CAPE COD, NANTUCKET, AND THE VINEYARD.

"THE Provincetown girls are so light-footed they can walk to church without getting sand in their shoes." It is an old saying, which, if you carefully consider it, tells a story of Provincetown as well as of its maidens; but they add that the latter used to carry their shoes to meeting under their arms.

To confess the plain truth, there *is* more sand in Provincetown than they can use there for building purposes. As you sweep around the Race, and past Wood End, and finally turn into the land-locked harbor—wondering, probably, how in the world you got into so snug a place—you see certainly a large number of comfortable houses, not to speak of the Town-hall perched on top of a tremendous sand dune; you see fishing vessels and fish-flakes and drying cod-fish, and sou'westers and pea-jackets, and pretty girls, and lots of boys who are not so pretty; but mainly you see sand. The beach is sand, of course. The roads are so sandy that the wagons have broad-tired wheels to make the draught easier; in the door-yards of the houses are roses and other flowers struggling with sand; and when you climb up to the Town-house, for the fine view, and the inscription which records the first landing of the Pilgrims, you will also, like the flowers, struggle with the sand. If it should be a breezy day on which you ramble about the narrow streets, you will see sand flying about as it is supposed to do in the great desert; and you will appreciate the care with which, in the suburbs, owners of vacant lots and the United States government cultivate beach-grass, a tough-rooted plant which Providence has provided to keep Provincetown and some other parts of the Cape from being blown away into the bay by a succession of easterly gales.

Besides the sand, the most striking thing in Provincetown to a stranger is an all-pervading odor of fish. It is not, as you might innocently expect, a simple odor, but a very remarkable combination of smells, in which, if you attentively give your whole nose to it, you may distinguish every imaginable offense which a fish can commit against the sense of smell from the time he is first split open and washed in a bucket of water, through all the stages of frying, boiling, broiling, salting, pickling, washing out, drying in the sun, packing away in a storehouse, transporting to a schooner's hold, getting dropped on the way, and trodden under foot, rotting on the beach, or hanging up in a shop door.

Provincetown is in many ways peculiar. In the first place, it is the terminus of a railroad. Consider for a moment how few places remain on this planet, having railroad communications at all, at which, when you arrive, you *must* get out, because you can go no farther in any direction. Then it consists mainly of one long, not very straight, but singularly narrow, street. There is another street back of this one, but it is hardly to be counted in. You come upon it unexpectedly; it is like the appendix in a book, which you are not bound to read unless you want to. The main street skirts the bay, and the backs of the houses on the water side project over the flats; and if you choose to smoke your cigar on the veranda at low water, you may see a good many articles of last year's wear and use, and smell the seemingly immortal odors of some of last year's fish, revealed by the departing tide.

Before your cigar, of course, you dined, or breakfasted, or supped, and in either case you ate cod-fish.

The cod-fish is a noble animal. He is served to you here fresh from his native lair, and fried in company of a thin slice of fat salt pork; and this is the orthodox, or, as a

HAULING A DORY OVER THE DOWNS.

German might say, the *allein selig machende* way of preparing it. A mackerel may be boiled or broiled, he may be pickled or smoked; but a cod-fish should be first caught, then disemboweled and washed, then gently salted for the space of half a dozen hours, and then, the brine being washed away, fried over a brisk fire with salt pork. If this process has been performed by a skilled hand (by a nine-year-old Cape boy, for instance), your fish will be firm, flaky, crisp, juicy, tender—in short, delicious—and you will send your plate back for a second portion. N.B.—A cod-fish which has been transported to New York in a fishing smack, and kept for a week in a fish car at the end of a sewer in the North or East River, is a different animal. Fat pork will not save him.

Provincetown has public spirit. For about a mile and a half it has made a street almost as solid as a New Jersey country road in September, and this way the town arduously keeps in repair. To make it, a certain depth of sand was carted away; sods were then brought from Heaven knows where, and laid down as they lay large stones for a road-bed in the Central Park. On top of this foundation is spread clay. The clay is an imported article. It is brought in as ballast from the main-land of Massachusetts, and sold to the town at so much a ton. "Dirt cheap" is not a good proverb in Provincetown.

To get a proper idea of the queer snail-shell-shaped curl of sand spit which makes Provincetown Harbor you must ascend to the hill on which stands the Town-hall, and here you will read the tablet over the door:

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE
"MAYFLOWER" IN CAPE COD HARBOR,
AND OF THE
FIRST LANDING OF THE PILGRIMS
IN AMERICA, AT THIS PLACE, NOV. 11, 1620,
THIS TABLET
IS PRESENTED BY THE CAPE COD ASSOCIATION, NOV. 11, 1853.

It was not a "stern and rock-bound coast" on which they landed here, but a thickly wooded country, inhabited by Indians, whose little granaries of corn the reluctant and starving Pilgrims presently plundered. The bay was full of whales; and it must make a Cape Cod man blush nowadays to read in the ancient chronicle that the Pilgrim Fathers regretted they were not prepared to capture these whales, because they might have made at least four thousand pounds from the oil in a few months.

At present whales are scarce in Cape Cod Harbor; and it is an extra-hazardous thing for even a porpoise to show his black nose over the water in sight of the town. Only a few weeks before I last saw the place eight hundred foolish porpoises entered the harbor, and four hundred were captured in an afternoon, and not only in the legitimate way, so to speak, by men with harpoons in boats, but a part of the school was driven into shoal water, where men waded out up

BLACK-FISH ASHORE.

to their armpits, and "grabbing" a porpoise with the fingers of one hand in his eyes and the other catching his back fin, dragged him ashore by main force. If you want to awaken Provincetown very suddenly, hire a loud-voiced man to shout, "Black-fish!" from the roof of a house. You will find yourself in less than two minutes in the middle of a very lively population.

