

## SOCIAL LIFE IN THE COLONIES.\*

BY EDWARD EGGLESTON.



"THE ONE-HOSS SHAY." (FROM AN ETCHING BY W. H. SHELTON, BY PERMISSION OF C. KLACKNER.)

[This etching corresponds with Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes's recollection and with some ancient examples.]

### I.

#### EQUIPAGES AND TRAVEL.

IN the first half of the seventeenth century there were many in England who regarded coaches as novel and ostentatious superfluities, that were, moreover, particularly injurious to the muddy roads of the time. In America, until the eighteenth century was well under way, traveling by coach, beyond the immediate vicinity of the greater towns was rendered almost impossible by the innumerable river-mouths and estuaries that intersected the belt of inhabited territory along the coast. Foot-passengers traversed the narrow streams by means of tree-trunks felled across them; wider rivers could be passed only by finding a canoe at some plantation upon the bank. On some main thoroughfares there were regular ferries, at which the traveler might count on getting over in a canoe, provided he could find the ferryman; but he could only get his saddle-horse over by leading him, swimming alongside. Even after wheeled vehicles were used, it was often necessary in ferrying to take them apart, or to straddle the carriage into

two canoes lashed together, or to let the wheels hang over the side of a small boat, or to tow the carriage behind through the water, and to carry the horse with his fore feet in one, and his hind feet in the other of two canoes bound together. The German immigrants appear to have introduced the ferry-boat running with pulleys upon a rope stretched across the river—the boat being set obliquely to the current, and propelled by the force of the stream against the gunwales.

The Virginia planter of the richer sort, who was said to live with more show and luxury "than a country gentleman in England on an estate of three or four thousand pounds a year," showed a strong liking for the stately six-horse coach, with postilions; but it was not until 1720 that wheeled carriages were recognized in the legal price-list of the Virginia ferries. In the other colonies, also, the coach was valued as a sign of official or family dignity, and some of the richer Carolinians carried "their luxury so far as to have carriages, horses, coachmen, and all, imported from England"; but in Carolina, and everywhere north of Virginia, the light open

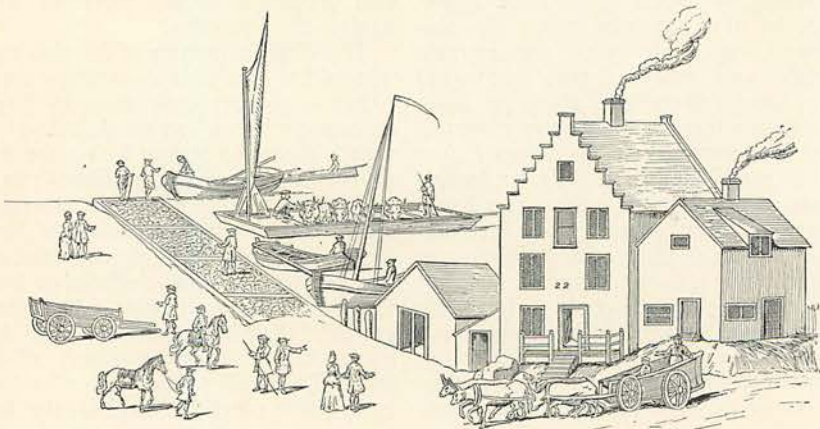
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"chair" or the covered chaise was generally preferred. These were better suited to the roughness and sinuosity of the roads than the coach. The chaise was a kind of two-wheeled gig, having a top, and drawn sometimes by one, and sometimes by two horses; the chair had two wheels, but no top; the sulky, which was much used, differed from the chair chiefly in having room for but one person. All these seem to have been hung on straps, or thorough-braces, instead of springs. Boston ladies in the middle of the eighteenth century took the air in chaises or chairs, with negro drivers. Boston gentlemen also affected negro attendants when they drove their chairs or rode on saddle-horses. But in rural regions, from Pennsylvania northward, ladies took delight in driving about alone in open chairs, to the amazement of European travelers, who deemed that a paradise in which women could travel without protection. Philadelphians were fond of a long, light, covered wagon, with benches, which would carry a dozen persons in an excursion to the country. Sedan-chairs were occasionally used in the cities. The Dutch introduced sleighs into New York at a very early date; but sleighs for pleasure, though known in Boston about 1700, only came into general use in the northern provinces at a somewhat later period. The first stage wagon in the colonies was run from Trenton to New Brunswick, twice a week, during the summer of 1738. It was a link in the tedious land and water journey from Philadelphia to New York, and travelers were promised that it would be "fitted up with benches, and covered over, so that passengers may sit easy and dry."

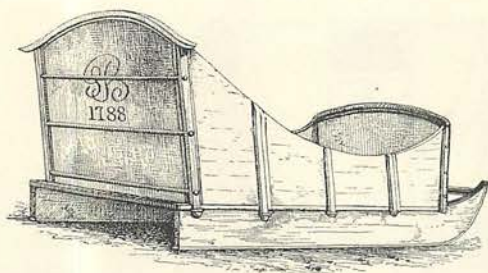
American wheeled vehicles belonged almost entirely to the eighteenth century; the primitive, and always the commonest, means of land travel in the colonies was the saddle-

horse. At the time of the beginning of American settlement English peers were wont to carry their spouses behind them on horseback from London to their country-seats, and even princesses rode on pillions, wearing caps of waxed linen to shelter their heads from the rain. In the eighteenth century the English were accounted the only European people that were fond of traveling in the saddle. In like manner American colonists, especially during the first hundred years or more, rode on horseback to church, to picnics, to weddings, to funerals, and on journeys, often carrying their wives behind them. Sometimes two or three children were stacked on in front of the saddle. One horse was often made to carry two men. By the "ride-and-tie" method, a horse was yet further economized; one man, or a man and woman, would ride a mile or two, and then leave the animal by the roadside for another person or persons to mount when they should come up with him, the first party going on afoot until their alternates had ridden past them, and left the horse tied again by the roadside. Two men and their wives sometimes went to church with one horse, by this device. Where a saddle could not be had, a sheep-skin or a bear-skin served instead. A lady when alone rode on a side-saddle; when behind a gentleman she sat on a pillion, which was a cushion buckled to the saddle. A church surrounded on all sides by saddle-horses tied to the trees and fences reminded the traveler of the outskirts of an English horse-fair. Stories are told of Virginians walking two miles to catch a horse to ride one, and of Marylanders walking six or eight miles for a horse to ride five miles to church.

The planter in the Chesapeake region was well-nigh inseparable from his steed; traveling, church-going, visiting, fighting, hunting, and even sometimes fishing, were done on



BROOKLYN FERRY-HOUSE AND FERRY-BOATS. SITE OF THE PRESENT FULTON FERRY, FROM A VIEW OF NEW YORK IN 1746.



AN AMERICAN SLEIGH OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

horseback. The scouts and rangers against the Indians, the Indian traders, the lawyers, the doctors, the parsons, and the peddlers of the southern colonies were all mounted. Comparatively few of the colonists except peddlers ever journeyed by land so far as to reach a neighboring province. The badness of the roads made travel irksome, if not dangerous, and pious people wrote "Laus Deo" in their almanac diaries when they got back with whole bones from a twenty-mile ride into the country. The taverns, whose signs hung on "a kind of gallows" across the road, bearing the portrait of some king or great man, were almost as formidable obstacles to travel as the rough roads and dangerous ferries. Innkeepers in many cases persisted in lodging two strangers in the same bed, often without changing the linen used by its previous occupants, and the beds for guests were frequently all included in one large room. From these roadside inns the hospitality of the colonists sometimes afforded a deliverance. In the South especially travelers were often able entirely to avoid the wretched and extortionate "ordinaries," as they were called.

When a magistrate or other dignity made a journey, gentlemen of each town escorted him a few miles on the way, usually bidding him adieu at some stream or boundary. "Not one creature accompanies us to the ferry," writes Judge Sewall with indignation on one occasion. Fifty horsemen escorted Whitefield into Philadelphia in 1745, and eight hundred mounted gentlemen went out to meet one of the proprietors of Pennsylvania. Indeed, it



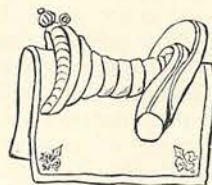
COACH, SUPPOSED TO BE THAT OF RIP VAN DAM. (FROM A PRINT OF THE OLD DUTCH CHURCH IN NEW YORK, 1731.)

was but common courtesy for a company of gentlemen to meet, a long way off, a governor or a commissioner from another province, and to form a voluntary guard of honor, bringing him in great state to his destination, with no end of wine, punch, and other "treats" on the way, and no end of dinners and dances after his arrival.

