

WHAT THE SWALLOWS SAID.

The air is cold at morn and eve—
The summer days have fled—
And on the withered, yellow grass,
The leaves are falling dead.

The gardens now their last bright gifts
Before our eyes display,
The dahlias wear their rich cockades,
And marigolds are gay.

The rain-drops bubble on the pond—
The swallows feel the cold—
And noisy, chattering on the roofs,
A parting council hold.

In flocks of hundreds, lo! they come:
They gather to depart:
One sighs for Athens and his home
Upon its old rampart:

"Where cannon-balls a breach have made,
I'll build my winter's nest,
And 'neath the sculptured cornice of
The Parthenon will rest."

"At Smyrna I my chamber have,
Where stately hadjis meet,
To count their amber beads, and feel
The 'café's' genial heat;

"O'er turban and tarbouche I skim,
Or at my willalight,
Accustomed to their clouds of smoke,
Which rise in billows white."

"By claws and beak," another said,
"Mid Balbec's ruins grand,
I hang upon a temple's front,
Half buried in the sand."

"I spread my wings," a fourth one cried,
"And seaward gladly roam,
In Rhodes, the Palace of the Knights
Each winter is my home."

The fifth one spoke: "Age makes me slow,
And therefore I alight,
Between blue water and blue sky,
On Malta's terrace white."

"How happy I at Cairo am!
Within its minarets high,
My quarters always ready are,
And thither I will fly."

"Beyond the second cataract,"
The last one said, "I'll rest,
And among these grand old granite kings
Will build my winter nest."

Then cried they all, "To-morrow we
O'er many a place will roam,
Brown plain, white peak, and deep-blue sea,
Embroidered with its foam."

Thus on the moulding's narrow ledge,
They, chattering, flapped their wings,
And joyed to see brown autumn's rust
Creep over all green things.

The poet hears—for he is but
A captive bird, who'd fly,
But ah! an unseen net-work breaks
Each flight toward the sky.

Oh, for the wings! the wings! the wings
Of Ruckert's song, to soar
To golden summer and green spring,
Forever—ever—more!

AN ISLAND HOME.

Nantucket is unique. In some respects it resembles sister towns on the neighboring cape, but there is a peculiar charm about the place which singles it out from all others. This is not alone due to the quaint appearance of the town itself, nor to the fresh ocean breezes, pure and health-giving.

There is over all a sense of rest, a quiet, delicious languor, that seems to permeate all things, animate and inanimate, alike. Under the clear blue sky one can drink in the fragrant breath of old ocean and dream of his "castles in Spain" until toil and weariness seem so far removed as the hills of sunny Spain themselves. It is an "Ultima Thule," a land only to be reached by a voyage, and only to be understood after careful study. To go thither the visitor must pass through the same experience, only less protracted, as on a trip to Europe. As has well been said, all that is lacking is a few more revolutions of the paddles. The shores of the Vineyard grow faint and disappear long before Nantucket flows as a hazy blue cloud on the distant horizon. For a time nothing but an expanse of sea and sky is visible, the former whitened by the sails of the coasters, hurrying through the Vineyard Sound. It is difficult to believe that the journey will be accomplished so quickly, and that days will not elapse before the destination can be reached. The approach to Nantucket by water presents the old town in a most picturesque manner. The two sandy points, which enclose the waters of the harbor, conceal it as well, so that, from the deck of the approaching steamer, the town seems to be built directly on the ocean shore, including in its midst the lighthouse on Brant Point. The scene resembles on a minor scale the confused ranks of buildings rising in irregular tiers that greet the stranger's eye when approaching Boston by sea, showing all those marvelous tints of blue and gray lent by the distance to tone down and enhance the view. When nearer, the small red lighthouse on Brant Point detaches itself from the other buildings, and a glint is caught of water beyond. The narrow ribbon widens, and a gateway appears through the encircling arms of sand. Passing so near Brant Point that a biscuit could be easily tossed ashore, the steamer describes a graceful curve and swings in to her

wharf. The "Mysterious Island" has been reached at last. As we wander about the old town we see all around us the evidences of past glory, and of a life and activity which have long since ceased. The aged men leaning on their canes who meet us here and there speak lovingly of the old days when the "Arethusa" came home laden with hundreds of barrels of oil, and manned throughout with sturdy Nantucket boys.

