arriving at Nantucket he learned that his wife and children had left the island and gone to find a safe retreat in her father's house, in Saratoga County, New York. As the war prevented him from going to sea again, he followed his family, bought a farm, and cultivated it. One day, after the return of peace, he drove a load of his farm's produce to the village of Hudson, expecting to sell it and return to his home within three days.

Three days, three weeks, three months, three years passed; — “and where was Enoch?” He had not obliterated himself from human society, as did the “strong heroic soul” portrayed in Tennyson's poem, but he had suddenly gone a-sea-roving. On arriving at Hudson, and learning that a ship was fitting out at New Bedford for a whaling cruise along the coasts of Greenland, he put his farm produce aboard a sloop,

sloop, sailed with it to New Bedford, sold it to the outfitters of the Greenland ship, and went to sea in her as first officer. The ship ended her voyage at Dunkirk. Here he took command of the ship *Criterion*, and sailed on a cruise to the Indian Ocean. Returning to Dunkirk with a cargo of oil, he sailed again; cruised on the Pacific Ocean, and carried another cargo of oil to Dunkirk. At the end of the last voyage he returned to his home, from which he had been absent five years instead of three days. The restlessness of the sea-rover was in him, and he went to sea again, but he never returned home. He died on board his ship while she lay at anchor in the harbor of the island of St. Helena.

I copy two or three days from his sea-journal, written while cruising in the Indian Ocean: —

Ship *Criterion*, May 19th — at 4 P M took a Lunar observation, found our Longitude $107^{\circ}-32'$ East of London Latitude is $7^{\circ}-38'$ South. Land bareing N E to N W 8 Leages — fine weather all drawing Sail Set. Steard for the Land.
Saw

Saw a School of Spermaceties headed off Shore.

Friday May 22^d. Lay'd off & on the Land till day Light then Steard for Java Head bareing N N W 4 Leagues distance. At 6 P M Came to anchor in 25 Fathoms. Got up the boarding Neting. Got under way for Mew Isle watering place. Sent the yawl ashore to find the water. Saw a number of men on the Isle. Before the boats Got at Shore Saw 10 Prowes coming for us. Saw theare Guns Glittering. Set the coulers to the Ship & fired one 4 Pounder. The Prowes fired a Number of guns at us. Got under way and set all Sail. So ends all well.

Wednesday May 25th. Came to anchor in 23 Fathoms water. Got in Reddyness for Battle with the Pirot Maylays. Saw a great Number of Maylay fishing boats. Got under way for Anger Rhodes. At 6 P M came to anchor — Batavia Church baring N N W.

A sea-rover was David Brown, of the
ship

ship Manilla. I quote one day from his sea-journal in the South Atlantic Ocean:—

December 1st 1791. Down a boat and caught a Sea Dog. Running S W with two ships bearing West, one a trying. Saw whales and gave chase. Hove to under 3 staysails headed to the southward. At 1 P M saw whales. Killed 3 & at 5 P M came on board without any. Went off again & kill'd one and took her a long side. Spoke William Bunker with 600 Barrels. Lat. 37-20 S.

A sea-rover of Nantucket made a discovery in the South Pacific Ocean which is still a theme of history. In January, 1789, the British ship *Bounty* sailed from Otaheiti with a crew whose attachments to the women of that tropical island made them reluctant to leave it. Soon after sailing, twenty-five mutineers seized control of the ship, and sent adrift in a boat the commander with his officers and the loyal members of his crew. The mutineers sailed the *Bounty* back to Otaheiti, where sixteen of them landed with the expectation of leading lives of endless enjoyment.

The

The nine who did not land took aboard nine women of the island as wives, and six men as servants, and then they sailed away. What became of them was a mystery for nineteen years, or until Mayhew Folger, of Nantucket, cruising for whales in the ship *Topaz*, fell in with Pitcairn's Island, on a February morning of the year 1808. This island, which is about two miles wide and three miles long, rises abruptly from the deep sea to the height of a thousand feet. On a plateau, four hundred feet above the ocean, Captain Folger found a little pastoral village peopled by descendants of the nine mutineers of the *Bounty* and their Otaheitian wives. I quote from his sea-journal:—

Saturday February 6th 1808. At 2 A M saw Pitcairn's Island bearing South. Lay off and on till daylight. At 6 A M put off with 2 boats to explore the land and look for seals. On approaching the shore saw smoke on the land at which I was very much surprised as the island was said to be uninhabited. I discovered a boat paddling towards me with three men

men in her. They hailed in the English language & asked who was the captain of the ship. They offered me gifts of cocoanuts & requested I would land, there being a white man on shore. I went ashore & found an Englishman named Alexander Smith, the only person remaining out of nine that escaped on board the ship *Bounty*. Smith informed me that after putting Capt Bligh in the long boat and sending her adrift, Christian their chief proceeded with the ship to Otaheiti. There all the mutineers chose to stop except Christian, himself, and seven others, who took wives and also six men as servants, and immediately proceeded to Pitcairn's Island where they landed all the goods and chattels, ran the *Bounty* on shore and broke her up. This took place, as near as he could recollect, in the year 1790: soon after which one of their party ran mad and drowned himself, another died of a fever; and after they had remained about four years on the island, their men servants rose up and
killed

killed six of them, leaving only Smith alive, and he desperately wounded with a pistol ball in the neck. However he and the widows of the deceased arose and put all the servants to death, which left him the only surviving man on the island, with eight or nine women and several small children. He immediately went to work tilling the ground so that it produces plenty for them all, and he lives very comfortably as commander-in-chief of Pitcairn's Island. All the children of the deceased mutineers speak tolerable English. Some of them are grown to the size of men and women, and to do them Justice, I think them a very humane and hospitable people; and whatever may have been the errors or crimes of Smith the mutineer in times back he is at present a worthy man and may be useful to navigators who traverse this immense ocean. I tarried on shore with the friendly Smith and his truly good people till 4 P. M. and then left him and went on board the *Topaz* and made sail steering for Masafuera, having received

ceived from the people on shore some hogs cocoanuts and plantains.¹

The wars provoked by Napoleon touched the whaling-ships of Nantucket in many ways. In the year 1808, England was allied with Spain in a war against France, and defeated the French army at the battle of Talavera in June, 1809. Whaling-ships were now armed; and because they carried arms and large crews they were sometimes arrested on the high seas under suspicion that they were belligerents disguised as whalers. A story of such an arrest is told in the sea-journal of Captain Charles Gardner, who was cruising the ship *Argo* in the South Seas. I copy it exactly as it was written in the journal:—