## II.

## COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

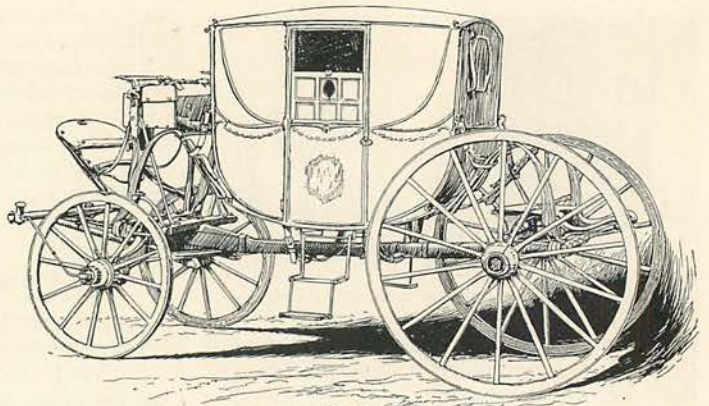
THE traveler Josselyn gives us a glimpse of seventeenth-century "gallants," promenading with their sweethearts, on Boston Common, from a little before sunset till the nine o'clock bell gave warning of the lawfully established bed-time. This picture of twilight and love lends a touch of human feeling to the severely regulated life of the Puritan coun-

ENGLISH SADDLE OF THE STUART PERIOD.  
(FROM MEYRICK'S "ANCIENT ARMOUR.")

try. But even love-making in that time was made to keep to the path appointed by those in authority. Fines, imprisonments, and corporal punishment were the penalties denounced in New England against him who should inveigle the affections of any "maide, or maide servant," unless her parents or guardians should "give way and allowance in that respect." Nor were such laws dead letters. In all the colonies sentiment was less regarded than it is now. The worldly estate of the parties was weighed in even balances, and there were sometimes conditional marriage treaties between the parents, before the young people were consulted. Judge Sewall's daughter Betty hid herself in her father's coach for hours one night, to avoid meeting an unwelcome suitor approved by her father. Sometimes marriage agreements between the parents of the betrothed extended even to arrangements for requests to be left to the young people, as "incorridgement for a livelihood." The newspapers of the later period, following English examples, not only praised the bride, but did not hesitate to mention her "large fortune," that people might know the elements of the bridegroom's happiness.

But if passion was under more constraint from self-interest among people of the upper class, it was less restrained by refinement in

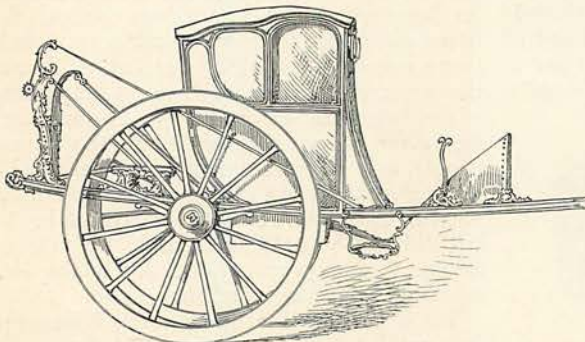
the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than it is in our time. There was a good deal of stiff external formality in good society, but far less of real modesty in all classes than in modern times. The New England law-givers declare that great evils had resulted from certain social recreations, which would be regarded as quite harmless now; and the large number of offenses against sexual morality, brought to light in the proceedings of churches and courts of law in all the colonies, make one suspect that this was not a merely puritanic scruple. The books, the newspapers, the plays, even the law and court proceedings, and the very sermons of the colonial time, manifest a comparative coarseness and lack of reserve in thought and feeling. The smallness of most of the houses, the numerousness of families, the rustic manners of a new country, the rude, untempered physical life begotten of hardy living, the primitive barbarism lingering in the race, and the prevailing laxity of morals in the mother country, all tended to promote an irregularity that could not be corrected by the most stringent secular and ecclesiastical discipline. There were many illegitimate births in all the colonies, nor was the evil confined to families of the lower order. Puritan churches often exacted a public apology from their members for such sins, and the not infrequent spectacle of a young girl making confession of her offense in meeting probably spread the contagion it was meant to arrest. Beyond the influence of the more strenuous religious movements, such as puritanism, quakerism, and what may be comprehensively called Whitefieldism, men were under com-



BECKMAN FAMILY COACH OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD, IN THE POSSESSION OF GERARD BECKMAN, ESQ.

paratively slight restraints from society. In the South a taste for gallant adventures, though very hurtful to a woman, was quite as likely to be beneficial as otherwise to the standing of a gentleman.

The mode of courtship known as bundling or tarrying — the very name of which one hesitates to write to-day — was prevalent in certain regions of New England, especially in the Connecticut Valley. The practice existed in many parts of Europe, and is said still to linger in Wales. It was no doubt brought from England by early immigrants. That it could flourish throughout the whole colonial age, alongside a system of doctrine and practice so austere as that enforced by New England divines and magistrates, is but one of many instances of the failure of law and restraining precept to work a refinement of manners. That during much more than a century after the settlement this practice found none to challenge it on grounds of modesty and moral tendency, goes to show how powerful is the sanction of traditional custom. Even when it was attacked by Jonathan Edwards and other innovators, the attempt to abolish it was met by violent opposition and no end of ridicule. Edwards seems to think that as "among people who pretend to uphold their credit," it was peculiar to New England; and there appears to be no evidence that it was practiced elsewhere in America, except in parts of Pennsylvania, where the custom is a matter of court record so late as 1845, and where it probably still lingers in out-of-the-way places among people both of English and of German extraction.



A CHAISE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. (FROM "L'ART DU MENUISIER-CARROSSIER," 1771.)

A certain grossness in the relations of the sexes was a trait of



AMERICAN STAGE-COACH OF 1795, FROM "WELD'S TRAVELS." (PROBABLY SIMILAR IN FORM TO THOSE OF THE LATER COLONIAL PERIOD.)

eighteenth-century life, not confined to rustics and people in humble stations. In the "Journal of a Young Lady of Virginia," the writer complains more than once of the freedoms of certain married gentlemen of her acquaintance, "who seized me and kissed me a dozen times in spite of all the resistance I could make." Miss Sarah Eve, of Philadelphia, has likewise recorded in a private journal her objections to the affectionate salutations bestowed on her in company by a Dr. S. "One hates to be always kissed," she says, "especially as it is attended with so many inconveniences; it decomposes the economy of one's *handkerchief*, it disorders one's *high Roll*, and it ruffles the serenity of one's countenance." Perhaps it was the partial default of refined feeling that made stately and ceremonious manners seem so proper to the upper class of that day; such usages were a fence by which society protected itself from itself. But eighteenth-century proprieties were rather thin and external; they had an educational value, no doubt, but conventional hypocrisies scantily served to hide the rudeness of the Englishmen of the time.

Marriage ceremonies and festivities in America differed but little from those which prevailed in the mother country. The widest divergence was in New England, where the Puritans, abhorring the Catholic classification

which put marriage among the sacraments, were repelled to the other extreme, and forbade ministers to lend any ecclesiastical sanction to a wedding. But the earliest New Englanders celebrated a public betrothal, or, as they styled it, "a contraction," and on this occasion a minister sometimes preached a



CUT-PAPER VALENTINE OF 1764. (VIRGINIA.)

sermon. A merely civil marriage could hardly continue long in a community where the benedictions of religion were sought on so many other occasions; where the birth of a child, the illness and the recovery of the sick, birthday anniversaries, the entrance into a new house, and even the planning of a bridge, gave occasion for prayer and psalm-singing. Indeed, a marriage performed as at first by a magistrate was accompanied by psalms sung by the guests and by prayers; and as the seventeenth century drew to its close, the Puritan minister resumed the function of solemnizing marriages.

The Quakers, of course, were married without intervention of parson or magistrate, by "passing the meeting." Even in the colonies in which the Church of England was established, marriages usually took place in private houses,— a divergence from English usage growing out of the circumstances of people in a new country. But it was everywhere enacted that the banns should be published. This was in some places done at church service, as in England, or by putting a notice on the court-house door. In New England the publication was sometimes made at the week-day lecture, at town-meeting, or by affixing a notice to the door or in the vestibule of the meeting-house, or to a post set up for this express purpose. Publication seems to have been sometimes evaded by ingenuity. The Friends in Pennsylvania took care to enjoin that the notice should be posted at a meeting-house, "with the fair publication side outward." The better sort of people in some of the colonies were accustomed to buy exemption from publishing the banns, by paying a fee to the governor for a license, and the governor's revenue from this source was very considerable. Ministers in remote places sometimes purchased a supply of licenses signed in blank and issued them at a profit.

English colonists in the hardest pioneer surroundings took a patriotic pride in celebrating what was called "a merry English wedding." The festivities in different places varied only in detail; in all the colonies a genteel



TANKARD PRESENTED ON HER WEDDING DAY TO SARAH RAPELJE, THE FIRST WHITE PERSON BORN IN NEW NETHERLANDS. NOW IN POSSESSION OF MISS SARAH A. JOHNSON OF BROOKLYN. (SEE "CENTURY MAGAZINE," APRIL, 1885, PAGE 889.)

wedding was a distressingly expensive and protracted affair. There was no end of eating, and drinking, and dancing, of dinners, teas, and suppers. The guests were often supplied with one meal before the marriage, and then feasted without stint afterward. These festivities, on one ground or another, were in some places kept up two or three days, and sometimes even much longer. The minister finished the service by kissing the bride; then all the gentlemen present followed his example; and in some regions the bridegroom meanwhile went about the room kissing each of the ladies in turn. There were brides who received the salutations of a hundred and fifty gentlemen in a day. As if this were not enough, the gentlemen called on the bride afterward, and this call was colloquially known as "going to kiss the bride." In some parts of the Puritan country kissing at weddings was discountenanced, but there were other regions of New England in which it was practiced with the greatest latitude and fervor. In Philadelphia the Quaker bride, having to "pass the meeting" twice, had to submit to a double ordeal of the sort, and the wedding expenses, despite the strenuous injunctions of yearly meetings, were greatly increased by the twofold festivity.