Black-fish mean money. They are worth about ten dollars apiece, and a capture of four hundred fish is a handsome day's work, which adds to the wealth as well as to the fragrance of the town. Besides the blubber oil which these animals and porpoises yield, there is a product of which few people, I imagine, think much, but which is yet of considerable importance to all of us. This is the peculiarly limpid oil which is drawn from the jaw-bones of these fish, and which is used by watch-makers all over the world to oil the works of watches. A drop of it goes a long way; and in fact the civilized world uses at present in all its hundred millions of watches only about two hundred gallons yearly, most of which is produced, or, more correctly, saved on Cape Cod. An old man who had been thirty-five years in the business of preparing this jaw oil told me that when a school of fish was caught he bought the heads, which he then tried out carefully, refined the oil by boiling it, and finally submitted it to a freezing test. Two or three men furnish the world's supply of this product; they have established their reputations and control the market; and this old man remarked that the stock on hand was now sufficiently great, and he would not save any more this year. The oil is sold by the producers for from four to eight dollars a gallon. I remarked to the old fellow that if he could sell two hundred gallons a year at five dollars a gallon he would do a comfortable business; and he replied, "Yes, indeed; I'd be happy with that, and throw off half."

Nor was he exaggerating. On this frugal Cape Cod a fisherman is not unhappy nor unfortunate if he makes five hundred dollars by his year's work. His wife will lay by some of it, and he will subscribe liberally to church and foreign missions, and think himself a comfortable man. He owns his house and little garden patch; he is not afraid of the tax-gatherer; he and his wife know how to make money go far, and they are not at all conscious that they are pinched by poverty.

From Provincetown curious visitors drive over to the Highland Light, seven miles distant, which stands on a steep bluff fronting the ocean. This is one of the most important lights on our coast, as it guides ships into Boston Bay. The tower had to be moved back, or inland, about twenty years ago, because the ocean threatened to undermine its foundations. I was told that at that time the shore here lost about ten feet per year; now the loss is less than four feet: it is still loss, however. The land is now a great barren waste, on some hundreds of acres of which are growing stumpy and scraggy pines, planted many years ago. It is curious to read that when the Pilgrims landed it was covered with large oak and walnut trees, which were used for ship timber and lumber, and pine-trees, which were tapped for turpentine. It was nearly a century after the landing before the destruction of the woods was interfered with; and from the name, Wood End, borne by the long and now barren sand spit which makes Provincetown Harbor, it appears that this was once a forest. So late as 1714 the first or-

dinance "for preserving the harbor at Cape Cod" was adopted, and this declares that "whereas the harbor at Cape Cod, being very useful and commodious for fishing, and the safety of shipping both inward and outward bound is in danger of being damnified, if not made wholly unserviceable, by destroying the trees standing on the said Cape (if not timely prevented), the trees and bushes being of great service to keep the sand from being driven into the harbor by the wind—*Be it enacted*, by his Excellency the Governor, Council, and Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, that from and after the publication of this act no person or persons may presume to bark or box any pine tree or trees standing upon any of the Province lands on the said Cape for the drawing of turpentine"—under penalty of a fine and confiscation of the turpentine.

Another provision of the same act constitutes the Province lands a precinct, and "the inhabitants are obliged to procure and support a learned orthodox minister of good conversation to dispense the Word of God among them, and to allow him sixty pounds a year maintenance."

The earliest description of the harbor speaks of it as "compassed about to the very sea with oaks, pines, juniper, sassafras, and other sweet wood;" and a century later the land about the bay appears to have been thought valuable for pasture, for in 1740, as Frederick Freeman, the historian of the Cape, records, complaint was made to the General Court that "many persons, not inhabitants of the town, are in the habit of driving down great numbers of neat cattle and horses to feed upon the lands, whereby the beaches are much broken and damaged, occasioning the moving of the sands into the harbor, to the great damage thereof." By an act of 1745 the inhabitants themselves were restricted in the quantity of stock they might keep, being thenceforth allowed "to keep and suffer to feed on the lands one bull and three yoke of oxen for the inhabitants in general, and one horse and one cow for each family in particular; also such persons as shall have license to keep a house of entertainment are to have liberty to keep two cows." In the same act it was forbidden to cut down trees "growing within 160 poles from high-water mark."

The Cape, indeed, was for some years a granary and fat land of Egypt for the settlers of the Plymouth Colony; the Indians raised corn enough to keep the Pilgrim Fathers alive; and these traded knives and beads for corn and beaver-skins, and quarreled with their neighbors, the Massachusetts people, because these too began to buy corn on the Cape.

Even when the Pilgrims landed, Cape Cod was already a great grave-yard; one of the first acts of the newly arrived English was to dig up several graves they found. "We brought away with us sundry of the prettiest things, and covered up the corpse again. After this we digged in sundry like places [the Vandals!], but found no more corn, nor any thing else but graves."

The Indian inhabitants appear to have been a gentle race, who treated the Pilgrims with great forbearance and kindness, but were treated in return with suspicion and cruelty, so that, as Mr. Freeman points out, the Rev. Mr. Robinson felt himself compelled to write from Leyden to the church at Plymouth, begging them "to consider the disposition of their captain, who was a man of warm temper," and suggesting that it would have been better, in dealing with the Indians, if they had "converted some before they had killed any." Some of the earlier police regulations read oddly in these days, as, for instance, one in 1638, by the General Court, that "whosoever shall shoot off a gun on any unnecessary occasion, or at any

PROVINCETOWN.

HIGHLAND LIGHT, CAPE COD.

game except at an Indian or a wolf, shall forfeit five shillings for every shot." A later amendment added, to satisfy the more ardent hunters, perhaps, "until further liberty be given." In 1638 three white men were hanged for assassinating an Indian, and the circumstance appears to have caused much bitter feeling. "Some have thought it a great severity to hang three English for one Indian," writes a contemporary quoted by Mr. Freeman, "but the more considerate will easily satisfy themselves for the legality of it."

Wolves, by-the-way, appear to have been troublesome on the Cape, which they visited from the adjoining region. So late as 1717 it was proposed to build "a high fence of palisades or of boards" across the neck of land near which, in these days, it has been proposed to cut a ship-canal, "to keep wolves from coming into the country."