1809 Sunday November 5 in Lat.
17-27' South. Standing in by the Wind
East at 2 P M saw a Ship 2 points off
the Weather bow. Saw that She had all
Sail out and coming for us. Steerd on
til She was of the Starboard beam then
up

¹ After this visit by Captain Folger, Smith changed his name to John Adams, by which name he has been called in histories of the mutiny of the ship *Bounty*.

up Corses and backed the main yard. She came within hail and ordered a boat onboard with the papers. I sent the boat and the cheaf Mate with the papers. He was detained onbord the Private Spanish Ship of war & all the boats crue but one was Stoped and two officers and boats Crue from the Spanish Ship Came onboard the Argo & Sent more of my hands onboard the Vultor. At 7 P M they onbent the Mainsail and the boat Came from the Vultor with more Spanish men & took Charge of the Argo and wore Ship and Steerd on a wind to the South all night in company with the Vultor. At 7 A M Shortened Sail and lay by. The Capten of the Vultor Came onboard and brot the Argos papers that I had sent by the mate & asked me if I knew them. I told him I did. He wished for a Candle which was brot him. He told me all other papers would be of no youse to me hear after and in my presance Sealed the papers up. I asked him if it was war. He told me that was none of my Business. I Should See & would

would give me no Satisfaction but told me to go on Deck which we ded and he Looked at the Ship.

He asked how many guns I had. I told him. He asked why I run from him to Luard. I told him I did not, he told me I did and a Whale Ship had no business with guns — and where the guns was. I told him Some in the hole & some on Deck, he in a ruf tone told me I had mounted them 4 on Deck after Seeing him. I told him no — he told me he new better than that. After a little time on Deck he told me he wished to go below in the Cabin and look about the Ship. I told him any part he wished to See Should be Shone him. He told his officers and men to open the after hatchway and brake up the hole to the eilson — and Capt & Some men brock up the run & took all the casks out, and all the powder out of the magersean, and the Officers took more than 40 Casks out of the after hole and Some out of the main hatch and oppen'd the Casks of Sails & Bread.

The

The Capten Cut open my Slops with his own hand and made me turn up my bead and made me take everything out of my trunks, and told me my own hankerchefs was Spanish and told me I had Money onboard and that I had no Business with guns & with a Drum and that I lyed & what I told him was lies. I told him what I told him was truths and what ever Construcktions he pleased to put on it I could not help, but I never was told so before — and he Seamed Displeased notwithstanding I ded everything in my power to Shoe him all parts of the Argo and every thing onboard.

At halfpast 12 three Ships hove in Sight and half an hour after the Capt went to his own Ship and told me he would Send my papers and men, which he ded & told my mate I mite go where I pleased — but he left the Argo with 50 or 60 Casks on Deck that they had taken out of the hole and much wood the Mainsail Laying in a heap on Deck, the Ship in grate confution & three Ships come for us.

Monday

Monday Nov^m 6. First part laying by and geting the Decks Cleard. At 5 P M Stod towards the Ships and found them to be Whalers and the Vulter had Spook them and her boats were along Side. We Stod by and ded not Speack them Standing to the S S W — 4 Ships in Sight to the S S E. Dul times and No whales. Latt by Obsⁿ 17°-37' South.

The days of “dull times and no whales” did not last long after this privateer had left the Argo. As a contrast to her bad luck with the Spaniard, I quote one day from Captain Gardner’s sea-journal:—

Nov. 25th. At 2 P M saw Sperm Whales. Went off and got six. At 7 P M got them to the ship. One boat stove. At meridian got aboard five. Lite wind. Latt by obsevation 18°-09' South.

These journals of sea-rovers are a valuable accessory to the picture of Quaint Nantucket. They reveal the boldness and extent of that hazardous business which, during a century and a half, enlisted all the

the

the wealth and enterprise of the island. Now Nantucket is manning no more whale-ships, is writing no more sea-journals. The days have gone when —

“There was rich reward for the look-out man, tobacco for every sail,
And a barrel of oil for the lucky dog who 'd be first to raise a whale.”

VII

The Town's Doings

THE doings were done in the town-house, a building so old that in May, 1707, the people said "the towne howse should be repaired;" and then they agreed that "thursday next should be the day to goe a perambelation." Every spring it was a custom to perambulate the town,—to walk along the boundary lines of public lands and note if the marks were standing, or if any man had encroached upon them. Men who went on the perambulation were, by a vote of the town, "to be paid for their time." Time was the principal property that some of them had to sell. Besides these, the perambulating procession, which was led by the selectmen, included all boys and dogs who were at leisure on the morning appointed for the tramp.

The next yearly routine of importance
was

was to prepare for "the shearing time," which always came in the month of June. For this event two men were chosen to count the flocks as they went into the shearing-pens, to take care of the fleeces, to sell the town's sheep, and "receve the money for the townes euce," as the clerk of the records wrote it. Now and then "an assembly man to serve his majesty at the great & generall Court at boston" was elected, and the names of thirteen men "to serve his majesty as jurors" were drawn out of a box. Occasionally a landholder applied for permission "to lay down" a swamp which had been allotted to him, and "to take up" a meadow in its place; another asked for the grant of a swamp, and got it on condition that he "stand out on the next divishon" of public lands. A man who wanted to move out of town got "liberty to exchange his howse lott" for land in "anie place eastward of the towne fence;" another, living on a lonesome spot "up the island," was granted "liberty to exchange three akers near the beache woods for land at the towne."

towne." Exchanging and laying out lands by allotment formed the staple business of town meetings in the early part of the century. These acts were varied by hiring a schoolmaster at "three score pound current money for the yeare;" by legislating about the commons, as:—

No hogg shall go thereon without an order;

No man shall mow grass in the ram paster;

Bethiah Gardner shall mow grass at Coatue in compensation of her grass eaten up by sheepe at Pacamoka.

Then came the affairs of the day, such as: John Macy "shall build a prison for the towne as soon as he can." Benjamin Waire "shall have that stream of water to damit up & sett a fulling mill on it." William Gayer "shall take care of ye townes two Great Gunns that are at Wescoe," and John Swaine "shall take ye little Great Gunn to his home & fix it & cary it to Squam & there it is to abide." Sometimes business was so much wanting at these meetings that little farces took its place;

place; as, to quote from the records of the year 1710, "George Gardner was chosen trustee by vote & was at ye same time put out againe."