I have seen no direct evidence that the colonial gentry followed the yet ruder English wedding customs of the time. But provincials loyally follow the customs of a metropolis, and I doubt not a colonial wedding in good society was attended by observances as indecorous as those of a nobleman of the same period. Certainly stocking-throwing and other such customs long lingered among the backwoodsmen of the colonies, as did many other ancient wedding usages. Among the German immigrants, the bride did not throw her shoe for the guests to scramble for as she entered her chamber, after the manner of the noble ladies of Germany in other times; but at a "Pennsylvania Dutch" wedding the guests strove by dexterity or craft to steal a shoe from the bride's foot during the day. If the groomsmen failed to prevent this, they were obliged to redeem the shoe from the bosom of the lucky thief with a bottle of wine. The ancient wedding sport known in parts of the British Islands as "riding for the kail," or "for the broose,"—that is, a pot of spiced broth,—and elsewhere called "riding for the ribbon," took the form among the Scotch-Irish in America of a dare-devil race over perilous roads to secure a bottle of whisky with a ribbon about its neck, which awaited the swiftest and most reckless horseman on his arrival at the house of the bride's father. There were yet other practices,—far-reaching shadows of the usages of more barbarous ages, when brides were carried off by force. A wedding party in the backwoods as it approached the bride's house would sometimes find its progress arrested by wild grape-vines tied across the way, or great trees felled in the road in sport or malice by the neighbors. Sometimes, indeed, they would be startled by a sudden volley with blank cartridges fired by men in ambush. This old Irish practice, and other such horse-play, was most congenial to woodsmen and Indian-fighters, in whom physical life overflowed all bounds.

A custom, no doubt of very ancient origin, prevailed in some Massachusetts villages, by which a group of the non-invited would now and then seize the bride and gently lead her off to an inn or other suitable place of detention until the bridegroom consented to redeem her by providing entertainment for the captors. But in the staidest parts of New England puritanism succeeded in suppressing or modifying some of the more brutal wedding customs of the time. Sack-posset was eaten, perhaps even in the bridal chamber, but it was taken solemnly with the singing of a psalm before and a grace afterward. The health and toasts to posterity, which had been, according

to immemorial usage, drunk in the wedding chamber after the bedding of the bride and groom, were omitted, and in their place prayers were offered that the children of the newly married might prove worthy of a godly ancestry. Old English blood and rude traditions would now and then break forth; it was necessary in 1651 to forbid all dancing in taverns on the occasion of weddings, such dancing having produced many "abuses and disorders."

Where church-going was practiced, as in New England, the "coming out groom and bride" on the Sunday after the wedding was a notable part of the solemnities. In Sewall's diary one may see the bride's family escorting the newly married pair to church, marching in double file, six couples in all, conscious that they were the spectacle of the little street, and the observed of all in the church.

The eccentric custom, known in England, of a widow's wearing no garment at her second marriage but a shift, from a belief that by her surrendering before marriage all her property but this, her new husband would escape liability for any debts contracted by her or her former husband, was followed in a few instances in the middle colonies. One Pennsylvania bridegroom saved appearances by meeting the slightly clad bride half-way from her own house to his, and announcing in the presence of witnesses that the wedding clothes which he proceeded to put on her with his own hands were only lent to the widow for the occasion.

### III.

#### FUNERAL CUSTOMS.

IN 1655 the Virginia Assembly, in order to check the waste of powder at drinking frolics, and to prevent false alarms, ordained that no person should "shoot guns at drinkeing (marriages and funeralls onely excepted)." And indeed the colonial funeral deserved to rank as a festive occasion—a time of much eating and a great deal of drinking. Whole pipes of Madeira with several hogsheads of beer were consumed at single funerals in New York, to say nothing of the food eaten and the tobacco smoked by the friends and neighbors who made a day of it, and now and then also a night of it, in honor of the departed. In Pennsylvania five hundred guests were sometimes served with punch and cake at a funeral; the refreshments were distributed not only in the house, but to guests standing all up and down the road. The cost of the wine at one funeral in Virginia came to more than four thousand pounds of tobacco. In more than

one colony, legislative interference was required to keep the friends of the deceased from eating and drinking his widow and orphans out of house and home. South Carolinians excelled in the sumptuousness of their funerals, as they did in all other forms of hospitality and social ostentation; a profusion of all kinds of liquors, tea, coffee, and other articles were distributed at their cheerful obsequies. In New England funeral festivities were more moderate in the matter of eating and drinking. Cake and cheese were distributed, and tables were sometimes spread in Massachusetts, and wine or beer was served as on other solemn occasions; but feasting at such times appears not to have been so general as in the middle and southern colonies, where funerals were sometimes occasions of disgraceful drunkenness and riot. A New Jersey governor provided in his will against the occurrence at his funeral of rudeness, "that may be occasioned By To Much Strong Lickquor"; and a Virginia clergyman took the bold course of wholly forbidding the distribution of liquors at his burial.

But meats and drinks, though costly, were not always the chief expense at a funeral. The "underbearers," who carried the coffin, walking with their heads and shoulders covered with the pall-cloth, were provided with plain gloves. This pall was hired for the occasion; its corners were upheld by persons of social dignity who were the pall-bearers, and who were provided with gloves of a costlier kind. Gloves were also given to the minister, and often to a great many of the friends. The present of a pair of gloves was an approved form of invitation to a funeral, though in some places invitation cards with wide black borders were used. Among the Dutch at Albany, one hears of a "special" invitation to a funeral being given by sending to the house of the person invited "a linen scarf, a pair of silk gloves, a bottle of old Madeira, and two funeral cakes." At one Massachusetts funeral seven hundred pairs of gloves were sent, at another a thousand, and three thousand at yet another. So many gloves were received by persons of wide social connections, that a considerable revenue was derived from the sale of them. Mourning rings were one of the heaviest charges at an upper-class funeral; they were sent to the minister and pall-bearers, and sometimes to a wide circle of friends. One Boston minister estimated the rings and gloves he received as worth fifteen pounds per annum. Two hundred rings were distributed at a funeral in Boston in 1738. Scarfs, often of silk, were given to the pall-bearers, ministers, and others, and they were worn for a considerable time after the

funeral as a badge of respect for the dead. Families sometimes dissipated a large portion of their estates in funeral pomp. As early as 1656 the Virginia Assembly began to struggle with this pernicious extravagance, and some of the other colonial legislatures, as well as voluntary associations of the people, sought at various times to abate funeral expenses; but the solemn pledge against the use of funeral scarfs and gloves embodied in the Articles of Association prescribed by the first Congress in 1774, shows how well the old customs had held their own against the reformers.

In New England the tolling of a "death-bell" as an announcement immediately after the decease of any person came in probably with the introduction of bells. The earliest New Englanders had no religious service of any sort at a funeral; they followed the corpse and filled the grave in silence, lest they should "confirm the popish error, . . . that prayer is to be used for the dead or over the dead." But eulogistic verses, or ingenious laudatory anagrams of the name of the deceased, were often pinned to the bier, and by degrees some towns deviated from the general practice by having suitable prayers at the house before the burial of the dead, or a short speech at the grave. Another custom, probably confined to New England, was that of presenting to friends at the funeral suitably serious books as memorials of the occasion. Funeral sermons there were, but these were not preached at the time of burial. In some of the southern colonies a clergyman's fee for a funeral sermon was fixed by law. In following the coffin to the grave, great formality was observed; some man of dignity "led" the chief mourner. If the cortège had far to go, and the chief mourner was a widow, she sometimes rode on horseback behind her escort. The funeral of the Philadelphia printer-poet, Aquilla Rose, in 1723, was on this wise:

"A worthy merchant did the widow lead,—  
And these both mounted on a stately steed.

Thus was he carried—like a king—in state,  
And what still adds a further lustre to 't,  
Some rode well mounted, others walked afoot."

At the funeral of a young child the bier was sometimes borne by girls clad in white, and wearing long white veils. Now and then, among people attached to the English Church, a funeral took place by torch-light, but night burials were never common in the colonies. There was an early custom of firing volleys at the grave of a person of great distinction or of high rank, and this even where the per-



son buried was a lady. A barrel and a half of powder was consumed in the endeavor to do proper honor to Winthrop, the chief founder of Massachusetts.

