

'SCONSET BY THE SEA.

"Come and spend your summer vacation with us in 'Sconset," wrote a friend who for more than a dozen years had regularly sought this retreat for rest and health, and who honestly believed that after his native heath-clad hills no spot in all the wide world is so fair in promise and so bountiful in fulfillment. If the air is purer anywhere else, or the bathing more invigorating, or the society more delightful, no visitor of 'Sconset has as yet heard of such a place.

But already the reader is asking, Where is 'Sconset, or more properly Siasconset? It does not argue that our school system is a failure if the boy or girl well furnished in the lore of the schools should be unable to answer the question. Let me assist you. From Boston, the "hub" of the universe, the Old Colony Railroad carried us rapidly down to the sea. The train speeds by towns and villages, made historic as the birthplace and home of some of America's greatest sons; and the greatness of the past is linked with that of the present, for the cottage of Gray Gables, where President Cleveland rests in summer time, is in clear view of the passengers as they rush past. Wood's Holl, on Buzzard's Bay, is the terminus of the railway line, and there a steamer is waiting to convey us to our chosen retreat. But the baggage must first be transferred, and while Italian porters are rushing and shouting and struggling with the heavy trunks, we have time to take a glance at the building of the United States Fish Commission. There in the summer season are gathered hundreds of scientific professors, and students from the various Colleges on the Continent, who are busy examining, studying and classifying the specimens that are caught in the deep as well as

the shallow waters of that region. Every morning the fishermen go out with their boats, and on their return the "catch" is given into the hands of these experts, who become as excited over the discovery of a rare fish of the sea as a gold digger might on finding a large nugget. If any of you saw the Aquaria at the World's Fair, you will perhaps remember that the salt water and most of the salt water fish were brought from Wood's Holl. But the boat's whistle is sounding, and we are no sooner over the gang plank than the vessel is headed for Nantucket, for on this island, 120 miles south east of Boston, and fifty miles from the nearest point on the mainland, is 'Sconset. In a little we are on the broad rolling Atlantic, and soon know what it is to be out of sight of land. There was a time, and that not very long past, when it would have been impossible to sail in these parts without sighting the great black hulls and the broad canvas of the "whalers." Many a large fortune has been built up from the sale of sperm oil, and the ambition of every young man in these parts used to be to round Cape Horn in search of whales. Coal oil, gas and electric light have made the whale industry only a memory; one almost regrets that it is so when he hears the tales of adventure from other seas that the lounging and gossiping old salts love to tell.

Nantucket is finally sighted, and soon we enter the shoal water of the harbor, where bell buoys are ceaselessly giving their solemn note of warning. About a year ago this harbor was closed up with ice for several weeks, supplies from the main land were cut off, and the pressure of a genuine famine was beginning to be felt by man and beast. On the hill that circles round the harbor is the town of Nantucket; the visitor to the island