The title of captain is still the favorite, and can be applied with perfect faith in its propriety to as large a proportion of the older natives as the sobriquet of colonel in our Southern States. At the captains' room, under the old brick custom-house, meet the "Captains' Club," and here the visitor can listen to most marvelous tales of wonderful captures and hairbreadth escapes in the palmy days of the whale fishery. Then the room was the meeting-place of the House of Lords and House of Commons as they were universally denominated, the former being the agents and owners, and the latter the officers of the ships engaged in whaling.

The history of Nantucket presents a varied succession of ups and downs. Discovered in 1602 by Bartholemew Gosnold, it was deeded by Lord Sterling in 1641 to Thomas Mayhew and son, the consideration named in the deed being quaintly expressed as follows: "That Thomas Mayhew and Thomas Mayhew his Sonne, or either of them or their Assignes, doe render and pay yearly unto the Honble the Lord Sterling, his Heyres and Assignes, such an acknowledgement as shall be thought fit by John Winthrop, Esqr., the Elder, or any two Magistrates in the Massachusetts Bay, being chosen for the End and Purpose by the Honble the Lord Sterling or his Deputy; and by the said Thomas Mayhew and Thomas Mayhew his Sonne, or their Assignes." The Mayhews claimed sole ownership of the larger part of the island up to 1659, when it was sold to "the Ten Associates," Tristram Coffin, Thomas Macy, Christopher Hussey, Richard Swayne, Thomas Bernard, Peter Coffin, Stephen Greenleaf, John Swayne, and William Pike. Mayhew himself retained the part then called Masquetuck.

These are the ancient worthies to whom every true son of Nantucket looks up not alone with the reverence of the Chinese for their ancestors, but almost in the light of demigods. It has been so often and vigorously asserted as to assume the character of an historical truth that these first settlers were a band of Quakers fleeing from persecution. But this is only a pretty fable, and the beautiful verses of the poet Whittier referring to it a flight of fancy. Following these first settlers a number of families arrived from Salisbury and settled in 1660, and civilization then obtained an abiding foothold. These early settlers brought the rights of the native Indians wherever they located, and their honesty in this respect brought them a lasting peace with the red men. The tale of the early prosperity of Nantucket cannot be told except by narrating the story of the whale fishery as well.

It is said that the first whale captured by these hardy islanders rashly invited his fate by gamboling in the waters of their harbor until the temptation held constantly before their eyes proved too strong. A harpoon was improvised, and the first whaling expedition successfully carried out. The industry became popular at once. Lookouts were established at convenient points on the island shores, from which whale-boats set out for the chase whenever a whale was descried. Finding it profitable, the cruises were lengthened and vessels were built to engage in the fishery, until the white sails of the Nantucket whalers were seen in every ocean, and heavily laden ships were constantly arriving and discharging at her wharves.

After almost total extinction in the two wars with England, when the island lay at the mercy of the foe and suffered most severely, the whale fishery reached its height about 1810. This was the flood-tide of the town's prosperity. The five wharves were scenes of constant activity, large fleets of vessels taking in or discharging cargoes, or refitting for new voyages. Coopers, blacksmiths, sail makers, riggers, and rope-makers were busy from morning to eve, and the constant hum of industry was heard on every side. Many were the yarns told by Nantucket boys in those days, and among them all, there was perhaps none more thrilling than the story of the loss of the *Essex*. This occurred in 1819, and was occasioned by an enraged sperm whale which attacked and sunk the ship. The crew made a terrible voyage of two thousand miles in their whale-boats, and when, after three months of suffering, they finally reached safety, only eight of the original men survived.

The great fire of 1846 was perhaps the death-blow to the whaling interest, although it lingered along for many subsequent years, staggered in turn by the "California fever," the Rebellion and the discovery of petroleum. The last whaler sailed as late as 1869, but the noble fleet had long been scattered. This fire of 1846, causing a loss of one million dollars, was the greatest calamity ever known on Nantucket. In Godfrey's "Nantucket Guide," page 202, is given the graphic account of an eye-witness, in which occurs the following sentence: "And now the roar of the great conflagration is heard, and the hoarse cries of the fire-wards as they, almost in vain, give their orders." Mr. Godfrey remarks, with a good deal of truth, no doubt, "as there were twelve of these fire-wards it is no wonder that, with so many conflicting orders as they must necessarily have given, such a large amount of property was destroyed. The town never recovered from this heavy blow, and sank

gradually into a quiet, listless sort of existence, from which it is just awaking to find a new lease of life as a popular watering-place. The neighborhood of the old wharves is in many places quite picturesque, and there are numberless nooks and corners full of quaint interest. A spot which has a peculiarly salt flavor is the lounging-place of the captains of the yachts. Here on a low wooden bench on the front and side of a building where oil suits are kept to let can be seen almost any night a number of the old sea-dogs smoking the pipe of peace, and awaiting their next day's customer.