## IV.

## SPORTS OF THE WOODS AND WATERS.

THE abundant supply of game in the forest and of fish in the waters was the supreme good fortune of the pioneer and his chief bane. The poorest need rarely lack for fresh meat, but the fascination of the chase was destructive to habits of industry. Mechanics deserted their trades and many of the lower classes neglected to provide for their families, falling into a savage's hand-to-mouth way of depending on the dog, the gun, the trap, and the fishing-line for a living. The agriculture of the colonies was lowered in character from the perpetual temptation offered by well-stocked woods and virgin streams; in North Carolina the evil was so great that the woods became at length infested by hunters who led a half-savage life in defiance of law. Deer were most sought for, and many were the ways of making war on them. The settlers early learned a favorite Indian method of hunting them. A hunter inclosed himself in a deer-skin, so as to peer out of the breast of a mock stag at his game, and, thus disguised, was able to get almost into the midst of the unsuspecting herd. Sometimes a horse was trained to walk gently by his master's side, shielding the man from sight. As the woods were full of horses, the deer took no alarm until the rifle had brought down its victim. Trees were felled to tempt the deer to browse upon the tender twigs, while the hunter lay in wait behind the boughs. Night-hunting was then as now a common method; a negro with a flaring torch went before the sportsman, who killed the dazed animal while it was looking into the light; or the hunter floated up to his game in a canoe with a blazing fire in the middle of it. In the Carolinas and the up-country of Virginia, deer were run down with dogs by sportsmen on horseback; but along the coast the frequent bays and rivers rendered dogs and horses of no avail. The Virginians drove sharp stakes where the deer were accustomed to leap into a field of peas; on these stakes they would find the animals impaled in the morning. The great iron traps set for deer in New Jersey and Pennsylvania were found dangerous to men. A favorite way of capturing these creatures in Pennsylvania, and of ridding the land of bears and wolves at the same time, was to get up a

"drive." The name and the method of procedure resembled the "drift of the forest" in England, by which all the animals in waste or common ground were brought together and their ownership settled. In Pennsylvania a ring of men surrounded a great tract of country, and then in exact order, carefully regulated, drew inward toward a center, inclosing deer, bears, wolves, turkeys, and other game, shooting the animals as they made desperate efforts to escape. New England swamps were "beat up" for wolves in a similar way. The excitement of such a day of slaughter, increasing to the very last, may be easily imagined. A more common and destructive device was that of "fire-hunting." A band of men would set fire to the leaves around a circle of five miles or more; this fire, running inwards from all sides, drove the frightened deer and other game to the center, where they were easily slaughtered by the hunters outside the blazing circle. This mode of hunting was at length forbidden in several of the colonies, partly because it was dangerous to property, and partly because, as wild creatures grew scarce, it became desirable to preserve the game from extermination. The slaughter and waste of venison was excessive at the first coming of fire-arms. One planter's household in Maryland was said to have had eighty deer in ninety days, and dry bread was at length thought preferable to a meat of which everybody was tired.

The South Carolinians made the deer-hunt a prime social pastime. For this they gathered regularly at club-houses, from which they started the chase, running the deer with hounds; the sportsmen following with tremendous swiftness on horseback, regardless of underbrush and more dangerous obstacles. Little lads rode pell-mell with the rest, and boys of ten years could show trophies from deer they had killed. Foxes were also hunted by men on horseback, especially in Virginia and Maryland, where the traditions of English country gentlemen were preserved. But there was little that resembled the English sport; the American deer or fox hunter endured fatigues and discomforts, and exposed himself to perils, never dreamed of by an English sportsman of that time, whose worst dangers were ditches and hedge-rows, and whose stags were carted home alive to be chased another day. One of the many devices for taking foxes in New England was to bait them with a sledge-load of heads of the cod-fish, the hunter shooting them from behind a paled fence. One man sometimes killed ten in a night. Wolves were caught on mackerel hooks, bound together with thread, wrapped with wool and dipped in tallow. Other colonial

methods of capturing wolves were by pits lightly covered so as to let them fall in; by pens of logs slanting inward, open at the top and baited within; and by traps and spring-guns. Smaller "vermin," opossums, raccoons, and such like, were hunted then as now by small boys, negroes, and mongrel dogs. Squirrels were prized above most other sorts of game, and were also shot as pernicious consumers of the farmers' grains; matches were made between groups of men, and squirrel scalps were counted at night to decide which party had won. The wild turkey is the prince of all game birds. The colonists hunted it not chiefly for sport, but for its delicious meat; and for taking it they "had many pretty devices besides the gun," such as traps that would catch a whole flock at once. Fires built at night near their roosting-trees so bewildered the turkeys, that one might shoot at them more than once before they would take wing.

The flight of migrating pigeons at certain seasons, darkening the very sky with their multitude, is a phenomenon little known in this generation to people east of the Alleghany mountains; and inconceivable to one who has not seen it. But in colonial days such flocks were seen all along the coast. Cotton Mather, with characteristic fondness for the improbable, suggested to the Royal Society that these birds migrated to and fro between the earth and a satellite near at hand, but invisible. Their abundance at certain seasons was a great relief to the poor in the more settled regions. They were shot down with guns fired into the wide flocks without definite aim; they were taken in nets, they were beaten off their roosts at night by negroes and others with poles, and they were knocked down with sticks as they flew low over the house-tops in Philadelphia. In the Boston market they were sometimes sold at a rate as low as a cent a dozen. Waterfowl in their season were almost as abundant as the pigeons.

There were many other beasts and birds captured and killed by other devices. But these will serve to show what life in all but the most densely settled regions was,—a school, not of industry, but rather of happy-go-lucky vagabondage. It was also a rare school for soldiers. The rustic colonists were accustomed from boyhood to make war on the creatures of the forest by cunning, courage, and marksmanship. With hardship and woodcraft they were familiar from childhood. A traveler in the colonies about 1774 says: "As all the country people are brought up to the Use of Fire Arms from Meer Children, they in general handle a Musket more dextrously and with greater ease than almost

any other Set of People in the World." It was this training that made them more than a match for Indians, and superior to British veterans in fighting against the French in the woods. In the rebellion against the imperial power, it was their habitual endurance of the fatigues of the march and the privations of the camp, with their deadly marksmanship, that made them so formidable. These life-long hunters were never raw troops, and in a crisis like that which culminated at Bennington and Saratoga, the farm-houses poured out riflemen and soldiers ready-made by all the training of their lives. When beaten from towns and forts in the Carolinas, the soldiers became partisan rangers, living in the recesses of the familiar forests, and picking off an English officer with as little ruth as they felt in shooting a stag, and with much more exultation.

It would be tedious, if it were possible, to describe the various methods used by the colonists for taking fish. Beverley, about 1700, mentions "Trolls, Casting-Netts, Setting-Netts, Hand-fishing and Angling," as well as "Spil-yards," which last were long lines "staked out in the River, and hung with a great many Hooks on short strings, fasten'd to the main Line, about three or four Foot asunder." Seines were widely used, and seem to have been also known as sieves or "sives" in some places. Weirs were in use, and these were rather an improvement on Indian devices than an introduction of the English "hedges."

The New Englanders went in multitudes, as the Indians before them had been wont to do, to the falls of the rivers to intercept the ascending shad and salmon. The vast crowds of men gathered at the fishing season made a sort of merry-meeting, and there was much drunkenness and reveling. From these assemblages men went away with their horses laden with fish. Shad were too plentiful; incredible stories are told of three thousand taken at a haul; they sold for from one to two cents apiece of our present money, and were held so cheap that the salmon were sometimes picked out of a net and the shad rejected. Well-to-do people only ate shad on the sly, lest they should be suspected of not having a good supply of pork.

The colonists may have brought the art of spearing fish "with a harping iron or gigg" from the mother country, where in some places trout were thus taken by torchlight, but it is more likely that in this they took lessons from the expert savages. The Virginians and Marylanders had a method all their own: riding their horses into the water on the shoal beaches of their rivers, they speared fish torch in hand, much as a Centaur might have done. Hardly

less picturesque were the Connecticut River fishermen when they waded into the water holding a flaring torch of birch-bark, while they caught lampreys by seizing them in their mittened hand.

Notwithstanding all the wholesale ways of fishing which were practiced without remorse and with small hinderance from the laws, one catches now and then a glimpse of a quiet angler of the true Izaak Walton breed. Such was the Virginia historian Beverley, who gently intimates rather than boasts of his success in saying: "I have set in the shade at the Heads of the Rivers Angling, and spent as much time in taking the Fish off the Hook as in waiting for their taking it." In the same restful tone the colonial historian of New York digresses to let us know that the long, lazy summer voyage by sloop from New York to Albany was "exceedingly diverting to such as are fond of angling."

## V.

## THE TURF AND OTHER OUTDOOR AMUSEMENTS.

AMERICAN hunting and fishing took on American forms; but horse-racing, a sport at that time peculiar to Englishmen, followed in the main the fashions of the English turf. The Virginians probably had something like a horse-race as soon as there were horses in the plantation. The races run in the colonies were of two sorts. The first was a regular formal race, over a set course, for a silver bowl, tray, tankard, or other piece of plate. Such great events, whose results convulsed the good society of the little provinces, had their chief capitals at the race-courses in the vicinity of New York, Annapolis, Williamsburg, and Charleston. There were other courses, notably one at Philadelphia after 1760, but these were the chief. To each of these came at stated seasons all the gay world of the neighborhood in apery of the English aristocracy, enjoying themselves like children in imitating their betters, and rejoicing in the patriotic belief that they were planting the institutions of Old England on a new continent. And indeed every form of gayety, revelry, pomp, and pleasure-getting known to English people flourished in the American racing seasons, and in the latest years of the colonies the races on this side the ocean came to rival those of England in the speed of the horses, the character of the attendance, and the extravagance of the betting. The circular courses were a mile in length, and were traversed four times in each heat. Where two four-mile heats out of three were needed to

win a race, endurance was a prime requisite in a horse. The horses of Virginia, the best in the colonies, achieved a four-mile heat "in eight or nine minutes"; the imported horse Flimnap ran the first four-mile heat of his race with Little David at Charleston, in 1773, in eight minutes and seventeen seconds. Successful horses became heroes of popular admiration, and were followed by applauding crowds and discussed in drawing-rooms by the ladies, who were ardent partisans in the contests of the turf. Roger, a famous South Carolina horse, was retired from the course by a formal announcement in the "Gazette," accompanied by a poetic eulogy of his virtues and achievements.