Peregrine White, the first child born to the Pilgrims, came into the world in Provincetown, shortly after the arrival of the *Mayflower*. He lived to near eighty-four years of age—evidence that he did not suffer overmuch in the famine which several times threatened the Plymouth people, when, crops failing, they had to depend much for their living upon the products of the sea. On one of these occasions of short commons, Mr. Freeman relates, a good man who had asked his neighbor to a dish of clams, after dinner piously returned "thanks to God who had given them to suck of the abundance of the seas and of the treasure hid in the sands."

Provincetown has become a wealthy place in the last fifteen years. It has five churches, several hotels, and a plank sidewalk on one side of the main street. It has a considerable population of Portuguese, who follow the water for a living, and give a foreign air to the town. When the spacious harbor is full of vessels, as it often is when the mackerel fishing fleet seeks refuge here from a storm, this makes one of the prettiest sights imaginable. It has happened before now that a thousand sail of fishermen dropped anchor in the harbor at once, and at such times the shop-keepers have a lively trade. And thus the Cape levies in its turn a tribute upon the fishermen of other ports, and repays itself what two centuries ago it was made to yield to Plymouth and Boston; for the Cape was for many years a sort of dependency of the Plymouth Colony. In 1661 the four towns of Sandwich, Yarmouth, Barnstable, and Eastham were required to deliver, free of charge, at Boston "one hogshead of oil for every whale that shall come." In 1670 an act which begins, "Whereas, the Providence of God hath made Cape Cod commodious to us for fishing with seines," etc., commanded a duty of twelvepence per barrel upon all fish caught; and the revenue from this source was devoted to the maintenance of a free schcol at Plymouth. Next year it was again "ordered that the charges of the free school, £33 per annum, shall be defrayed by the treasurer out of the profits arising from the fishing at the Cape," etc. This reminds one a little of Artemus Ward's patriotic offer to send all his wife's relations to the war. But it should be said that the Cape had then so few inhabitants that these were allowed to vote by proxy, instead of having to go to Plymouth in person on election-day.

The Cape longer than any other part of New England retained the ancient habits and customs. It lay so far outside of the regularly traveled routes that until within the last dozen years it was but seldom visited by strangers. Thoreau was thought to have accomplished a notable feat in his exploration of it, and until the railroad and the growing fondness for the sea-side drew people to its pleasant sandy beaches, the Cape man was a person of marked charac-

teristics. Nor yet are all the old landmarks removed. Cape thrift and enterprise remain; the simple frugal habits of the people, at least in the remoter parts, have not changed; and when, this last fall, at Harwichport I found a pretty young schoolmarm superintending the picking of a cranberry patch, of which she, her sister, and a brother were the owners, which they had bought of their father with money they had earned, and from which they expected to make not less than three hundred dollars to each share this year, I saw that the old spirit of independence, of patient thrift, of small but vigorous enterprises, the capacity to make the best use of the few natural gifts of their land, and the union of intelligence with labor, have not yet departed from the dear old Cape, of which not only its own "home folks," but all who have for even a short time lived among them, are fond.

It happened to me some years ago to drive in a carriage from Hyannis to near Provincetown with a lady who had never seen the Cape before. Our route carried us along the back or south shore, remote from the railroad, and as we passed hamlet after hamlet, composed of real comfortable-looking, well-kept houses, each with its garden and corn patch, where the corn grew scarcely breast-high, my companion asked, curiously, "Well, where do the poor people live?"

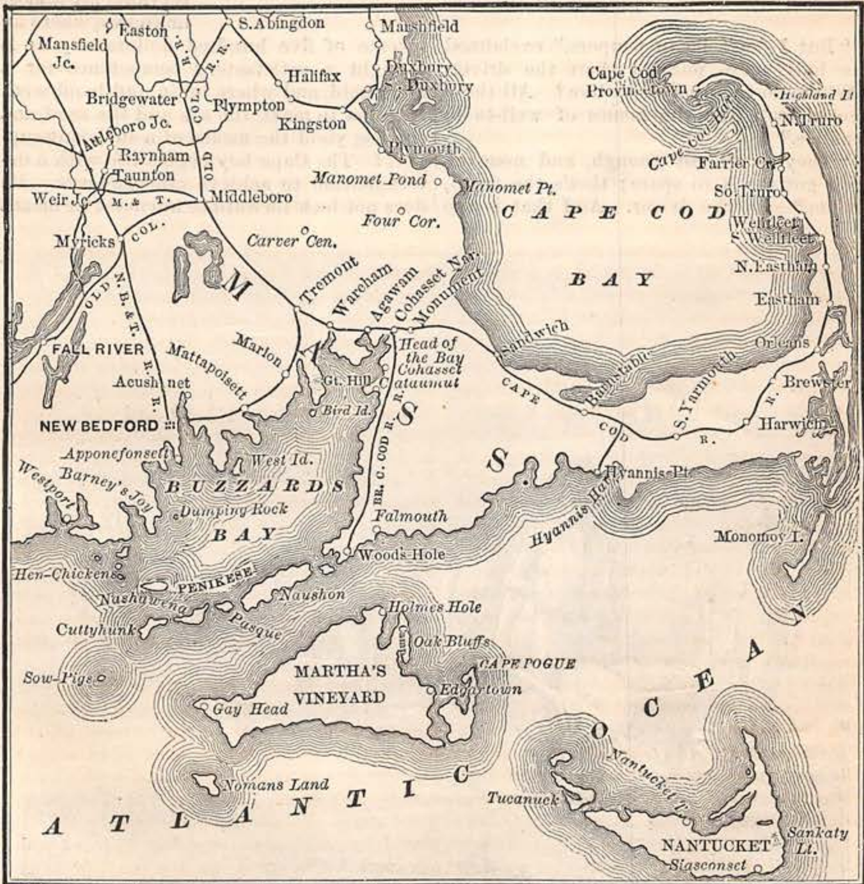
"I guess they'm all pooty poor round here," replied the driver, with a twinkle in his eye.

"But they all look comfortable; I have not seen a poor house in three hours' drive."