The welfare of the large flocks of sheep pasturing on the commons always interested town meetings. Men had been appointed "to rayne the towne to look up the sheepe when lickly hood of bad wether ensuing;" and it was ordered that "if any man refuse to goe when he is cal'd on he shall forfeit five shillings;" pens had been made to shelter the sheep in winter, and "five loads of hay" put in each pen; the town meeting had also provided that "the sheepe shall be kept by three shepherds all the yeare." Nevertheless, sheep farmers suffered losses from Indians who stole their lambs, dogs that killed them, and hogs that ate them. The Indians were punished, all swine were impounded, and at last, in an exasperating moment, the town meeting ordered "that all the Dogs upon the Island of Nantucket be forthwith killed;" an order which must have struck

struck sorrow to those who loved their dogs.

The ancient rights to pasturage for sheep are disclosed in a town record of the year 1689, from which it appears that each owner of one share in the island estate had the right to pasture on the commons 540 sheep; that it was then a custom to count the sheep at the shearing time, and every owner having more than 540 to a share was to pay to the town two shillings per head for the excess. Failing to do this, the surplus sheep were condemned as "damage feasant" and sold.

There appeared on the island a plague of rats, which annoyed the sheep as a plague of flies annoyed the Egyptians. Year after year the town meeting ordered that "every person who shall kill a Rat and bring his head to the towne treasurer shall Receive for every such Rat a six-pence." To prevent rat-hunters from cheating the treasurer with the heads of rats that were young enough to be harmless, it was stipulated in the town's order that "the said Rat shall be so full grown as
to

to be all over covered with hair." Said the old player, "I smell a rat!" And so said the Nantucket boys—"I smell a rat!"—as they scurried here and there to earn the sixpence reward.

In the year 1723, the town meeting found it necessary to establish "a constables watch in the night season, for suppressing disorders and breaches of the peace." The streets of the prospering town had become a night resort of "Indians negroes and other suspected persons," as the record says, who molested such inhabitants as walked abroad, and disturbed the repose of those who slept. A long wharf had been built into the harbor from the end of the main street, and this was the trysting-place of these idlers of the night. The town resolved "to suppress" the vagrants; and it ordered that "if they shall be found upon the wharfe & about towne after nine of the clock at night, they shall be taken up and carried before a Justice." This action was effectual for a time; but at last the constables proved to be so incompetent
to

to preserve the peace that a town meeting chose sixteen stout men to be a night watch, and paid them for their services. Their duty, as it is written in the town records, was "to walk the town in the night season, and on the first day of the week, to suppress the growing disorder of the young people and all others that act inconsistently with the principles of morality and virtue." To aid the sixteen men in their task of suppressing young people in the night season, and promoting morality and virtue, a town meeting besought the legislature at Boston "to pass an act to put a stop to masters and mistresses of houses entertaining minors at unseasonable hours of the night, in Drinking and Carousing and Frolicking contrary to the mind of their parents." This was a sad commentary on the nature of family ties in Nantucket, and also on the effects of that sober-sided Quakerism which ruled the town, and had caused the streets and houses of public entertainment to be the only places in which young men could meet young women, or boys and girls could
could

could find a vent for the natural exuberance of their spirits. They were driven into the streets by the extreme severities of the Quaker home, in which the most harmless of joyful amusements could not be tolerated.

Having thus published the fact that Nantucket was a place of immoralities, the parents went satisfied to bed, but not until they had voted in town meeting that the sixteen night-watchmen "shall frequently give the time of night and looks of the weather and other Remarks worthy of notice in a clear and audible voice." Thenceforth, as I may fancy, the midnight cry of the watchmen was: "Twelve o'clock; wind no'theast; bloin' fresh; no young people in sight!"

Although the principles of truth were supposed to influence all the acts of this Quaker town, there was enough of human nature existing to prevent honesty from being its prevailing policy. So the town meeting had to appoint "Sam Ray to view and prevent frauds in meats exposed for sale by the barrel;" and John Macy "to inspect

inspect wood that is for sale & see that there be no deceit therein ;” the inspector was to have “one penny per cord to be paid by him that sells the wood.”

The Quaker inhabitants had become so numerous that their principles were asserted in town meetings on every occasion. In the year 1740, when it was proposed “to build some fortification to prevent an enemy from coming into the harbour,” the Quakers defeated the resolution. They would not consent that the town guns be put in order, but they were willing “that the charge for drums and colours for the military foot company shall be defreyed out of the treasury ;” and this was recorded as “the mind of the towne.”

When smallpox appeared on the island it created much alarm. After a long debate in town meeting it was voted, “by 68 voices against 41,” to “suffer Inoculation of the small pox to be practiced.” It was then voted “that a House be built near the shore for the reception of persons infected.” The Quaker church was hostile to this movement. All its members who allowed themselves

themselves to be inoculated were disowned, unless they abased themselves in public meeting by a confession that they were sorry for it. Next year the church was rallied to town meeting, and it was voted "that Inoculation shall not be permitted in this town." The Quakers protested when the legislature billeted upon Nantucket some of the French prisoners who had been brought to Boston from Acadia. These people of a foreign tongue and a foreign faith were very unacceptable, and the town's representative was directed to petition for their immediate removal from the island.

In the year 1746, the town built a light-house on Brant Point, the owners of vessels agreeing to maintain the light. The light-house was burned down, rebuilt, and then blown down by what was described as "a violent gust of wind." The first loss of the light reminded the inhabitants of the island that they needed "an engine to quench fire," and the town sent £18 sterling to London to buy one. It proved to be too small; and, after experimenting with

with a second one, the town sent £60 sterling to London to buy a large fire-engine. The selectmen were then ordered to provide five dozen leather buckets and six ladders "as cheap as they can," and to appoint men to run with the machine. For public safety, all powder was ordered to be removed "from the body of the town;" and at the same time it was voted "that the ends of all the cows horns be sawed off."

The court of common pleas, sitting in the town, had much to do with the daily life of the people. It licensed John Coffin "to sell Tea and Coffy," and William Rotch, with his brother Joseph (who had been complained of by a licensed retailer), to sell "Speritious Lickers" out of doors only. It recorded the certificates of a justice of the peace that Stephen Norton had sworn "one profane oath," and also "one profane curs." It tried many suits of sailors, against owners and masters of whaling-vessels, for more pay than they had received. Those who had been presented by the grand jury "for not attending
Public

Public Worship for more than one month" it fined ten shillings each and costs of court, five shillings and sixpence. It tried a breach of promise case, in which the woman claimed damages of two hundred pounds from a sailor; but, as twelve pounds four shillings and seven and a quarter pence were all the property that could be found belonging to the man, the court gave judgment to the woman for that sum, and she was satisfied.