On the prosperity of these great races the well-being of fashionable society seemed somehow to depend, and to attend them was a kind of duty for every man of the world and every lady of social pretensions. But there were innumerable less formal races, which were run merely for the sport to be gotten out of them. In North Carolina and the up-country of Virginia quarter-races were much esteemed, and a breed of horses was cherished with no remarkable staying qualities, but capable of running a quarter of a mile at a tremendous speed. "Quarter-courses" usually consisted of two parallel paths, and were run by two horses at a time; as each horse was required to keep to his own track, and the race was short, there was little skill in the riding; it was merely a question of initial velocity. But these thundering dashes, where all was staked on a few seconds of exalted effort, delighted the common people, who traveled long miles to witness them, and to see the chance excitement of "fist-fights," and other accidents, that were sure to fall out in an excited crowd. The infatuated Marylanders took advantage of every great assemblage of people, even of Quaker yearly meetings, to test the speed of their horses. But the horse-race, a sport so closely bound to English traditions, began to suffer a change when practiced on quarter-courses, at county courts, at fairs, by cross-road taverns, and at Quaker yearly meetings. Those peculiarly American forms of the race, the trotting-match and the pacing-match, had come into being, if not into vogue, long before the expiration of the colonial period.

Another peculiarly English sport, of which some of the colonists were inordinately fond, was the cock-fight, which found its chief home in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, where men would travel fifty miles to see a main, and where they brought choice gamecocks from England. The delight taken in this inhuman sport by those of the highest social standing and the best education, is only

one of a thousand marks of the lack of compassion in the man of that time, who did not like to kill a wolf outright, but kept him in order to "have some sport with his dogs" in baiting him to death, or dragged him alive, tied to a horse's tail. Says Wood, in "New England's Prospect," "No ducking ponds can afford more delight than a lame cormorant and two or three lusty dogges." This love of fierce and cruel sport was in the fiber, and had the sanction of ancient usage and aristocratic example. Bears and bulls were baited in England, and an important vote in Parliament was lost in 1699 by the absence of members at the baiting of a tiger by dogs. Even horses were baited to death by dogs in England; this cruelty, shown in drawings of the fourteenth century, was relished as late as 1667. Englishmen on both sides of the sea cultivated some of the tastes of beasts of prey.

Holy days, parish wakes, and other such outlets for the animal spirits of the populace, having been omitted or suppressed in New England, the militia training became a sort of substitute. Even this was sometimes sanctified by prayer, and by psalm-singing at such length as once provoked remonstrance from the rank and file; but it was also cheered by "a noble dinner," for the Puritans were by no means poor livers. In 1675 we find many Boston gentlemen and gentlewomen dining in tents on the common, at a training; there were also "great firings" during the day, so that it made quite a good old English frolic. Now and then the irksomeness of military drill and manœuvre was turned into play by a sham-fight—one party rigging themselves up like Indians, to be ignominiously defeated at the close of a battle of blank cartridges. Training-day prevailed everywhere except in Quaker latitudes, and it was more a time of merry-making than of any efficient military drill. Byrd tells of the militia of a county in southern Virginia "exercising in a pasture," and says there were "women enough in attendance to form a more invincible corps."

There were usually other amusements than evolutions and the manual of arms at a militia muster in the country. Running, leaping, wrestling, cudgel, stool-ball, nine-pins, quoits, fencing, and back-sword or single-stick were practiced. But the favorite competition on training-days was in shooting at a mark for a silk handkerchief or other prize, or a wager. In New England in the seventeenth century this was directly connected with the militia training; for they shot in cold blood at what appears to have been an image or outline of a man, and there were grave debates as to who had won the prize, the one who had shot the

target in the neck or he who lodged a fatal ball in the bowels.

Target-shooting was by no means confined to days of training. In a country where marksmanship was a means of livelihood and of defense from ever-impending danger, it became the kind of skill most highly valued, and the manliest sort of distinction. So unerring was the aim of Virginia up-countrymen, that one of them would volunteer to hold a board nine inches square in his fingers or between his knees, while a comrade a hundred paces off shot through it. A British officer, prisoner during the revolution, was pounced upon by a wildcat, and would have been killed had not his companion in the hunt, a Virginia rifleman, shot the brute without hurting the officer. In New York the eve of Christmas and the eve of New Year's Day were always celebrated by shooting at turkeys. In South Carolina marksmanship was the supreme accomplishment; target-shooting took the place of the auction and the raffle. A beef was often distributed by shooting for it at a target no larger than a silver dollar. The best shot got the best cut, and so on down; but those whose shots failed of coming near to the center were quite ruled out.

The fairs held in some of the middle and southern colonies took old English forms; the very ancient court of pipowder, for the trial of disputes and offenses arising at the fair, was established in some of them. People attending the fairs were usually exempted from arrest for offenses or debts, and all kinds of old English sports were used to attract a crowd. A beaver hat worth eight pounds and a pair of boots were prizes in a foot-race at a fair in South Carolina. A live goose was often hung head downward; whoever, riding at full speed, plucked the well-greased head from the goose, was declared victor and carried off the fowl. A greased pig was given to him who could catch it and hold it by the tail, and the ludicrous efforts of one and another to do this caused great hilarity. A laced hat was hung on top of a greased pole, to be the property of any one who could climb up and take it. Then there were sack-races and other forms of rude fun suited to an age of great animal spirits and little refinement. The excitement of the rabble was increased whenever a strapping young woman entered the foot-race or engaged in a wrestling match. To all these delights bull-baiting was sometimes added. Traveling shows of various sorts increased the attractiveness of the fair. The advertisement of a fair on Long Island in 1728 closes with this climax: "It is expected that the Lyon will be there to be seen."

A catalogue of the outdoor sports in that out-

door age would be tedious. There was no end of noise; guns were fired at weddings and at funerals, at "merry-meetings" or drinking bouts, on training-days, and, except in New England, at Christmas and New Year's, as well as on every special occasion of rejoicing besides. Guns often welcomed a distinguished person on arrival, and the din of guns was the last public adieu. People of all ranks loved active sports. Golf and foot-ball obstructed the streets of some of the towns. By a sort of natural selection, the sports now and then took their cue from the laborious occupations of the people. The whalers on Nantucket strove to excel in an ancient English sport called "pitching the bar," while the Maine and New Hampshire lumbermen liked above all things to match, yoke against yoke, their great yellow oxen in drawing loads as a test of strength. There were among the farming people sharp competitions in reaping with the sickle, boisterous corn-shuckings, wood-choppings, and wood-hauling matches.

In all those amusements that require ice and snow, such as sleighing, coasting, and skating, the Dutch were foremost, having brought their liking for such sports from the fatherland. The wide descent of State street in Albany was long a famous resort of young people with sleds, and it was no doubt the original home of the coasting frolic in America. The maze of ponds, marshes, and watered meadows on Manhattan Island made a noble skating-park; marketmen even brought back-loads of provisions into New York on skates. But skating, which was introduced from Holland to England by Charles II., was known in Boston before 1700. At the close of the colonial time Philadelphians prided themselves on their graceful skating and their famous swimming.

Whichever way we turn, we are impressed with the love which the colonists of every grade had for the out-of-doors. Houses chafed them. New York and Philadelphia followed if they did not go ahead of London in the proportionate number of their suburban "gardens" or places of pleasure resort. Some of these commanded delightful prospects of the rivers and bays, and "entertained gentlemen and ladies in the genteelst manner." To the tea-garden came the town-people, sometimes to eat a breakfast in the dewy coolness of the morning, or to take a lunch on butter, crackers, and cheese, with dried beef, ham, pickled salmon, and bread, or to eat hot rolls with coffee, or, better still, "soft waffles with tea," in the freshness of a summer twilight. Certain gardens were noted for their mead; the "Tea-water Pump Garden" in New York was famous not so much for its tea or its water

as for its punch. There were also gardens of a more public sort which, following the example of the Vauxhall and Ranelagh of London, entertained their guests with concerts, "weather permitting."

Suburban taverns were much resorted to. The New Yorkers especially affected fish-dinners at an inn perched on Brooklyn Heights; they were also fond of driving in chaises to a bi-weekly turtle-feast at a retreat on the shores of East River, taking pains to come back over what was known as the Kissing Bridge, "where," as a traveler of the time tells us, "it is part of the etiquette to salute the lady who has put herself under your protection." To eat and drink with zest and to be ardently gallant to the ladies were two cardinal traits of gentlemanliness.