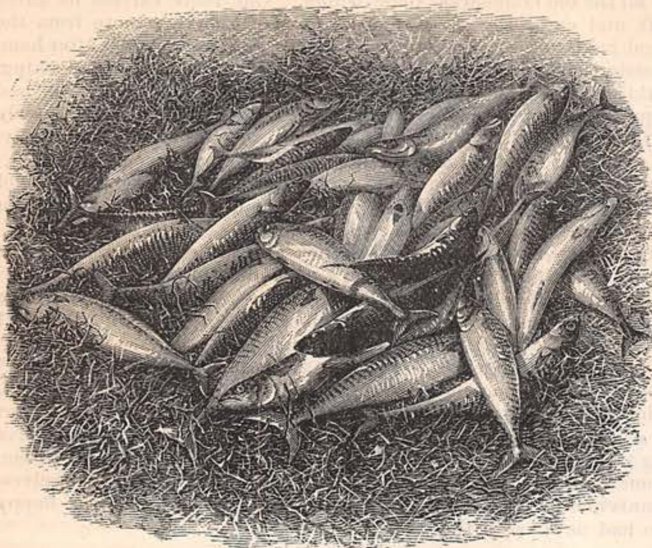
"Of course they'm comfortable," said the puzzled driver. "Why shouldn't they be? They all work."

"But are there no poor here on the Cape?"

"Yes," said the driver, still puzzled, "there's poor, of course. Every body's got poor. Here in the town there's four or five old folks thet's got nobody belongin' to 'em, and too old to stir round for themselves. The town boards 'em out. They'm happy enough, don't fear."



MAP OF CAPE COD AND VICINITY.



GROUP OF CAPE MACKEREL.

happy truth still for the greater part of the Cape. Consider what it means, to have no poor in a community, except a few aged and helpless people, who are "boarded out by the town!" what an ideal condition it is where every family lives in humble but sufficient comfort, where it is a disgrace to a man not to own the house he lives in, where the free school is attended by all the children of the community, where a simple and frugal life makes hospitality easy, where servants are almost unknown, where an

"But I don't mean paupers," exclaimed the lady, more puzzled than the driver. "Where do the *poor people* live? All these houses look like the homes of well-to-do families."

"They've all got enough, and none of 'em's got much to spare; thet's the truth, ma'am," said the driver. And that is the

income of five hundred dollars a year is thought a satisfactory competence for a household, and where brain and hand work together to make the sea and the sand and the bog yield the means of a sufficient support! The Cape boy begins life with a determination to achieve independence. He does not look forward to idleness; he means

WASHING FISH.

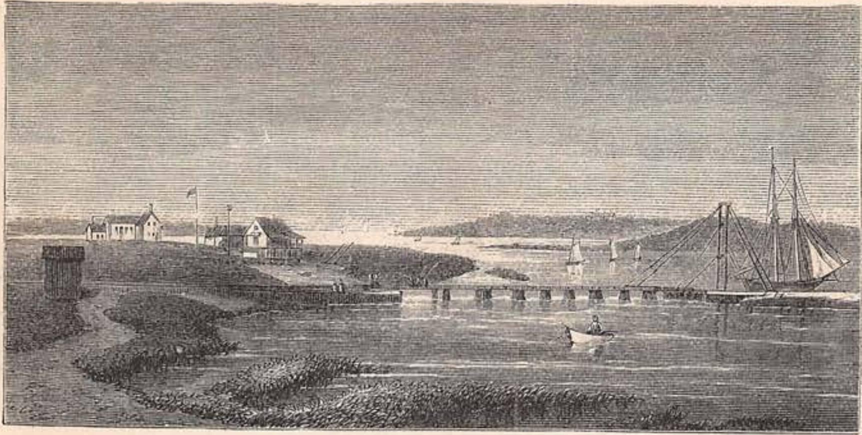
A VILLAGE ON THE CAPE.

to work all his life; but he means to own the house into which by-and-by he shall carry his wife; he expects to be master of a schooner, or, perhaps, if his ambition soars high, of a "square rigger;" he foresees, at the age of nine, that in due course of time he will want to court a pretty Cape girl, and that she will refuse him if he is not "forehanded;" and he will not willingly work for hire.

As for the Cape girls, it's a pretty sight to see them picking cranberries. With rosy cheeks and rippling laughter and bursts of song; with a shout for the baby girl who proudly carries up her tiny cupful to be measured and written down to her credit; with pleasant jokes over the sorting and barreling; with kindly emulation and neighborly helpfulness—the picking goes on. I wonder if it will ever be discovered by womankind that a sun-bonnet and a calico dress are as dangerous to the male heart as the costliest satin and diamonds?

The cranberry is one of the most important products of the Cape. It is grown, as every body knows, on bogs that have been drained and redeemed; and thus the cranberry patch lies usually in a kind of bowl,

PICKING AND SORTING CRANBERRIES.



COHASSET NARROWS—HEAD OF BUZZARD'S BAY.

and you look down upon it from the road. The crimson fruit is concealed beneath a tangled mass of russet vine; and the "patch" looks sufficiently commonplace until it is enlivened by the gay colors of a little army of pickers. Harwich is the principal seat of the cranberry culture on the Cape, and the importance of this industry may be seen from the fact that this little town, of about three thousand inhabitants, exported in 1873 over eighty thousand dollars' worth of cranberries—nearly twenty-seven dollars a head for every man, woman, and child in the town. This is the product of brains applied to agriculture. The Cape has a great many fresh-water ponds, and much swamp and bog land. Twenty-five years ago these bogs were worthless; now they form the most valuable land on the Cape. Patient labor, intelligently directed, makes a redeemed swamp bear from two to four hundred dollars per acre per annum; and the cranberry culture has done much to enrich the people of Cape Cod, and to afford pleasant and profitable employment to women and girls during the picking season.

