

comparing them to the 'pure isles'—

'Which bards of old with kindly fancy placed
For happy spirits in th' Atlantic waste.'

Captain Somers returned to England in 1611. In March, 1612, the Virginia Company procured an extension of their charter so as to cover all islands within three hundred leagues of the Virginian shore and thereby to include the Bermudas. In the autumn of the same year the Company sold the islands to certain members of their own body, who in 1615 were incorporated by Royal Letters Patent as 'The Governor and Company of the City of London for the plantation of the Somer islands.' This Company owned the islands till the year 1684. The Letters Patent gave them full powers of government, with an absolute monopoly of the import and export trade of the islands, and among other provisions excluded from the settlement persons 'addicted to the superstition of the Church of Rome.'

The first emigrants to the Bermudas, about fifty in number, were sent out in 1612, before the new Company had been formed. Richard Moore, a ship's carpenter, was the first governor, and the instructions given to him specified various sources of wealth which might be derived from the colony, including tobacco, pearls, silk, timber, salt, sugar-canes, ambergris, and whale oil.

The new comers were received on arrival by three men who had remained behind from Somers's company, and who were mainly concerned with trying to conceal from the governor a large quantity of ambergris which they had found.

Other writers besides poets have borne witness to the climate and soil of the Bermudas, notably Bishop Berkeley in discussing his scheme for the establishment of a college in the islands (see below, pp. 20, 21). On the other hand a different picture is given in *A Short Discovery of the Coast and Continent of America*, by William Castell, published in 1644 (see the *Harleian Collection of Voyages*). The writer says, 'Besides it is as much if not more than any other place infested with most tempestuous fearful winds called hurricanes. The soil and temperature is far inferior to any part of Virginia, and yet is it inhabited no less than with 1000 English.' Labat, too [1705], speaks of the Bermudas, to which he gives the second name of Vermude, as being stormy islands.