They alternately voted to build a work-house and not to build one. Meanwhile the town paid Silas Paddock "for nursing a squaw thirteen weeks at 12 shillings per wee' ;" and ordered "that the negro woman Hager be considered one of the towns Poor." They repaired the old prison," and built a new one with a fence around it; ordered that oysters shall not be exported; and subscribed £50 "towards defraying the cost of a fulling mill for dressing of cloth." They refused to send delegates to the convention at Faneuil Hall, called by inhabitants of Boston to protest against the revenue acts of Great Britain ;

Britain ; and, that smuggling might be made easy, they refused to petition “the commissioners of his majesties customs to send a collector of Duties to this town.” They asked the legislature of the year 1770 to build a light-house “on the sandy point of Nantucket,” and to annex Muskekit and Gravelly islands to the county. The event of the next year was the delinquency of Thomas Arthur, collector of taxes, who was put in jail, and refused to deliver the tax-books, or any extract from them, until he was let out. And so the routine of the town’s doings went on, in the usual way, until the War of the Revolution began. The island had been the centre of a contrabrand trade between Holland and New York, by which gunpowder had been smuggled into the colonies. There was now an end of it. The Earl of Dartmouth wrote to Lieutenant-Governor Colden, of New York, in September, 1774 : “My information is that the ship Polly, bound from Amsterdam to Nantucket, has among other articles received on board, no less a quantity
quantity

quantity than three hundred pounds weight of Gunpowder.”

When the war began, Nantucket contained upwards of five thousand inhabitants. They were a conservative and calculating people, who felt that the benefits received from the protecting power of England were of more importance than the political restraints which she imposed upon them. They held a town meeting, and decided that the only safe line of conduct for them to pursue was to take no part in the contest, and to give no cause of offense to either of the contending forces. Their isolated situation was made difficult to control by the hostile conduct of a few restless persons who had nothing to lose by the war, and who hoped to gain something by thwarting the pacific plans of their neighbors. In April, 1779, the island was threatened by an invasion of the enemy. Immediately a town meeting was convened to consult on measures for safety, and it was decided to send three Quakers — William Rotch, Benjamin Tupper, and Samuel Starbuck — to the British commanders at Newport

port and New York, to prevail on them "to avert the impending stroke," and "to put a stop to depredations on the island." A memento of this expedition is to be found in the account book of William Rotch, from which I copy:—

— 1779. 8 mo. 17 day Rec'd of William Rotch one hundred and seventy one pounds, on acct of the towne, in full for 11 weeks & 3 days wages in sloop Speedwell to Newport & New York as a Flag of Truce — John Cartwright.

On return of the sloop from this successful venture, a town meeting voted "that all the inhabitants will remain in a quiet and peaceable condition in the future, as being the basis of the Indulgence granted by the British commanders." In the following September, learning that an invasion was threatened from Martha's Vineyard, the islanders voted that they "disown every hostile proceeding towards the British forces and Servants of the King." But this declaration did not save the island of Nantucket from many depredations by royalists and refugees who destroyed the property of
of

of the inhabitants, and sometimes made it difficult for them to obtain even the necessities of life.

As soon as peace came, the whale-ship Bedford, which had been lying in the harbor since the war began, was fitted for sea with a cargo of sperm oil, and sailed for London flying the new ensign of the United States.

VIII

Odds and Ends of Nantucket Life

AFTER the war was over, the town was in a distressed and turbulent condition. Its records make frequent mention of "Disorders in the Night by Boys and Servants;" of "unruly Boys and others Disturbing the Peace;" of "noise and Tumultuous Assemblies in the streets." This state of affairs was so serious that at one time sixty-four men offered their services as a night patrol for a year, and at another time forty men volunteered for a similar service. Records of the justices' court reflect in a slight degree the condition of the town at this time. An Indian, complained of for "assaulting & striking Obed Hussey Esq^r," was condemned "to be whipt ten stripes on the Naked Back." Three boys, who "stove off the boards of Jeremiah Colemans house in the Night season,"

son," had each to pay five shillings and the costs of court. Hannah Russell and Hepzibeth Coffin confessed to the justice that "on Saturday night they did strike Phebe Glover for which they are exceeding sorry," but each had to pay a fine of five shillings. A cordwainer was condemned to pay £1 16s. 4d. because he "did in a violent manner take hold of a bucket that was in the hand of Abigail Bunker & stove it to pieces & further assaulted the aforesaid Abigail in a violent manner by pushing her against the Law and Peace of the Commonwealth." Two women, who, as the justice wrote, "not having the Fear of God before their eyes & being instigated by the Devil did wickedly with force & arms commit an assault upon each other," were condemned "to receive nine stripes on the naked back."

There was other business in the court besides the punishment of disorders. An Indian woman, accused of stealing "about four doz. ears of green corn of the value of four shillings," was condemned "to pay three fold the value of the corn you stole the cost of Court & a fine of five shillings or be

be whipt five stripes on the Naked Back." As she could not pay, she took the whipping. Daniel Johnson, accused of "stealing a Quantity of Iron Bolts," was condemned to pay "three fold the value of the Iron you stole the cost of court & a fine of ten shillings or be whipt ten stripes." Out of the judgment money paid into court, the justice took to his own pocket the amount of a small debt which the prisoner owed to him for oysters. John Crandall, for stealing "sundry Silk Handkerchiefs & a Razor," was condemned to pay three times the value of the stolen goods and the costs of court, amounting to £3 15s. 10d. He confessed inability to pay the judgment, and was sentenced to serve the plaintiff "four months in compensation of this sum." John Smith stole a flannel shirt. His sentence was, to pay three times the value of the shirt, or go to prison. To this sum the justice added a sixpence which John Smith owed to him "for trowsers."

Nantucket society was dependent upon itself for social amusements. There was no theatre on the island, dancing was tabooed

booed by the Quakers, and the circus never came. I have the manuscript of a play written in the town and acted before private assemblies, which interested its players and its audiences because the simple plot was based on incidents of the time, — a hundred years ago. The heroine, a young coquette of Nantucket, is engaged to be married to a sailor-boy who is at sea. A young man of insinuating manners, who is supposed to be wealthy, comes from New York and seeks the heroine's acquaintance. In the first scene of the play he enters a parlor, where the coquette is waiting to receive him, and the following conversation occurs: —

“Madam, I am your most obedient humble servant. I hope I have the pleasure of seeing your ladyship very well this evening.”