Straight Wharf, the oldest of the five, has been built for more than one hundred and fifty years. Many localities in the old town are losing the quaintness that formerly distinguished them, and the relentless hand of modern improvement is robbing them of much of their interest for the visitor. Such a locality is the old "Step Lane," now modernized as "Chapman Avenue," and running between Centre and North Market streets. Until within a few years it resembled a bit of Marblehead. The roadway from Centre street ended abruptly, thence a descent of several steps conducted the pedestrian by a narrow foot-path to North Market street below. But enough remains of the old flavor to give Nantucket an interest to the seeker of the curious. The houses are almost universally, in the language of Burdette, "shingled, shingled, shingled, and shingled" throughout, and generally guiltless of paint; and many of them have railed platforms around the chimney, where, in the old whaling days, the good-wives were wont to sit and watch for the long-expected ships. The quiet streets wander away from each other, and cross and interlace in seemingly inextricable confusion, and the unlucky stranger who trusts in their apparent direction usually finds himself several points of the compass out of his course. It is a reminiscence of Boston before the fire in all save architecture.

Nantucket is a town where crime is practically unknown. The county jail, an old weather-beaten, shingled house, with wooden bars across its numerous windows, rarely has an inmate, and it is difficult to see how an unwilling prisoner could be kept confined. The old story of this jail, so often told, finds ready credence with any one familiar with the locality. A prisoner, so the legend runs, finding his possession of the premises contested, went to the jailer's house and awakened that functionary to assure him in most emphatic terms that, unless the sheep were kept out of the jail, he would be hanged if he would stay there. Near the jail is the Friends' burying ground, and a more desolate-looking spot can hardly be imagined. Surrounded by a low wooden railed fence is a level field covered with a growth of scanty brown grass. Not a mound to be seen, or any evidence of the tender care of loving hands and hearts. In one corner a few simple foot-stones, each marked with a single initial, designate the last resting-place of the Hicksite Quakers. With this exception it is estimated that ten thousand people lie here beneath the sod in unmarked and unknown graves. In the old cemeteries of the other denominations are head-stones dating as far back as 1740, covered with lichens and worn by time. On our way back to the town we pass the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, dedicated to the islanders who died for their country. Nantucket furnished more than her quota to both branches of the service, and claims to be the banner town of the Commonwealth in this respect.

No visit to Nantucket would be complete without a sight of the old wind mill, built in 1746. It is but an easy walk, and one which is well repaid. The ancient structure, covered with the universal coat of shingles, stained and weather-beaten, lifts its gaunt arms against the blue sky, and seems to feebly defy the elements that for so many years have acted as its servant. There is such a conscious impress of tottering, weak-kneed old age given by the structure that we almost feel a sense of relief that its working days are over, and, like a faithful old farm-horse, it is left to round out its few remaining days in peace and idleness. The view from the hill on which the mill stands is very fine. Immediately in front are the clustered houses of the town; beyond the blue waters of the harbor, the white sandy shores of Brant and Coatee, and farther still the ocean. On every side we see the scattered, weather-beaten houses, gray and old, and the all-encircling ocean. At the right the view ranges to Wauwinet, Sankaty, and Sconset. On the left is the tank of the Wauwinet water works perched high in the air on its iron stilts, and looking for all the world like a giant spider. This tank is the first object of importance seen on the island from the approaching steamer, and is the subject of much curious and interested comment. Turning our eyes toward Surf Side we see the low groves of stunted pines much resembling the dwarf trees of a Chinese garden, and disappearing behind them, and then darting out beyond over the level plain, the "lightning express" of the Surf Side railroad.

Perhaps no one on the Island feels more pride in the Surf Side railroad, or imagines that his personal efforts have contributed more to the final success of the scheme, than the town crier, Mr. Clark, commonly spoken of as "Billy" Clark. "Billy" is a very important personage, with the Atlantean weight of his little world resting upon his shoulders, and he is not the man to falter or shrink back. "If it warn't for me there wouldn't be no life in this place," says Billy. "I stir 'em up and put the life into 'em." Other criers there are, but none can claim pre-