Looking at the Cape, and examining the character of its people, one wonders how much the thin and unfruitful soil, the harsh climate, and the isolation from the world had to do with forming the habits and peculiarities of the inhabitants, and how much is due to their almost unmixed Puritan descent and the characteristics transmitted from the Pilgrim settlers: whether, that is to say, another and different race or tribe would have grown naturally into the Cape Cod man of to-day, or, more correctly, of fifteen or twenty years ago. The early settlers were, as all in the Plymouth Colony, governed by "the moral law of Moses and the New Testament," with annual elections and majority rule annexed, church-membership being an indispensable requisite to becoming a freeman or voter. The Governor and ten assistants were a court of justice, who were "to try and to do as God shall direct." The laws were strict, and were intended to force men to a moral life. Thus it was forbidden, under a penalty of five pounds or corporal punishment, to court a man's daughter or his maid-servant without first getting leave of him. To "drink tobacco," as smoking was then called, was forbidden on the highway under penalty of twelve shillings. In 1639 "a pair of stocks and a pound" were erected in Yarmouth. In 1640 not only was profane swearing punished, but "for telling lies" a man was set in the stocks three hours and fined ten shillings. "Excess of apparel, strange new fashions, naked breasts and arms, superfluous ribbons on hair or apparel," subjected offenders to a fine and public prosecution. In 1660 the court, "noticing that many do not appear at elections," ordered absentees to be fined. Even the Indians were commanded to keep the Sabbath, and from their head-men justices of the peace were appointed to try and punish minor offenses among their own people. It is related that one of these justices issued his writ of arrest after this style: "You big constable, quick you catch um, Jeremy Offscow, strong you hold um, safe you bring um afore me, Wabau, Justice of Peace."

Every town was obliged by law to support a minister, and if it failed, the General Court assessed the town for the minister's salary. "If any lazy, slothful, or profane persons in any of the towns neglect to attend public worship, they shall pay for each offense ten shillings or be publicly whipped." "No public meetings but such as the government shall approve shall be set up." In 1670 a prominent citizen was "ordered to be publicly whipped for reviling" a minister. The sermon was expected to last an hour; the sexton set the hour-glass when the text was announced, and when he turn-

OAK BLUFF, MARTHA'S VINEYARD.

ed it again the preacher was at the end of "Finally, and to conclude." It is a little odd to read in Mr. Freeman's history that even in the early days, and in spite of such stringent laws, ministers had trouble with their congregations. The sect of "Come-outers," who are still abundant on the Cape, seem to have existed at that time.

Not only were men fined for not voting, but so early as 1631 it was enacted that "if any person chosen to the office of a councilor or magistrate refuse, he shall be fined ten pounds;" and Mr. Freeman quotes a letter from a citizen of Cape Cod, James Cudworth, who actually refused to be made a general, a case which would have seemed incredible to poor Mr. Lincoln. The letter gives so curious a picture of the life of the early days that it is worth quoting here:

"The place is not below me, as some deem theirs to be, but is above me, and far above any desert of mine; and had the court been well acquainted with my insufficiency for such an undertaking, doubtless I should not have been put in nomination. Besides, it is evident to me, upon other considerations, I am not called of God unto this work at this time. The estate and condition of my family is such as will not admit of any such thing. My wife, as is well known to the whole town, is not only a weak woman, and has been so all along, but now, by reason of age, being sixty-seven years and upward, and nature decaying, so her illness grows more strongly upon her. Never a day passes but she is forced to rise at break of day or before. She can not lie for want of breath. And when she is up she can not light a pipe of tobacco, but it must be lighted for her. And she has never a maid. That day your letter came to my hands, my maid's year being out, she went away, and I can not get or hear of another. And then in regard to my occasions abroad, for the tending and looking after my creatures, the fetching home my hay that is yet at the place where it grew, getting of wood, going to mill, and for the performance of all other family occasions, I have now but a small Indian boy, about thirteen years of age, to help me. Sir, I can truly say that I do not in the least waive the business out of an effeminate or dastardly spirit, but am as freely willing to serve my king and my country as any man whatsoever, in what I am capable and fitted for; but do not understand that a man is called upon to serve his country with the inevitable ruin and destruction of his family."

The austere training of the Pilgrims doubtless bore fruit on the isolated Cape men and women; but their lives were also affected by the peculiar character of the industries which their situation forced upon them. They got their living out of the sea, and this taught them enterprise. Their habit of sharing the risks and results of a fishing venture bred them to independence. The Cape boy served his father until he came of age; after that he rarely served any one. For even though he was a poor man, entirely without means, he did not labor for wages; he fished "on shares," receiving a certain portion of his own catch, whether cod-fish or mackerel, and thus profiting directly and constantly by his own skill and industry. This peculiarity of the Cape man's sea life affected very powerfully his whole character and career, and made him from a boy more self-helpful, fuller of resources, than a man differently trained.

A directory of Cape names, if there were such a book, would show that a large part of the present population, except in the more populous places, like Provincetown, Barnstable, or Sandwich, is descended from but a few families. In the remoter parts of the Cape the country is filled with Doanes, Nickersons, Burgesses, Chases, Snows, Crowells, and Smalls. Mr. Freeman notices that some names have been greatly altered by differences in spelling. Burgess was originally Burge; Nickerson was spelled Nicarson; Noyes, Nye, and Ney are the same; Sayre became in some instances Sears, and Hoxie comes, it seems, from Hawkseye. The early settlers appear to have been a substantial stock, for their names have not died out in the land which they occupied, and their descendants are found all over the world as well as on the Cape. But the railroad, as it is likely to change the old customs and break in on the simple life of the Cape, will also bring in new names and

NANTUCKET, FROM THE SEA.

new people. The decaying windmill, and the summer hotel—with its back to the sea usually, so as to shut out the best view—already tell the story of change. But the sea-side lounger at Oak Grove, on the Vineyard, may yet spend some interesting days in a ramble over the old Cape, keeping, if he is wise, as far away from the railroad as possible. This means that he should skirt the south shore, or back of the Cape, as it is called. Harwichport, which has a neat summer hotel, Chatham, and Nauset are all points of interest for a pleasure-seeker who likes to get off the beaten paths, and has an eye for a quaint country and a peculiarly American people.