“Will thee please to sit down, sir?”
(She offers him the easy chair. He seats himself in it.)

“I thank you, madam; this becomes me very well. Here is room for us both.

Sit

Sit down here, if you please; I want to have a little chat with you."

"I find thee very capable of that, sir; but I'll take another chair, if thee please."

"Madam, you'll excuse me. I have business of the utmost importance; and as my stay here must be short, I may as well come to the point at once as to be very ceremonious about it. I am not fond of long courtships."

"Why, sir, thee alarms me! — talk of courting?"

"Really, madam, I am in love with you, deeply in love with you, and I have taken this opportunity to convince you of it. I am sure you will pity me and heal the wound that bleeds. It's in your power to do it."

"I must have time to think of that, sir. I have already passed my word, and — and my honor to a sailor-boy whom I expect soon. Shall I be treating him right to deceive him?"

"Oh, tell not of a sailor-boy! Not one in ten of them, who goes to sea with the most sacred promises from his fair one,
but

but expects to be deceived. The sea bleaches his heart, and he cares not for his girl at home."

"Why, sir, thee seems to understand something about it; and I do believe what thee sayest to be partly true. Indeed, if I should deceive my sailor-boy! — Well, he is not the first to whom I have made solemn protestations! Oh dear! Oh dear! I feel faint!" (She falls back in her chair. He offers a glass of wine.)

"Take a little of this, my dear, and you will feel better. It is the closeness of the room. Let me open a window. (She drinks the wine.) Dear madam, I am distressed for you. You look so pale, yet there is beauty in your paleness."

"Oh, I feel better now. I never had such a disagreeable feeling as that. But it has gone. And can thee think it right, after such a promise to him, to encourage thee?"

"Oh, fie! I should n't suppose that promise would have such an effect upon you, my dear; for you say it is not the first time, and habit is a second nature."

He

He marries the coquette, having obtained the approval of her mother, who is a matchmaker by nature and wants her daughter to have a wealthy husband and a quick wedding. Tradition tells the sequel of the story of the play, — that the husband was a profligate, that she left him and returned to her father's house, that the profligate died, and she married the sailor-boy.

I have the order book of David Greene, the fashionable tailor of Nantucket from the year 1787 to 1794. I copy a few of his orders, because they give a picture of the customary dress of the people at that time: William Brown is charged for "making a Cloak for Eliza & a Hood with Silk & hooks & eyes. A pair of denim Breeches for thyself & mending thy snuff coloured Coat & 8 buttons for Velvet Breeches & piecing side seams of thy Sagathee Waistcoat & mending a Baze waistcoat & new kneeing a pair of Breeches;" Nathaniel Starbuck, making "a seal skin Waist-coat with leather pockets;" William Hussey, making "a velvet Jacket, and a
Cloak

Cloak for thy Daugh^r Abigail;" Peter Pol-
lard, "to 9 Buttons & twist for Eliza's
pocket;" Sylvanus Macy, "making Velvet
Breeches with buckram in the knees;" Dr.
Roland Gilson, "making nankeen Breeches
and black Satin Breeches and for 12 large
Deathhead buttons on Statute Coat;" Dr.
John Bartlett, "making blue satin Waist-
coat with 8 buttons;" Peter Barney, "mak-
ing buck skin breeches for boy;" Daniel
Starbuck, "making a Suit of Superfine
Broadcloth & repairing & new lining a
pair of Breeches and making a Waistcoat
of cotton denim;" Benjamin Rotch, for
"14 large Basket buttons on statute coat
& 1 doz. large Deathhead buttons and a
seating to thy Breeches;" Samuel Rod-
man, "making Velvet jacket & waistcoat
for thy Son Thomas & twilled Velvet
Breeches with 3 large & 4 small ivory
buttons for thyself & a pair of leather
Drawers;" William Macy, "making coat
with 5 pockets & working new set of but-
ton holes to thy Statute Coat & mak-
ing waistcoat & breeches of Florentine;"
Oliver Spencer, "making Velvet Breeches
for

for son Tristram & thread for Tristrams trowsers & Velvet Breeches for thyself & a Great Coat with 14 small & 8 large buttons;" William Rotch, "making a waistcoat of Bengall, setting new breast buttons to frock jacket & making a great coat for Cesar;" William Rotch, Jr., "a Greatcoat with Velvet collar;" Thomas Rotch, "turning thy coat & making 2 pair Drawers;" Simeon Russell, "repairing a dark brown coat, turning Broadcloth coat with hooks & eyes for ye same & turning thy Sagathee waistcoat;" Captain John Cartwright, "a calico jacket & a blue coat;" Seth Cartwright, "making black Satin Breeches, and turning a coat, & making a Cloak for Priscilla." These tailors' orders tell us that there was then, as now, a standard of fashion in clothing to which every one tried to conform.

As the streets of the town were not lighted, the selectmen proposed that householders should set up lanterns if the town would supply oil for their lighting. The proposal did not meet with favor, because sperm oil was considered to be as good as money,

money, and of course it was an extravagant waste to burn money in the street. Those who had barrels of oil stored on the wharves held them in such value that they hired men to watch them, lest a barrel be stolen. I copy from William Rotch's account book: "Paid Wm Peak for watching oil on the wharf 10s. 8d." At one time there was no oil to be had for Brant Point light-house; and when, in the year 1785, the selectmen were directed to hire "some person to keep the light-house," they asked the town meeting, "How is Oyl to be provided in the future?" The Point was a cause of constant expense to the town. They built there a "Hedge Fence to prevent the sand blowing off." When northerly winds blew, the sand buried the fence, and the selectmen were at a loss, as they said, "How to secure Brant Point from blowing into the Harbour."

It was not "agreeable to the mind of the town" to pay direct taxes. In the year 1784, it instructed its representative to the legislature "strictly & positively to bear Testimony against the State Tax;" this
 voice

voice was the voice of Quakerism. In the year 1787, it was "voted that no money be raised by tax for this year, but if any be wanted the Town will borrow of William Rotch." In its thriftiness the town refused to send delegates to the convention at Boston in January of that year; and the next year it refused to send a representative to the legislature. When it elected Alexander Gardner "to serve as Representative," it directed that he "do not attend the General Court except when his presence there shall be thought necessary by the selectmen." The town objected to all unnecessary expenses; and when business involving an outlay of money was to be proposed at town meeting, the attendance sometimes numbered three hundred men, of whom the majority were savers rather than spenders of money. In a meeting at which the attendance was small, it was voted "to build piers on the back flats." At the next meeting there was a crowd, and the vote of the previous meeting was reconsidered; then the question about building piers on the back flats was put
again

again in due form, and was "passed in the negative," 250 men voting against it and 43 in its favor.