cedence over "Billy." He is the first to attract attention when the steamer comes in to her landing, as he winds a merry blast on his horn and announces some entertainment for the evening or the meat auction to occur next day; then seizing his bundle of papers he disappears precipitately up the long wharf. "Billy" is omnipresent. He turns up at unexpected seasons: he meets you at every corner. First a long blast of his horn, then a sturdy ringing of his bell, and the announcement: "Rememba a-a-h!! That there'll be a gra-a-a-nd entertainment to-night at Athenaeum Hall. Great Company from Boston. And do-o-o-n't forget! That there'll be a grand ball at Surf Side, Friday night! And rememba-a-a-h and do-o-o-n't forget! That there'll be a meat ox-lun at nine o'clock to-morrow. Cornbeef, mutt'n, and lam!" Then he vanishes, and further up the street the performance is repeated. One of Billy's self-imposed duties, and one which is really useful, is to watch in the high tower of the South Church for the steamer. Every afternoon he mounts to his station, and when with his telescope he discerns the distant craft plunging her way from the Vineyard he blows a blast on his horn from each of the four windows, thus notifying every one of the steamer's speedy arrival. Billy is a marked character among a queer people. The natives are of a retiring nature, but very hospitable. A little acquaintance melts their reserve, and you find them warm and obliging friends. There being little to do, and plenty of time to do it in, they never get in a hurry, but take life easily. The nine-o'clock bell is a feature of the town long clung to, and marks the cessation of trade and the darkening of the streets. Another custom of the place is the universal habit of going down to the wharf to see the evening boat come in. This had proved contagious, and now, the natives being as a general thing too busily employed at that hour, the summer visitors have taken their places and adopted the same rendezvous. Half an hour before the expected time of arrival the wharf begins to assume a lively appearance, dotted with promenading couples and diversified along the edges by groups of children fishing with strungs and bent pins for the voracious little crabs that swarm along the sandy bottom. The crowd increases, and when the steamer swings in to the landing the numerous seats at the wharf side are occupied, and the weary tourist runs the gauntlet of hundreds of curious eyes. It is a species of dress-parade for the youths and maidens, and the fresh young faces and bright toilets make a most pleasing picture. It is said that a Nantucketer being asked the question, "How do you islanders support yourselves?" replied, "In the summer we live on the strangers, and in the winter we live on each other." This way of putting it had at least the merit of honesty, for nearly every Nantucket house has its quota of summer boarders. In winter lyceums and social entertainments beguile the tedium of the long evenings, and preparations are made for the next season's campaign.

Nantucket has produced many noted people of both sexes, while others have claimed it as the land of their adoption. Among the galaxy are such names as Maria Mitchell, the female astronomer, now connected with Vassar College, who was born here in 1818; Lucretia Mott, born in 1793, and long a faithful and famous teacher among the Friends; Rev. Phebe A. Hanaford, born at Siasconset in 1829, a direct descendant of Tristram Coffin and Peter Folger; Major-Gen. George Nelson Macy; Charles J. Folger, Secretary of the United States Treasury; and others of more or less prominence in the history of their time and country.

Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, Bart., although not a native of the island, came from the old Coffin stock, and has endeared himself forever to the true Nantucketer by one generous act. In the centre of the town stands the Coffin free school, founded by him in 1826 for the benefit of the Coffins and their descendants. The school is a fine brick building, of the style in vogue a half-century ago, and accommodates one hundred scholars. It includes grammar and high-school grades, and has an endowment from the fund given by Sir Isaac, now amounting to fifty thousand dollars.

Among the distinguished residents are Charles O'Connor, the eminent New York jurist, and Eastman Johnson, the celebrated artist, both of whom reside on Sherburne Heights, or "the Cliff."

Mr. O'Connor has an elegant mansion, magnificently furnished, a low brick building in the rear containing his large and valuable library.

Eastman Johnson's cottage is less pretentious, and his studio was once the barn. Now, however, it is fitted up with everything that can be imagined for comfort and even luxury. The end facing the water has a front of glass, and here the artist can sit at ease and gaze upon a view only surpassed in its soft dreamy sea and sky by the world-famed Bay of Naples. Before him lies what might be called Nantucket Bay, with its surface, on these calm, perfect summer days, only lightly rippled by the dainty breath of the ocean breeze. Beyond is Great Point, gleaming snowy white in the sunlight, and seeming to tremble and waver in the light summer haze hovering over it. At the north can always be seen flocks of white driving across the horizon, the sails of the coasting fleet passing through that great highway, the Vineyard Sound. At the south is the town; at his feet the sandy beach, the bath-houses, pavilions, and the busy crowd that always haunts the "Cliff" on pleasant days. In storms, the scene changes