If the fashion of sea-side summer resorts continue, it will not be long before the shores of Buzzard's Bay will be dotted with finely built towns, crowded during the hot months, and deserted in winter. Very few places on any coast present so many favorable and beautiful locations for such summer towns as the region which is washed by Vineyard Sound and Buzzard's Bay. There are dozens of town sites on this variously indented shore-line, all picturesque and easily accessible; and the rapid growth and popularity of Oak Bluff make it probable that in turn other villages like it will dot the shore for many miles around. Martha's Vineyard has already a little railroad —who shall say that the Elizabeth Islands will not some day have a ferry-boat running to Penikese, Cuttyhunk, or even to No Man's Land?

Even in Nantucket they are laying out sea-side resorts, and that island may yet, with the help of summer visitors, regain somewhat of its former wealth.

Nantucket has had singular vicissitudes. Before the Revolution its inhabitants were prosperous. During that struggle they sometimes suffered for the want of food. When peace was restored they began life anew, and were once more prosperous and rapidly becoming wealthy, when the war of 1812 came and inflicted ruinous losses upon them, besides almost bringing them to starvation point. After the second peace they largely extended their whale-fishery, and became very wealthy, but the gradual extinction of the whaling business brought ruin to many pleasant homes, and inflicted a fatal blow on the prosperity of the island, which has not now a single whale-ship afloat.

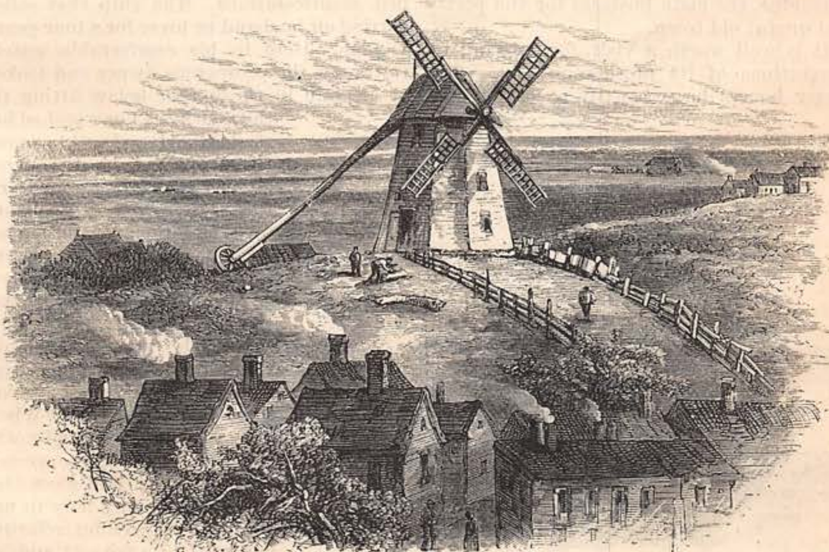
Nantucket was bought from the agent of the Earl of Stirling, together with Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands, in 1641, by Thomas Mayhew and his son. Mayhew in 1659 sold the island of Nantucket, except a part reserved to himself, to nine men, for thirty pounds and two beaver hats, one for himself and one for his wife. He styled himself then "of Marther's Vineyard." The purchasers united to buy also the Indian title, which they accomplished in 1664. The ten proprietors in the mean time found it expedient to encourage immigration from the main-land, and agreed that each should take a partner, and in course of time seven others came over, and were assigned shares, so that the island was eventually divided among twenty-seven share-holders, who occupied in common all such land as they did not choose to sell off. Among these was Peter Folger, the grandfather of Benjamin Franklin, who received a half share of land in consideration of serving as miller, weaver, and interpreter, as well as land-surveyor. He came to Nantucket about 1663. Obed Macy, who wrote his *History of Nantucket* in 1834, remarks, "These twenty-seven shares include the whole island, except the place called Quaise, which Thomas Mayhew reserved to himself;" and he gives the following as the plan of the proprietors for improving their island: "It was agreed that the privilege of stocking to each share should be limited to the amount of land cleared, and that each proprietor stock his own [he means

should furnish his own stock] at his own election, allowing eight sheep to be equal to one neat beast, and two neat beasts to one horse. As the land became more cleared, the privilege of stocking was extended to each share until it amounted to 720 sheep, or other stock in the proportion above stated. Thus the stocking privilege of the proprietors collectively amounts to twenty-seven times 720, or 19,440 sheep, or 2430 neat beasts, or 1215 horses, or to a part of each, according to the interest or convenience of each proprietor. At the same time, and from year to year, a certain tract was fenced off from the stock and appropriated to a general corn field, which was laid out into twenty-seven shares."