In the beginning of this century a petition by the town for the removal of Nantucket bar was sent to Congress. It stated that "the whale fishery commenced with vessels from 30 to 50 tons burthen upon the American coast, and so continued until the year 1753, since which the whales have left the coast and we have gone further in pursuit of them; and since the year 1790 we have had to follow them to the Pacific and Indian oceans — voyages of eighteen months to two years, with ships of 200 and 300 tons." The petition said that "the bar will destroy this business;" that it "lies about two miles from the harbor, has had only about nine feet of water over it at full sea, and within a year it has shoaled nearly one foot. We have already sustained considerable loss by our vessels grounding on the bar, and it is with much difficulty and expense that we can get our ships out of the harbor."

The town voted "that Isaac Coffin Esq^r.
be

be the bearer" of this petition to Congress, but the people wanted to know what the cost was to be, before he started; and so they appointed three men "to contract with Isaac Coffin Esq^r. what he shall have for his services in carrying the petition." Then they voted "that Gideon Gardner shall accompany him to assist him, and that the Town shall be at no Expençe for his service."

The economically planned petition produced no result. The harbor bar remained, as an obstacle to the commerce of the port, for nearly a hundred years longer, when two jetties, constructed by the United States government, began to deepen, and are still deepening, the sea that flows over Nantucket Bar.

IX

Nantucket's School of Philosophers

IT was an insurance office in a brick house that stood near the wharves at the foot of the main street, and is standing there now. It was also a place of resort for learning what news had come from the sea. The news was written in a book lying on the public table, whose title, "Marine Journal," had been carefully drawn with a pen on the outside of its front cover. The book is dated in the years 1804 and 1805. It is a mirror of its times.

The office was open every day in the week. Every morning a secretary wrote in the book the direction of the wind and the character of the weather, as if he were at sea; then he wrote the news of the day, — concerning vessels entering the harbor, vessels departing, vessels anchored "in the Cod of the Bay," vessels passing the island, vessels

vessels ashore, Nantucket ships spoken at sea, the barrels of oil on board them, the disasters that had happened to them.

Turning the leaves of the book, I notice how neatly the items of news are written; how the importance of certain events is indicated by wider spaces between the lines; how the corners of pages had been made thinner by the stamp of brown thumbs. Its paper covers, tattooed with a variety of pen-marks, initial letters of unknown names, reckonings in figures, sketches of a steering-wheel, a compass card, a harpoon, and mazes of thoughtless scrawls, tell me of the dozy hours spent by men who came in to read the book, and to lounge in the office chairs as if resting on their oars, while expecting some waif of news to come ashore, or to be brought by a mail-packet from the continent. After the news had been recorded in the Journal, it was given to the town-crier, who went through the streets publishing it "by sound of the trumpet and the publicque cry."

These records were reminiscent to the
marine

marine philosophers who frequented the office. Some of them had retired from the sea to a quiet life ashore; some were yet sea-rovers, waiting for their ships to be got ready for a cruise; some were heroes of hazardous deeds, having about them that air of authority which comes from a habit of command. When they read in the Journal that the ship *Edward* had arrived from the coast of Peru, reporting the ships with which she spake since she "stowed down her oil and put away for home," and that the ship *Rose*, with teas and silks of Canton, had been heard from homeward bound to Nantucket, the thoughts of these marine philosophers surveyed "the world from China to Peru." And, as they talked over the news, they told of strange voyages of which they had been a large part. And yet they were not adrift from the facts of their present time; for when the Journal reported the arrival of a sloop from Wood's Hole,¹ loaded with
firewood

¹ For more than two hundred years, Wood's Hole was the name of a village and two adjoining harbors of Barnstable County, Massachusetts. In April, 1702, Judge Sewall wrote in his
his

firewood for which the master was demanding ten dollars a cord, they had opinions that the price was too high considering the condition of the spermaceti-oil market.

Woven in with the strands of marine news were things belonging to the shore life of the islanders. For example:—

Tuesday, December 25th, 1804. In the morning small wind, westerly, and snow. The President of this Office was hurt by a horse at 9 o'clock this morning. The Faculty consider it not dangerous. Seth Baker has arrived with the Cranberries.

Seth and his cranberries had been expected a day or two sooner; perhaps he was detained at Hyannis by a head wind. As his arrival is noised through the town, housekeeping women are hastening to the wharf,

his diary that he embarked for the island of Martha's Vineyard in "Mr. Robinson's boat at little Wood's hole" (meaning the smaller harbor). In the year 1875, the summer residents of Wood's Hole caused the name to be changed—for peculiar reasons—to Wood's Holl. In May, 1895, the United States Board, which is empowered to decide and fix the proper orthography of geographic names, declared that the proper form of this name is Wood's Hole.

wharf, carrying baskets and pails to be filled with cranberries for their Christmas dinners.

Saturday Feb'y 16th 1805. Wind west by South, snow—arrived Sloop Charles from Bermuda. News of the Sloop Planter coming through woods hole struck a rock & sunk. Arrived Lively Packet with seven Mails & Passengers—from the papers get accounts of Ship John & James spoke Dec 9—Latt 30 South—Long 35. Arrived two wood Sloops, want 10 dollars per Cord for wood and cannot in our opinion get \$8.—At last the captain got \$6.

Monday March 4th. Wind northerly—pleasant weather. Arrived several coasters; the packet with two mails from New Bedford. The Harlequin was off Isle of May Dec. 20th. Congress closes their session this day.

To-day, loungers in the insurance office are discussing the adjourning Congress and Thomas Jefferson, who becomes for a second time the President of the United States. They are saying that the political horizon

horizon is cloudy, for England is claiming a right of search on the high seas, and her frigates are boarding Nantucket ships.

Tuesday April 30th. Fine Spring weather. Wind Southerly. Some small coasters arrived. Sailed the *Leander* packet in pursuit of the Revenue Cutter which was run away with last night suppos'd to be by a man that came passenger with Silas Coleman in the *Leander* from Hudson.