Philadelphians amused themselves in much the same way. They had fishing-clubs and club-houses at convenient places on the rivers; they rejoiced in what were playfully termed "feeding parties"; they incessantly drove into the country in wagons, as though the little city of the time were already too strait for them. Albany people went on all-day picnics, or alighted in a surprise-party at some settler's cabin "in the bush," where feasting and dancing filled the day. Norfolk, though but inconsiderable as a city, had its "Old Pleasure House" by the seaside; and everywhere town-people delighted in suburban excursions. The country people were, perhaps, equally fond of moving about. The Long Islanders mounted their horses,—each horse carrying its couple, a man in the saddle and a woman on the croup,—and, taking with them wine, and cream, and sugar, feasted like gypsies on the wild berries which grew in such plenty as to dye the fields red. Joyous, excursion-loving, simple-minded were the men and women of that time; fond above all things of society, of the fresh air, of excitement, and of eating and drinking. The barbecue had great attractions for the people of the middle and southern colonies; indeed, the ox or pig, roasted whole, even had a considerable political influence in some of the provinces.

## VI.

## HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS.

ONE of the curious effects of the migration of English to America was the weakening of the hold of the old English festivals. All the church days were sedulously disregarded in New England, and elsewhere they suffered some decay. The unfamiliar aspect of the seasons may have had something to do with

this; the decline of the religious spirit, and the exigencies of the first years in a new country, had no doubt even more influence. In 1719 the Virginia clergy tell the Bishop of London that their parishioners observe "no Holy days except those of Christmas day and Good Friday, being unwilling to loose their dayly labour." There was probably a revival of interest in the church festivals in the later years of colonial dependence, when English ways were more in fashion with the rich. Outside of New England Christmas was always observed, but with something less than the old English fervor, and with a good deal less than the old English disorder. On eastern Long Island, which was as distinctly Puritan as Connecticut, the Yule log continued to be burned at Christmas until the open fire-place disappeared; and the custom of hanging up the children's stockings on Christmas eve, and filling them with cakes made in images of little boys, continued therein spite of Puritan prejudices against all church days. In New England, the English custom of counting March the first month was in use until the change from old to new style; but the Puritans probably had a preference for the continental mode of counting. As early as 1697 a "levet" was sounded under Judge Sewall's window on the morning of the 1st of January; and on January 1st, 1700, old style, which he seems to have regarded as the beginning of 1701, he caused to be recited by the town bell-man a poem of his own on the opening of the eighteenth century.

New Year's Day was celebrated among the New York Dutch by the calls of the gentlemen on their lady friends; it is perhaps the only distinctly Dutch custom that afterward came into widespread use in the United States. New Year's Day, and the church festivals kept alike by the Dutch and the English, brought an intermission of labor to the New York slaves, who gathered in throngs to devote themselves to wild frolics. The Brooklyn fields were crowded with them on New Year's Day, at Easter, at Whitsuntide, or "Pinxter," as the Dutch called it, and on "San Claus Day"—the feast of St. Nicholas.

It was complained in 1724 that the Virginians paid little attention to the two anniversaries of the gunpowder treason—the 5th of November and the 30th of January. But the former of these was celebrated in some of the northern colonies by fire-works, by burning an effigy of Guy Fawkes, or by carrying about the village two hideous pumpkin faces, supposed to represent the Pope and the devil, and then consigning them to a bonfire. The pale shadow of this old celebration reaches to our time; boys in some New England coast

towns still light their bonfires on the 5th of November, though quite unable to tell what for. In the region about New York forgetfulness has gone further; stacks of barrels are burned, not on the 5th, but on the evening of the November election day, by lads both Catholic and Protestant, none of whom have any interest in the gunpowder plot, or any suspicion that they are perpetuating in disguise a custom handed down to them from ancestors loyal to the throne and Parliament of England.

Like most things that come to stay, the autumn thanksgiving feast of New England grew so gradually that its development is not easily traced. Days occasionally set apart for thanksgiving were known in Europe before the Reformation, and were in frequent use among Protestants afterward. The early New Englanders appointed fasts and thanksgivings on proper occasions without reference to the season. Some of the first thanksgivings were for harvests, for the safe arrival of ships with provisions, and for the success of the arms of the Protestants in Germany. There were also fast days and thanksgiving days kept by single churches, and private fasts and private thanksgivings set apart by individuals and observed in retirement. Public thanksgiving for the harvest, and for the other blessings of a year that was near its end, occurred frequently in the autumn and easily became customary. Christmas and other church festivals had been severely put down; the very names of the months were at first changed to numeral designations, "not out of any pevish humour of singularity, . . . but of purpose to prevent the Heathenish and Popish observation of Dayes, Moneths and Yeares, that they may be forgotten among the people of the Lord." But custom is stronger than precept, and when the Thanksgiving holiday became annual, it borrowed many of the best and most essential features of the old English Christmas. It was a day of family reunion on which the Puritans ate turkey and pumpkin pies instead of boars' heads and plum-pudding. Thanksgiving Day was long in settling down to its present fixity of season; it is even on record that one prudent town took the liberty of postponing its celebration of the day for a week in order to get molasses with which to sweeten the pumpkin pies.

## VII.

### SOCIAL LIFE WITHIN DOORS.

CLUBS were more affected by gentlemen in colonial times than they are now, but the club of that day was not a rich corporation possessing

a club-house with luxurious up-fittings, a restaurant and a library, parlors, billiard rooms, and art galleries. It was simply a company of gentlemen meeting on a given evening of each week at a tavern. Some clubs could not get enough of the tavern by meeting weekly. "The Governor's Club" of Philadelphia, presumably made up of men of the highest fashion, were accustomed in 1744 to assemble every night at a tavern, "where they pass away a few hours in the Pleasure of Conversation and a Cheerful Glass."

This club appears to have had a great personage for its center and nucleus, but a common basis of association in the colonial clubs was origin, and this naturally enough, for the immigrants of various nationalities had not yet had time to assimilate. New York had its Irish club, its French club, and so on. Each of these met weekly at the tavern at six in the evening. Even general society was divided into groups by the patriotic attachments and clannish feelings of the immigrants and their children. In a center of fashion like Annapolis or Philadelphia, for example, the Scots' Society gave a ball, or held "an assembly" in the language of the time, on St. Andrew's Day; while the "English Society," as it was called, had its festivals on the King's birthday, and on St. George's; the Welsh "Society of Ancient Britons" danced to St. David with leeks in their hats, and the Irish to St. Patrick of blessed memory. The young gentlemen of American nativity found themselves without a patron saint or a holiday; but with American notions of congruity, they canonized, by their own authority, King



GOLD SNUFF-BOX OF RALPH IZARD, ESQ., NOW IN POSSESSION OF DR. G. E. MANIGAULT OF CHARLESTON.

Tammany, a Delaware chief long dead, and celebrated his feast on the old English May-day, which they ushered in with bell-rings, as though it were a veritable saint's day. These lively native Americans danced at their assemblies with bucks' tails dangling from their hats; some of them were accustomed to enter the ball-room painted and dressed like savages, and to entertain the ladies and gentlemen with the spectacle of an Indian dance and the music of a whooping war-song.

The savages themselves were not more fond of dancing than the colonists who came after them. Dancing-schools were forbidden in New England by the authorities, but dancing could not be repressed in an age in which the range of conversation was necessarily narrow, and the appetite for physical activity and excitement almost insatiable. From the most eastern forest settlements of Maine to the southern frontier of Georgia, people in town, village, and country were everywhere indefatigably fond of dancing. Fiddlers were sure of employment; but failing a fiddler, the dance might go on without him, some one volunteering to



TOP OF THE IZARD SNUFF-BOX, WITH PORTRAIT IN ENAMEL OF MRS. IZARD (MISS DELANCEY OF NEW YORK).  
SIZE OF THE ORIGINAL.



SILVERWARE FROM THE BULL PRINGLE MANSION, CHARLESTON, S. C.

guide the dancing by humming the tunes. In less fashionable companies, when music could not be had to dance by, such ancient, jolly, and unreserved plays as rimming-the-thimble, cut-and-tailor, grinding-the-bottle, dropping-the-glove, brother-I-am-bobbed, threading-the-needle, wooing-a-widow, and so on, were substituted.

In centers of fashion, like Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Annapolis, Williamsburg, and Charleston, there were regular assemblies where one might meet "handsome, well-dressed, compleat gentlemen," and "a brilliant appearance of lovely well-dressed women," according to the testimony of eye-witnesses. The richness of the costumes at these balls was set off by the stateliness of the ceremonies. The account-book of the Philadelphia Assembly of 1748 has been preserved; we can see there how wine was provided by the hog's-head; tea and coffee two pounds at a time. Card-tables were set out for those who preferred gaming to dancing, and the playing of ladies and gentlemen, often for high stakes, added to the excitement of the evening. Early in the eighteenth century Virginia families remote from the capital held regular assemblies in the several county court-houses. But dancing did not wait upon formal assemblies or invited parties; night after night, week in and week out, the young people sojourning in a Virginia planter's house could dance with unflagging enjoyment. Among New Englanders, in the later colonial times, the

launching of a ship, the raising of a house, the assembling of a county court, and the ordination of a minister were good occasions for dancing, as were many other public and private festivities. Winter parties gathered in sleighs and drove merrily to some neighboring village, where they at once took possession of the inn and spent the evening in vigorous dancing. Not even in old age did the New Englanders quite give up the pleasures of the dance, if we may believe a careful Italian traveler who knew them just after the close of the Revolution; and the South Carolinians held their places in the ball-room to almost as late a period.