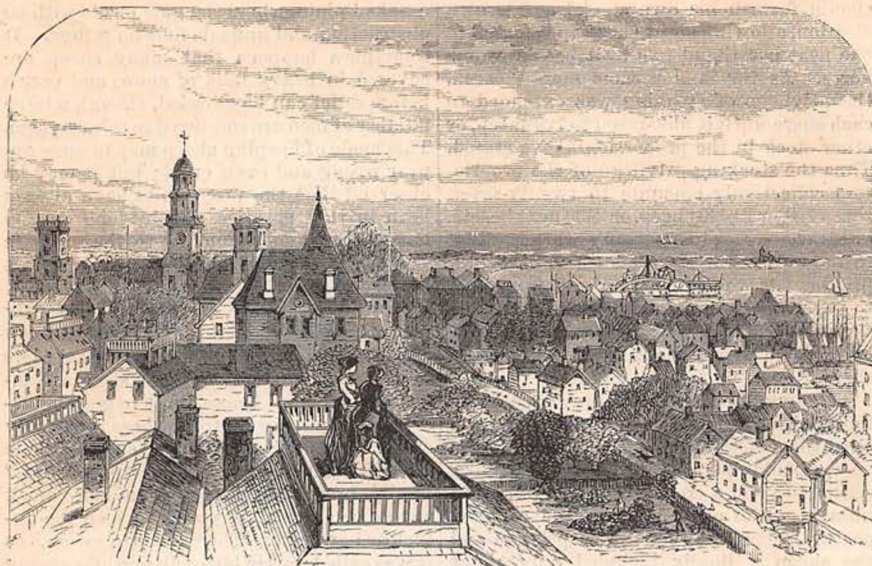
This singular plan of "improvement" was followed for nearly two hundred years, and until the general corn field, which it was to no particular person's interest to manure, ceased to yield a crop, and most of the soil blew into the ocean. As to the common pasture, fortunately for the proprietors and the sheep, it finally included only about eleven thousand acres, on which, when Macy wrote, eight or ten thousand sheep subsisted, with little care and probably small profit to their associated owners. Macy relates, with a quaint gravity: "The island being owned and improved in common, the sheep have not had that attention in the winter which it is the general practice of farmers in the country to give to them. They are suffered to run at large throughout the year, exposed in winter to the bleak winds and cold storms, with no place of shelter provided for them. The forest has disappeared, and the greatest part of the island is left a naked plain, where the gale meets with no obstruction and animals find no refuge. It sometimes happens that many sheep are covered in heavy falls of snow, and perish before relief can be afforded, though a large number of men are employed to release them. This mode of keeping sheep may to some appear wrong and even cruel; but it may be observed that the proprietors have always been in that practice, and by long custom have become so reconciled to the measure that the thought of doing wrong has almost become extinct."

After Macy wrote, the sheep, constantly becoming more numerous, invaded the town and seized upon the gardens and grass-plots of the citizens, and one still sees in Nantucket very high fences, built to guard flower-plots and lawns from these predatory sheep. This nuisance became so intolerable that after much argument the "proprietors" finally, in 1848, decided that no more stock should be allowed to run at large on the uninclosed grounds. The "sheep question," as it was called, raised bitter dissensions among the people before it was finally settled. Unfortunately, overstocking the land destroyed the timber with which it was originally covered; and though some attempts at planting have been made, here, as on Cape Cod, they do not succeed well. Consequently fuel has now to be imported into Nantucket as they bring clay to Provincetown.

Nantucket town is well laid out, and gives evidences of former wealth in a large number of fine and some stately residences. It is even yet a very well kept place; but the inhabitants will tell you that its glory has departed. The island contained about 9000



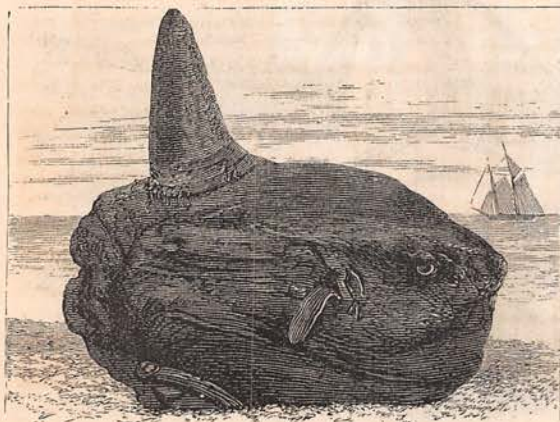
VIEW ON SOUTH SHORE OF NANTUCKET.



A BIT OF NANTUCKET.

people in 1840, 6000 in 1860, and only 4123 in 1870. There are still a number of families who live quietly on the fortunes, large or small, accumulated in former days, but a great many have removed, and sometimes they have taken their houses with them. One house was thus carried from the island, and now stands in a village on the Hudson River. The young people are forced to go to the main-land to earn a living; the soil is not very productive; even the cod-fish are scarce now, a cheery old fisherman at Siasconset told me; and summer visitors make, I imagine, the main business for the pretty and quaint old town.

It is well worth a visit, for it is full of suggestions of its prosperous past. The larger houses have usually a sort of convenient crow's-nest on their roofs, where chairs and comfortable benches are placed, and sometimes stanchions to support a summer awning, and from which the owners no doubt formerly watched the departure or welcomed the return of the whale-ships. They are empty now, and there is something pathetic about this relic of an old custom. For one can not help thinking, as he looks up at these deserted places which greet you in every street, of the joy of return and the too quickly succeeding agony of the parting, which here had their first and last manifestations. The ship that sailed carried off husband or lover for a four years' voyage. Here in his comfortable watch-tower sat the prosperous owner and looked at his ship in the harbor below fitting for the South Seas, or watched her as she shortened sail to round the Point homeward-bound, and perhaps full of oil. Here, too, sat mothers, wives, children, sweethearts, and waved eager welcome to the returning ship; and here, after a few joyous but anxious months, they assembled again, this time with tears, and I should think a dolor beyond description, to get the last glimpse of those dearest to them. "When a year had gone by and nothing was heard of the vessel, I put on black and gave him up," said a young lady in my hearing one evening, relating her grief to a friend; and, as she spoke, a pitiful twitching



SUN-FISH.

of her face showed that the bitterness of her sorrow had not yet passed away. It was her brother she had lost—it might have been her lover; but in either case how torturing and wearing the long-drawn anxiety, the hoping against reason, the contending with the saddest certainty!

It was in the autumn that I saw Nantucket, and I can not tell what it was that gave the town, to me, a tropical air. Perhaps it was the summery out-door possibilities of the crow's-nests; but it was to me as though the old South Sea men had brought back with them along with their oil something of the atmosphere of the Pacific isles: not their luxuriance, but their loveliness, that quality which Charles Warren Stoddard has so well brought out in his fine verses on the cocoa-tree:

"Cast on the water by a careless hand,
Day after day the winds persuaded me;
Onward I drifted, till a coral tree
Stayed me among its branches, where the sand
Gathered about me, and I slowly grew,
Fed by the constant sun and the inconstant dew.