After spring had begun to bloom on the island, "small coasters" were arriving daily with various kinds of merchandise for tradesmen, and for the outfit of ships; with grain, hay, salt, firewood, fruit, and vegetables, to be sold. Then, in the busy streets and above the clatter made by mechanics, truckmen, and the town-crier, was heard the shrill call of the huckster: "Har-war-che-e-e! ar-fine-onions — beets — turnips — apples! Har-war-che-e-e! Who buys?" As there was no newspaper on the island, the night-watchman, tramping his rounds, became an advertising herald, announcing with the hours the wares that
are

are to be sold by his customers to-morrow. Hear him: "Twelve o'clock and all is well. Jabez Arey has beans to sell."

Tuesday June 18th. Wind southerly. Arrived schooner Betsy from Cape de Verde, several coasters, and the mail packet from New Bedford with a number of Passengers. This is second Shearing Day.

It is a holiday on Nantucket. The eastern and western flocks of sheep, numbering together nearly ten thousand, were washed in Miacomet Pond on Friday and Saturday of last week, and on Monday and Tuesday of this week they are publicly counted and shorn. When this Marine Journal was written, it was the cruel custom to leave the sheep without a shepherd through the entire year, and without a shelter of any kind, not even so much as that of Jonah's gourd. In the tempestuous winters they were abandoned by their owners to all the severities of cold and hunger, compelled to get their food from a frozen soil, or to starve. During the storms they naturally huddled together
to

to get warmth from each other, and hundreds of them were often crowded into the freezing ocean from a bluff that bounded one side of the common pasture. This treatment of sheep was in painful contrast with the care which flocks received from their owners during the earlier periods of Nantucket.¹

In the summer season the pastoral scene was more pleasing; the large flocks feeding upon the new grass made a conspicuous picture in the landscape. Their companions were golden plovers, whose whistle could be heard all over the commons. If a gunner flushed the birds, they kept within protection of the sheep, winding in and out among them until they were beyond reach of a shot, when away they flew over the sea.

These sheep-shearing holidays, with their feasts and festivities, lasted about forty years longer. Feuds arose between land-owners and sheep-owners; sheep running at large were impounded; lawsuits ensued; the last sheep was driven from the commons;

¹ See page 179.

mons; and the holidays, to which home-ward-bound whalemens looked forward, hoping to arrive in time to enjoy them, came to an end. Let us return to the Journal.

Thursday, July 4th. Independant Day. Wind Westerly. Dry dusty hot weather. Sailed Maria packet for New Bedford and returned, was gone about 13 hours. Brought a mail. Arrived a schooner from Mistic with Hats, Cotton and tar.

There are no sounds of fire-crackers in the Journal, and no indications that the fourth of July was observed as a holiday on the island.

Now and then a real waif was brought in from the sea. The Journal of Monday, May 20, says:—

Arrived ship Eliza, Capt Chase, from Patagonia and the Brazils. The following letter was found in a junk bottol taken up about a league to the south of Nomans Land on the 9th of May. The bottol had about 6 oz of lead balls in it, was cork'd & seal'd tight, had a small staff

staff lashed to the neck and a piece of silk handkerchief for a flag on it: —

FRENCH NATIONAL SHIP *SILENE*,
April 10, 1805.

One of his Britanic Majestys subjects confined a prisoner on board this ship embraces this mode of communicating information to his countrymen (being the only means in his power) hoping that it may prove successful. If it should even fall into the hands of our american well wishers they no doubt will make it public — That a valuable Spanish ship with an immense quantity of Specie would leave the Havana about the first of this month. Such a fine prize is certainly worth the attention of any of his Majesty's Ships on this station looking after. The Spanish vessels force is only 16 guns and but indifferently equipt.

THOMAS BURK.

This letter, picked up at sea and brought to Nantucket, is a reminiscence of the empire of the first Napoleon. At its date France and Spain were allied in war against England, a crisis of which was
reached

reached in Lord Nelson's victory at Trafalgar, the 21st of October, 1805. Other reminiscences of the war appear in the Journal's news from Nantucket ships:—

By a letter from Obed Chase, dated August 3d, he informs that he took 38 English Prisoners from the Cape of Good Hope, & for landing them at St. Helena was to have 6000 rix dollars & was to return to the Cape of Good Hope.

Capt Ransom Jones left St. Helena with 200 tons Sperm oil under convoy of ship Calcutta of 64 guns for London. The ship Fox touched at St. Helena from Timor, with 1200 bbls of oil. Capt Shubel Worth died out of the Fox.¹

The Journal makes note of wintry days on Nantucket when the island was swept by gales and was locked in ice; when the moors were covered with snow, the springs were frozen, and there were wrecks along the shore.

Monday Dec^r. 17th. Wind north
west

¹ See page 164.

west cold. Arriv'd Dispatch Packet with a mail & sloop from Oldtown with Oile out of ship Edward 4 months from coast of Peru. Ship Brothers went to sea this day. Had accounts of the Ship Rose which left Canton the 2^d of June Macoa Rhodes the 7th of June & was spoke with 18 days out in the China Seas. Arrived a sloop from Rhode Island with hollow meat, fruit and Vegetables. Afternoon a snow storm.

Sunday December 30th. Wind northwest blowing Strong, considerable Ice in the Harbour. Brig Eliza Capt. Matthew Dole of Newburyport from Martinitico ashore at Low Beach.

Sunday January 6th. the Harbour froze up — wind northwest cold — abundance of Snow.

Tuesday January 8th — the Harbour still froze. a ship is aground between Muskeket & the Vineyard.

During winter seasons the island is often inaccessible for a time. In the winter of 1780, the surrounding ocean was frozen as far away as the eye could reach, and all communication

communication with the continent was cut off for forty days. The island was also blockaded by ice for forty days in the winter of 1837. During the winter of 1857, the mail steamboat was locked in the ice for thirty days, and in February, 1895, the ice blockade lasted nearly three weeks. And yet, sometimes, —

“When February sun shines cold,
There comes a day when in the air
The wings of winter slow unfold
And show the golden summer there.”

Friday February 1st Wind southwest pleasant and warm for the season. Sailed schooner *Brittania* for St. Thomas and the salt islands.

Monday February 4th. Snow storm. Arrived a *Jabaca* boat from *Pasamaquada* with only one man & one boy on board. Tuesday Feb. 5th. Wind north west verry cold, the harbour full of Ice.