Fashionable assemblies and parties in the little provincial capitals began their evenings with the graceful and formal minuet. For this minuet a gentleman sometimes craved the honor of a lady's hand by a note written a week in advance of the time. After the minuet came the country dances, but less fashionable people loved livelier movement. The Virginians were famous for their animated jigs; Pennsylvanians and the Scotch-Irish everywhere were infatuated with the "hip-sesaw." But whatever the dance or the assembly, the lady appears to have been assigned for the entire evening to one partner, with whom she did the greater part of her dancing.

Gaming was a vice almost universal. Young men often lost large estates in a short time by reckless betting at cards and billiards, and the lower orders followed them afar off by wasting time and money at truck and shuffle-board. Raffles were common, and lotteries were an approved resort for raising money to build bridges or churches and to accomplish other laudable things. The ladies of New York were considered virtuous above many others of their sex because of the moderation of their gambling.

## VIII.

## WOMEN IN SOCIETY.

IN such a society as this we are examining, women were chiefly esteemed for their good health, sprightliness, beauty, and housewifery.



As in all new countries, women were scarce, and the demand exceeded the supply. Few remained unmarried; and she was usually an irretrievable old maid who passed twenty without a husband. The education of girls was of the slightest; the female mind was thought quite unsuited to bear more than the rudiments of reading and writing. But there were various "fine works," such as the making of needlework cornucopias, the painful elaboration of shell-work, and the making of flowers from silk cuttings, that were taught to girls of wealth as a mark of upper-class breeding. Battledore was thought very suitable to young ladies of leisure. Some were able to accompany their own singing upon the guitar; the virginal, the spinet, and the harpsichord—quaint ancestors of our piano—were known to some of the most musical among people of wealth. Just before the beginning of the Revolution there began to be found in a very few houses an instrument hardly less primitive than these, which is set down in some of the diaries of the day as a "forte-pianer."

If some of our foremothers were intelligent and thoughtful, it was rather by natural gift than from instruction. Men of cultivation seem to have found it a little irksome to get down to the level of topics deemed sufficiently simple for the understanding of women. "Conversation with ladies," says William Byrd, "is like whipped syllabub, very pretty, but nothing in it." The most accomplished gentlemen of that time thought it necessary to treat their lady friends to flattery so gross that it would not be bearable now. Byrd, great lord that he was, repaid his lady friends for courteous and hospitable entertainment at their houses by kissing them at his departure, and excused himself for leaving one gentleman's house by assuring the lady that her beauty would spoil his devotions if he remained.

## IX.

## THE THEATER.

Of the drama proper we have no distinct record until near the middle of the eighteenth century. Shows there were in plenty; and so show-hungry were the people that it took little to make an exhibition. "The Lyon, the king of Beasts," was carried from place to

place in 1728, on a cart drawn by four oxen, with as much noise as though he had been a whole menagerie. In 1732 the cub of a polar bear was brought to Boston by a whaler, and put on exhibition. His arrival was heralded in the gazettes of the various colonies. A lonesome camel went the rounds in 1740. There were also exhibitions of legerdemain; there were various performances on the slack and tight rope by men and women and little



SILVERWARE OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD, BELONGING TO THE FAMILY OF THE LATE SENATOR BARNWELL OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

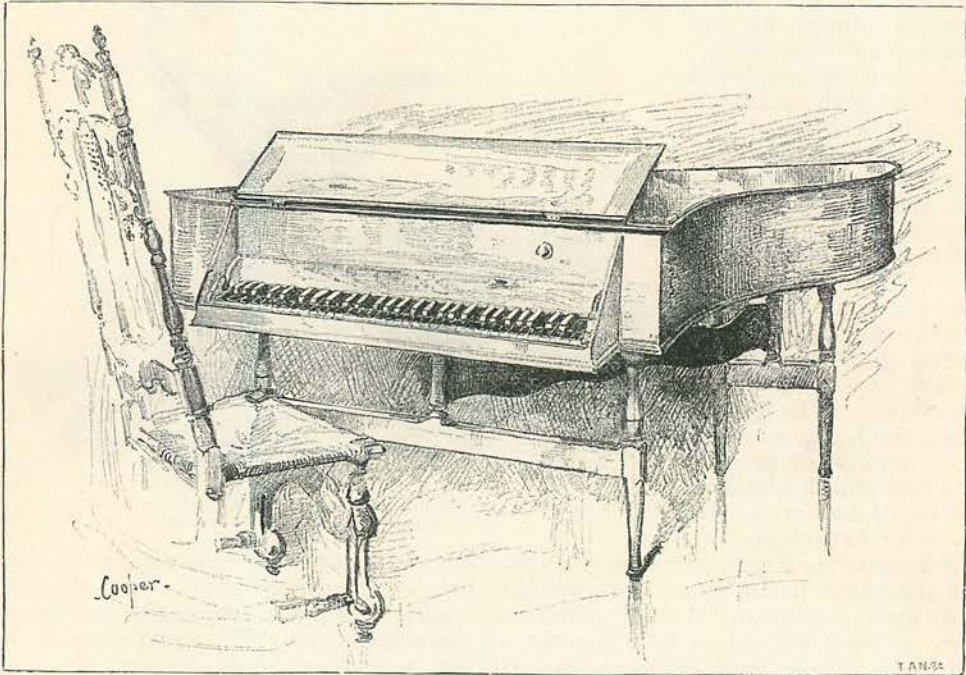
boys, with fetters on their feet, with wheelbarrows ahead of them, and so on; there was a woman that spun around like an animated top, while eight swords were pointed at her eyes, mouth, and heart. A solar microscope, a camera obscura, ingenious shell-work, "eight prospects of London," a musical clock, and puppets representing Joseph's dream, were shown at various times, to say nothing of such monstrosities as the remarkable cat with "one head, eight legs, and two tails."

As early as 1724 there was a variety show in a booth on Society Hill in Philadelphia, to which there were sold tickets for the stage, pit, and gallery. Corams and jigs to be danced on the rope, and other feats, were prominently advertised, and the sixth item on the programme reads: "You are entertained with the comical humor of your old friend Pickle Herring." This show was evidently a reproduction of one of the half-acrobatic, half-dramatic performances in the booths at the great London fairs, and the "comical humor" of "Pickle Herring" was no doubt one of those little plays called "drolls." Such shows were probably well known, since there was a "play-house" in New York in 1733, and a "theatre" at Charleston in 1735, many years before

the earliest mention we have of the production of any regular drama in the colonies. But it is not impossible that there were vagabond players in the English settlements from an early period. Mention is made of "a play" at Williamsburg on the King's birthday in 1718.

The origin of the first group of actors of whose performance any record has yet been discovered is as obscure as though the players had come out of the ground. From a private

out of Boston for the rest of the colonial period. Murray and Kean's company in New York were a sorry lot; the actors were mostly taken from other callings; one of the actresses was a "redemptioner," or indentured servant, the proceeds of whose benefit were appropriated to buy her freedom. The members of the company appear to have left debts and a bad reputation behind. For such a troupe a frequent change of air is desirable.



SPINET IN THE ROOMS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

diary we hear of them performing "Addison's Cato," in Philadelphia, in 1749, to the great disgust of the Quakers and those in authority, who took measures in the following January to prevent their continuing a course calculated to "draw money from inconsiderate people." It was probably this hostile action which sent "Murray & Kean," the managers of this venture, to New York, where they set up in a wooden building in Nassau street, in which, in 1750, they essayed, among other things, "The Historical Tragedy of King Richard III., wrote originally by Shakspeare, and alter'd by Colley Cibber, Esq." About the same time "two young Englishmen," probably the same adventurers, stirred up a lively hornet's-nest by producing "Otway's Orphan," with the help of amateurs, in a Boston coffee-house. Prompt and severe legislation put down this attempt of stage-players to gain an entrance to New England, and kept the drama

In this same year "The New York Company," as it styled itself, played in Williamsburg, Virginia, and its members were just opening a new brick theater at Annapolis in 1752, when the arrival from England of what was doubtless the first well-organized company of players in the colonies seems to have dissipated this makeshift troupe.