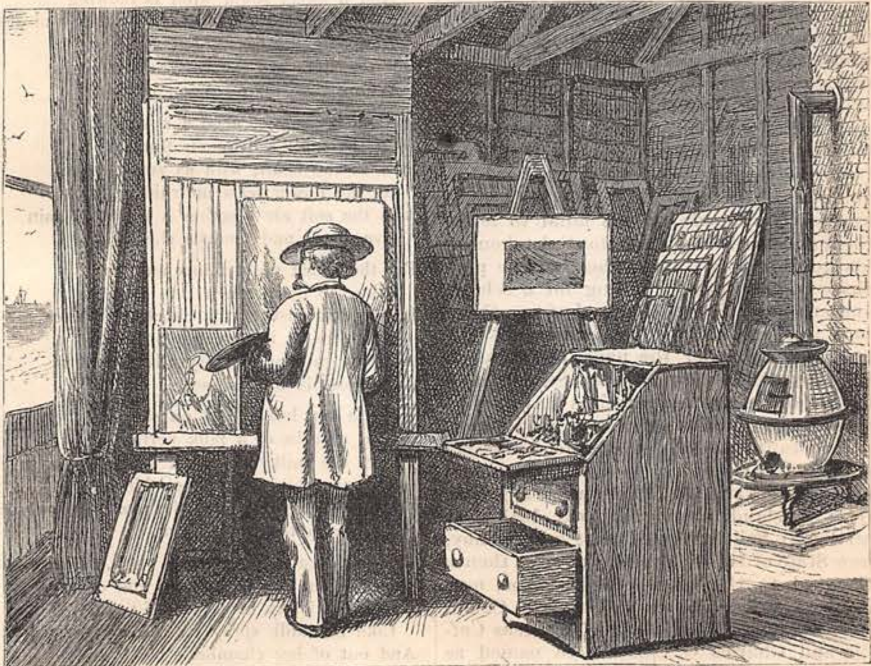
"The sea-birds build their nests against my root,
And eye my slender body's horny case.
Widowed within this solitary place,
Into the thankless sea I cast my fruit:
Joyless I thrive, for no man may partake
Of all the store I bear and harvest for his sake.

"No more I heed the kisses of the morn;
The harsh winds rob me of the life they gave;
I watch my tattered shadow in the wave,
And hourly droop and nod my crest forlorn,
While all my fibres stiffen and grow dumb,
Beck'ning the tardy ships, the ships that never come."

"Beck'ning the tardy ships, the ships that never come"—that is the meaning of the crow's-nests which so pathetically surmount the roofs at Nantucket, and with a mute eloquence tell of departed prosperity. It was a Cape Cod man, Ichabod Paddock, who in 1690 was engaged by "the proprietors" to come over and teach the people how to kill whales and try them out; and it seems a pity that another Cape man could not show them some new way to wealth.

Boating, fishing, and comfortable living among a pleasant population and in a very pleasant old town are the amusements of Nantucket. There are also some drives: to Siasconset, which is a fishing village; to Sancaty Head, where stands a light-house; or to the south shore, where the surf runs high—none of the three overlong or tedious. Of late auctions have furnished recreation also to summer visitors, where they purchased curious old furniture, old china, old table gear; and I was even offered a magnificent brass warming-pan. There is also a public library, an interesting museum, and very pleasant, intelligent society. Eastman Johnson, the artist, has a studio here.

The islanders have always been remarkably peaceful. No doubt the Quaker influence has helped toward this. Even the Indians felt and submitted to this power. At present Nantucket has not a lawyer in its population. If a case is to be tried before the court, lawyers are brought over from



EASTMAN JOHNSON'S STUDIO, NANTUCKET.

HOMES OF FISHERMEN, SIASCONSET.

the main-land. Whether there is a jail or not, I forgot to ask; there was one some years ago, and there is an old story that in the days when stock still roamed at large, a poor fellow in this lock-up complained bitterly that he could not sleep of nights, because the sheep came into his cell and trampled on him.

Among the original proprietors of the island were Tristram and Peter Coffin; and their descendants became a numerous race, whose fame as expert whalemen and good seamen rests on other grounds besides Cooper's fine character of Long Tom Coffin. A singular circumstance befell the island in 1826, when the British Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin visited it. He found that a considerable part of the population were his remote kindred, and made up his mind to leave them and the island a substantial token of his good feeling. He authorized the purchase of a suitable building for a school, and endowed this with a fund of two thousand five hundred pounds sterling. It was incorporated under the name of "Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin's Lancastrian School," and the act of incorporation recites that its purpose is to "promote decency, good order, and morality, and to give a good English education to youth who are descendants of the late Tristram Coffin (who emigrated from England about the year 1641, first settled at Salisbury, in Massachusetts Bay, now State of Massachusetts, and from thence removed to the town of Sherburne, now Nantucket)." William Coffin, Ariel Coffin, Gorham Coffin, Jared Coffin, Thaddeus Coffin, and Charles G. Coffin were named as trustees, and it is provided that their successors must always be descendants of Tristram Coffin. The school still flourishes, and is one of the notabilities of the town.

A FLORIDA DAWN.

By WILL WALLACE HARNEY.

THE moon is low in the sky,
  And a sweet south wind is blowing
Where the bergamot blossoms breathe and die
  In the orchard's scented snowing;
But the stars are few, and scattered lie
  Where the sinking moon is going.

With a love-sweet ache a strain
  Of the night's delicious fluting
Stirs in the heart, with as sweet a pain
  As the flower feels in fruiting,
And the soft air breathes a breath of rain
  Over buds and tendrils shooting.

For the sweet night faints and dies,
  Like the blush when love confesses
Its passion dusk to the cheeks and eyes
  And dies in its sweet distresses,
And the radiant mystery fills the skies
  Of possible happinesses,

Till the sun breaks out on sheaves
  And mouths of a pink perfume,
Where the milky bergamot slakes its leaves;
  And the rainbow's ribbon bloom,
Of the soft gray mist of the morning, weaves
  A rose in the rose's loom.

The fog, like a great white cloth,
  Draws out of the orchard and corn,
And melts away in a film of froth
  Like the milk spray on the thorn;
And out of her chamber's blush and loath,
  Like a bride, comes the girlish morn.