

Among the many singular town ordinances of the Island the following is selected as indicating the care taken in a primitive rural community to protect one source of profit even at the expense of another, if of less value; and as suggesting a somewhat close observation of the habits of the animals mentioned. The keeping of geese is forbidden as "prejudicial to the towne because ye sheepe do not keepe in ye streetes as formerly, but run ye woods whereby they are more exposed to be devoured by the wolves: because they cannot abide to feed where ye geese do keepe."

It seems odd that these somewhat austere people never advocated the general practice of compulsory or even voluntary total abstinence. Inebriety, indeed, was not always tolerated, and, under a code prevailing in some of the towns, one guilty of drunkenness was "to be punished with the punishment of a beaste," or, in plain words, whipped. Governor Dongan, however, in 1683, refused an offer of £52 for the Excise of the Island, because it was "the best peopled place in this gover'm't and wherein is great consumption of Rumme."

The early Long-Islanders apparently did not all entertain a hearty belief in woman's strength of mind. For purposes of registration to-day it is sufficient to establish that a wife was not compelled to execute a deed, but the spouse of one of them acknowledged that she signed an instrument of conveyance "voluntarily without threatening or flattery."

It is worthy of remark that as early as 1685, and first of all the New York communities, the town of Easthampton protested against taxation without representation. It should however, be fully recognized that many among the colonists who objected most strongly against being taxed unless and until they had a voice in the selection of the taxing body never aimed at securing the independence of the plantations. On the contrary, they trusted in the ultimate accomplishment of some scheme of Imperial Federation, although it must be confessed that they were no more successful than modern statesmen and politicians in its formulation.

Some of the early references to the material resources and conditions of the Island are most entertaining. From a paper printed and circulated in England for Sir Edmund Plowden, the grantee under Charles I. previously mentioned, with the evident intention of attracting immigration to his newly acquired territory, the following passages are extracted:—"First, there grow naturally store of Black wild Vines w'ch make verie good Vergies or Vinnugar for to use w'th meate or to dress Sturgeon, but for the Frenchman's art being boyld and ordred is good wine, and remains for three moneths and no longer.

"There is also great store of deere there and of the three soarts, the highest sixteen hands, and there is also Buffaloes which will be ridden and brought to draw and plow. There are fayre Turkeys far greater than heere, 500 in a flocke w'th infinite stores of Berries, Chestnuts, Beechnuts, and Mast w'ch they feed on.

"The spring waters theare are as good as small beere here, but those that come from the woods are not as good, but altogether naught."

The following extracts are made from a very racy description, published in 1670, written by Daniel Denton, son of the Pastor of Hempstead, to which the writer in all probability chiefly refers:—

"The fruits natural to the Island are Mulberries, Posimous Grapes, great and small. Plumbs of several sorts, and Strawberries of such abundance that in spring the fields and woods are died red: which the country people perceiving instantly arm themselves with bottles of wine, cream, and sugar, and instead of a coat of male everyone takes a Female upon his horse behind him and so rushing violently into the fields never leave them until they have disrobed them of their red colours.

"There are divers sorts of singing birds whose chirping notes salute the ears of travellers with harmonious discord, and in every pond and brook green, silken Frogs who, warbling forth their untun'd tunes, strive to bear a part in this musick."

The "princely ground nut," as Josselyn calls it, was so much prized that it could not be dug by the Indians without liability to punishment in Southampton in 1654. In 1755 cheeses from Queen's County are described by an English writer as "reviving," and the reputation of the Newtown pippins has survived to the present day.

Occasionally the waves from the ocean bore to the shores of the island carcasses of great whales, or perhaps wrecks or portions of the cargo of a vessel broken up among the breakers. It is narrated that two Maltese cats, one of either sex, so escaped the foaming billows, and became the progenitors of most of the animals of their kind now inhabiting North America.

The outbreak of the revolution found Long Island well populated and in a prosperous state. Its people were generally of a superior class, intelligent, honest and thrifty. Those among them who occupied the higher social and official positions, as a rule, were refined, educated and comparatively affluent: while the remainder of the population was not largely lacking in culture and creature comforts. It is true that the original stock was somewhat mixed, but each of its component parts had admirable qualities which, combined, produced an eminently satisfactory result. It may be mentioned that the Right Reverend Samuel Seabury, the first Bishop of the American branch of the Anglican Church, was the son of a Long Island rector, and many names from the island's roll of worthies might be cited if space permitted.

A large proportion of the islanders were loyal to the crown, and very many of them evinced a devotion to the cause which they espoused so profound that, regarded even now after long lapse of time, it cannot fail to awaken the emotions.

Its proximity to the City of New York and its importance for strategical purposes made the island a peculiarly unpleasant if not dangerous dwelling place during the war. The defeat of the revolutionary forces at the battle of Brooklyn served to interfere with, but not entirely prevent, incursions and attempts to exercise authority on the part of those acting under Washington and the political powers with which he was associated. Incursions by bodies of Hessians and other British troops and even of the Associated Loyalists were also by no means infrequent. These invaders helped themselves to the cattle and personal effects of the inhabitants, often destroying what they could not carry with them, and rarely discriminated between those who were for and against the crown. Then again, bulky whale boats, manned by freebooters from Connecticut, repeatedly appeared upon the coasts of the island, and stole or burned everything upon which they could lay their hands, sparing not lives when resistance was offered, and terrorising the inmates of once happy, peaceful farms.

It is indisputable that by the exodus of the loyalists the newly created American Republic was deprived of very many of the very best of its population. The maritime provinces of British America, however, and perhaps New Brunswick especially, profited largely by that event, and, among the numerous eminent persons who there found new homes under the old flag, the sons of Long Island were not inconspicuous. Two prominent islanders, Gabriel G. Ludlow and Col. de Peyster, were leading citizens of Saint John, New Brunswick, the former becoming the first mayor of that city and subsequently Chief Justice of the Province. The identity of sir-names common in the island before the revolution, with those of families well known in New Brunswick, since its inception as a province until to-day, is worth noting. The following are a few instances: Barnes, Carman, Clowes, Corey, Everett, Foster, Fowler, Hallett, Horsefield, Horton, Howe, Hubbard, Ketchum, Lee, Mills, Needham, Peters, Seely, Sands, Thorne, Underhill and Wiggins. Instances also occur in which the Christian and sir-names of an old Long Islander are repeated in the Province, e.g., Gerhardus Clowes, a combination which has been used as a Christian name by a descendant of a loyalist who came from the island. Again the sir-name Peters constantly occurs in the pre-revolutionary records of the island, and it so happens that two gentlemen of that name, father and son, each of whom, while living, held a civic office in Saint John were each named Benjamin Lester, evidently after a Long Island colonist of that name. Possibly the Peters ancestor and this Benjamin Lester may, in old colony days, have made raids upon the ruddy, luscious and abundant strawberries in the manner described by Master Denton.

In conclusion it is safe to aver that anyone who reads this book will find abundance of entertainment and instruction, and, if of loyalist origin or possessed of loyalist lore, may find in its pages what may be of personal interest or relate, in some way, to friend or neighbour.

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