In 1752, when the English theater, led by Garrick, was in the most brilliant period of its history, William Hallam, of the Goodman's Fields theater, sent to America his brother, Lewis Hallam, at the head of a company of actors, twelve in all, who were to open their colonial career at Williamsburg. The Hallams probably chose the capital of Virginia because the inhabitants of that colony were known to be rich, leisurely, and society-loving people, with enough of refinement to enjoy plays, and with few religious scruples against anything that tended to make life pleasant to the upper



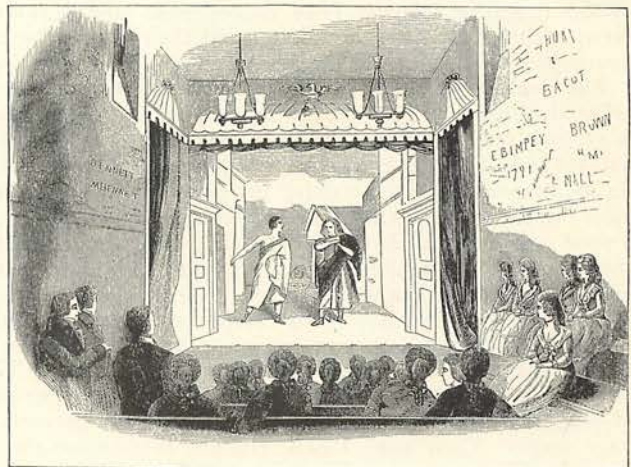
THE FIRST MRS. LEWIS HALLAM, AFTERWARD MRS. DOUGLASS, AS DARAXA IN "EDWARD AND ELENORA." (FROM A PRINT IN THE COLLECTION OF THOMAS J. MCKEE, ESQ.)

must have proved a disappointment to them. There were not more than a thousand people, white and black, in the village. The buildings, except the capitol, the college, and the so-called "palace" of the governor, were insignificant, and there were only about a dozen "gentlemen's" families resident in the place. In the outskirts of the town a warehouse was fitted up for a theater. The woods were all about it, and the actors could shoot squirrels from the windows. When the time arrived for the opening of the theater, the company were much disheartened. It seemed during the long still hours of the day that they had come on a fool's errand to act dramas in the woods. But as evening drew on, the whole scene changed like a work of magic. The roads leading into Williamsburg were thronged with out-of-date vehicles of every sort, driven by negroes and filled with gayly dressed ladies, whose gallants rode on horseback alongside. The treasury was replenished, the theater was crowded, and Shakspeare was acted on the continent probably for the first time by a trained and competent company. The "Merchant of Venice" and Garrick's farce of "Lethe" were played; and at the close the actors found themselves surrounded by groups of planters congratulating them, and after the Virginia fashion offering them the hospitality of their houses.

When the "season" at Williamsburg was over, the company got "a character" from the Governor of Virginia, and proceeded to play in the new brick theater in the gay and luxurious little capital of Maryland. From Annapolis a tour was

classes. Long before this period, and long afterward, the reading aloud of plays, romances, and operas was a pastime in Virginia country houses on rainy days, Sunday afternoons, and when no fiddler could be had in the evening.

Twenty-four plays had been selected and cast before Lewis Hallam and his company left London on the "Charming Sally," no doubt a tobacco-ship returning light for a cargo. On her unsteady deck, day after day, during the long voyage, the actors diligently rehearsed the plays with which they proposed to cheer the hearts of people in the New World. Williamsburg



INTERIOR OF JOHN STREET THEATER, BUILT IN 1767. (FROM A PRINT OF 1791 IN THE COLLECTION OF DR. THOMAS ADDIS EMMET.)

made to other places among the drama-loving Marylanders, and in 1753, a year after their arrival in Virginia, Hallam's company reached New York. So far the actors had found their career in the colonies open and their success easy. But New England, except Rhode Island, was double-barred against them, and to gain admittance to Philadelphia required strenuous importunity and careful diplomacy. From this time forward to the Revolution, under the



PORTRAIT OF MRS. MORRIS, OF THE "AMERICAN COMPANY." (FROM A RARE PRINT IN THE COLLECTION OF THOMAS J. MCKEE, ESQ.)

management of the senior Lewis Hallam, and then of Douglass, Mrs. Hallam's second husband, the company held exclusive possession of the American stage. They ranged from Newport to Charleston, and diversified their journeys by excursions to the West Indies.

The theaters built by this company in the colonial cities were, for the most part, little more than inclosed sheds, and were generally painted red. The scenery was very indifferent. At the opening in Williamsburg in 1752, the local music-master, with a harpsichord, furnished the music. By the time they arrived in New York, the next year, a violinist had been imported, who was also a dancer; orchestra and ballet were thus comprised in one man. Of the earliest actors we know little, except that the first Lewis Hallam was an excellent low comedian, and his wife a woman of beauty and an actress of more than ordinary merit. Their son, Lewis Hallam the second, who on the opening night at Williamsburg made his *début* as a lad of twelve

by breaking down in a part that gave him but one line to speak, early became, and long remained, the leading actor on this side of the sea. He was "a veritable Garrick" on the American stage, though he had but a tolerant reception at Covent Garden. His articulation was not so good as his acting; he was accused of mouthing and ranting, but the critic who lays this charge concedes that he was "thorough master of all the tricks of his trade." His versatility was considerable: Josiah Quincy's sentence, "Hallam has merit in every character he acts," is sustained by the general tradition. As Mungo in "The Padlock," he is thought to have been the first to portray negro character from observation. The American company, as it was constituted before the Revolution, succeeded better in comedy than tragedy, and its members were accounted by an intelligent Englishman "equal to the best actors in the provincial English theatres" of the time.

The seats were classified into boxes, pit, and gallery. Some of the boxes were placed in such proximity to the stage as to be virtually a part of it. The boxes could only be entered from the stage, and seats were sometimes sold on the stage itself. Gentlemen made free to go behind the scenes, and to loiter in full view on the stage, showing their gallantry by disturbing attentions to the actresses. Managers were ever publishing notices that no one would be admitted behind the scenes, and were ever allowing their rule to be broken by those whose position in society entitled them to do lawless things without rebuke. Smoking was allowed in the theater, and liquors were served to people in the pit.

Play-bills were distributed to places of business and to residences on the day before the performance. Seats were reserved for ladies by sending negro slaves as early as three or four o'clock in the afternoon to occupy them until their mistresses arrived; in 1762 a system of reserving seats in the boxes was introduced. When an actor received a benefit, he offered tickets at his lodgings, that he might have the opportunity of receiving personally the favors of friends and admirers; the beneficiary actor or actress was even expected to show respect for leading ladies and gentlemen by waiting on them at their houses to crave their patronage. Plays began at six o'clock, and gentlemen were entreated to come early, as "it would be a great inconvenience" to these gentlemen "to be kept out late." In the early years of this century, and no doubt before the Revolution, Shakspeare's and other plays were ruthlessly cut down in New York theaters, in order not to break over this habit

of keeping early hours, the only virtuous practice that was universally prevalent in that age.

In all communities where Puritanism or Quakerism was strong, the opposition to the theater was very violent. To soften this hostility and maintain the liberty of playing, the actors gave benefits to many objects — to the poor of various cities, to a charity school, to buy an organ for a college chapel, to assist in building a hospital in New York, and to the Pennsylvania Hospital, the managers of which institution were roundly abused for accepting money from such a source. The actors pleaded their own cause in various prologues; they took a peculiar "benefit of clergy" once by reciting a prologue written for them by a clergyman, and again by acting a play written by a Scotch divine. On the return of the company to New York from the West Indies, in 1758, the opposition broke out in that city, which had been their northern stronghold, and it was only after a severe struggle that the manager succeeded in getting permission to play. Religious feeling had been wrought to a high tension in the middle of the eighteenth century by the labors of Whitefield, Edwards, Tennent, and other famous revivalists. Much of the opposition had its source in a puritanic aversion to amusements, but it was greatly reënforced by the licentious freedom of some of the pieces relished by the play-goers of that time, a freedom that would be intolerable in any decorous place of amusement to-day. Nor did the loud dressing and irregular lives of some of the players help the standing of the drama with serious people who judged by other than artistic standards.

The managers adopted many ingenious devices for avoiding the legal impediments thrown in their way in several places. One ruse was to advertise a play, as Douglass did in Newport, as "a series of moral dialogues in five parts," giving a syllabus of the good instruction to be got out of "Othello," for example. Another device was to announce the opening of a "Histrionic Academy."

The southern colonists were exceedingly fond of the theater, and of all kindred gayeties. Virginians of the highest standing, not content with seeing plays at the theater, and reading them for home amusement, organized amateur companies of their own. In South Carolina it was a sort of article of faith with the upper classes that town life should atone for the irksomeness of time spent "in the swamps." They not only welcomed the American company when it came, but they conducted a series of fashionable concerts, paying in 1773 a salary of fifty guineas the season to a French-horn player, and ten times as much for a first violinist.

The American theater had after a while to



LEWIS HALLAM THE SECOND.  
(FROM A MINIATURE, BY PERMISSION OF MR. EDWIN BOOTH.)

contend with a new and unlooked-for enemy. The movement in the colonies against the encroachments of the British Parliament involved an underlying movement toward democratic equality. Nearly all modern democratic movements, especially those of the eighteenth century, have been characterized by what may be called a political Puritanism—an overflow of the reforming spirit. It was this which made some of the French revolutionists so austere in matters of dress and food. In America the outburst against the stamp-act in 1765 brought the destruction, by a New York mob, of a theater building. This curious logic of feeling was not confined to the vulgar. The patriot Josiah Quincy, though capable of enjoying and admiring Hallam's acting, yet declares that he would oppose the introduction of the theater in any State of which he was a citizen. When at length the revolutionary storm broke, the theater was one of the first things to go down. The Articles of Association, by which the Continental Congress of 1774 sought to pledge the colonists to put themselves into a state of warlike self-denial, contain a promise to "discountenance and discourage" "all horse-racing and all kinds of gaming, cock-fighting, exhibitions of shews, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments." Peyton Randolph, president of the Congress, wrote a letter to Douglass, the head of the American company, inclosing the resolution. If this had been law, a loop-hole might have been found; but the manager who should have disregarded the expressed wish of the Congress at this time would have looked the lightning in the face. The actors sailed for the West Indies, to return northward, like migratory birds of song, when storms should have blown over.