In the spring came home the ship *Rose*, long expected from China. She took a pilot from the south side of the island, and, passing through the west channel, dropped anchor

anchor at the bar, after a voyage of 273 days from Canton, including 80 days from the Cape of Good Hope. Her arrival was an event in which every islander was interested. Having discharged her cargo into lighters outside the bar, she came up to the wharf on the 19th of March to receive an ovation. The ship was built for Paul Gardner by island mechanics. James Cary was her captain; Joseph W. Plasket was her chief mate; Uriah Swain was her supercargo. She was manned by young men of the island, and she was the first ship that had sailed from Nantucket direct to China. I found her name writ large on the cover of the Journal, and I fancied that it was inscribed during the days succeeding her return, when the story of her long adventurous voyage was told at the table in the insurance office. She was fitted again for sea; and the Journal says:—

Sunday October 13th Wind in the morning Southerly with rain, then cleared up and hauled around to the westward. Sailed from the Bar the ship Rose for Canton.

The

The Rose sailed on her second voyage to China, laden with general merchandise, Spanish dollars, and shark fins for Chinese epicures. I may imagine that on the morning of her departure every black cat in the town was put under a tub, according to the popular superstition, so that a head wind should blow and detain the Rose a few days longer. But the trick was unsuccessful; the ship sailed on a fair wind, leaving the Nantucket girls in tears. On a range of sand-hills south of the town stood four large windmills, of which only one is standing now. They were the first landmarks of the island to be discovered from far at sea, and they were the last things that faded from the sight of the Rose as she sailed away from her home.

A traveler who visited Nantucket in the year 1810 speaks of its windmills, ropewalks, and two steeples as prominent objects in the landscape. He says that there are generally fifteen or twenty ships in port, and twice or thrice that number of coasters, "presenting a lively scene as you
enter

enter from the sea.”¹ To a traveler landing at the wharf the scene was interesting. All the townspeople who were at leisure have hastened down to learn what the packet has brought, and to scan the strangers who are coming ashore. If one of these has aught to distinguish him above his fellow-passengers, his description is reported from house to house, heads turn to gaze at him as he passes by, and bright eyes reconnoitre him through the window blinds. If he is a young man of affable manners, he will be welcomed by society, and will receive invitations to supper and to ride in a calash, a vehicle peculiar to Nantucket. This invitation expressed the utmost force of island hospitality.

The governor of Massachusetts visited Nantucket in September, 1825, and was honored by what his secretary called “a solemn reception at the Insurance Office.” Here he met the philosophers who made it their place of resort; shipowners and shipmasters,

¹ In the year 1822, Nantucket possessed 80 ships, 6 brigs, 16 schooners, 59 sloops, 9 ropewalks, 36 candle factories, 7,266 inhabitants, 1,423 families, 911 houses.

shipmasters, farmers and tradesmen, whose labors and savings had contributed to the wealth of the island. The visitors were introduced to men who had never been ashore on the continent of North America, although they had visited South America and the islands of every ocean. They conversed with one, sixty years of age, who had seen no other horizon than that of the island. When the visitors observed that Nantucket, the largest holder of whale oil in the world, was the darkest corner of it at night, they were told that it would be an extravagance to consume, in street lanterns, oil that had been procured for exportation. Oil was the source of the incomes of the inhabitants : if the market price was low, the town could not afford to use it for lighting streets ; if the price was high, the town could not afford to buy it. Thus the Quakers, who had given sombre colors to the town, had also given thrifty manners to the inhabitants. They could say, as said Henry the Fifth of England to his French princess : "We are the makers of manners,

Kate,

Kate, and the liberty that follows our places stops the mouths of all find-faults."

A venerable Quaker, named Micajah Coffin, addressed the visitors in the Latin language, which he had learned from his father Benjamin, who was a famous school-master of Nantucket in the last century. He was now ninety years old, yet of a robust personality; and, as he rambled about the town, his custom was to heave to, whenever he met a stranger, and hail: "Friend! My name is Micajah Coffin. What is thine?"

The governor had come by stage-coaches from Boston, through Plymouth and Sandwich, to Wood's Hole, whence he embarked, with his companions, on the mail-packet sailing at sundown. The travelers were stowed into narrow bunks in the packet's cabin, where they snatched such sleep as was possible until two o'clock the next morning, when a sudden thud and a swashing of waters against the sides of the sloop brought them to their feet to ask what had happened.

"All right!" answered the skipper, shouting

shouting down the companionway, "you jest lie still till morning. We're aground on Nantucket Bar — that's all."

Notwithstanding its harbor bar, the town, containing in its prime nearly ten thousand inhabitants, was in touch with all parts of the world. Every ship that sailed away carried bags filled with letters to Nantucket men and boys who were "pursuing their gigantic game" in seas beyond Cape Horn and beyond the Cape of Good Hope. I copy some letter-bag announcements of the year 1839: —

LETTER-BAGS FOR THE SOUTH SEAS.

Ship Ploughboy, Capt Moses Brown, to sail about the 20th of June. Letter Bag at the store of G. H. Riddle, 71 Main St.

Ship Peru, Capt Joshua Coffin, to sail about 1st of July.

Ship Constitution, Capt Obed Ramsdell, to sail about 1st of July.

Ship Richard Mitchell, Capt. Wm H. Gardner, to sail about 1st July.

Letter

Letter Bags at the store of J. Lawrence & Co.

Once in a while an outward-bound letter-bag was brought back to Nantucket after a long cruise, those to whom its letters were addressed not having been met with on any ocean. Then appeared a public announcement like this, of the year 1839:—

RETURNED LETTERS.

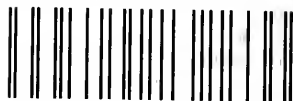
Letters returned by the Ship *Montano* are at the store of Obed Barney.

The town was now a hive of industry, Its streets were busy market-places; the paving-stones and the sand were rutted and stained by a constant travel of trucks loaded with hogsheads of oil and other merchandise, just arrived or just going away. Its five wharves were lined with whaling-ships getting ready to sail, and with merchant vessels loading or discharging cargoes. All day long, coopers, sparmakers, riggers, boat-builders, and sail-makers were at work; ironsmiths were forging harpoons, lances, and knives; cordage factories were turning out every kind
of

of "standing and running rigging, bolt-rope, wormline, marline, spunyarn, whale lines, or any other article in their line, of a good quality and on favorable terms," as the announcements stated. Only when the Old South bell rang the hour of noon, and the streets were thronged with mechanics going home to dinner, was there a lull in the noises of labor.

At last the tide turned, and the prosperity of Nantucket began to depart. Its sounds of industry became fainter; its wharves fell into decay; its population decreased in number; its marine philosophers drifted away to the unknown sea; and when, in the year 1869, the last whaling-ship sailed from the harbor bar, Silence dropped his mantle on the town.

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