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Source: *The New England Quarterly*, Sep., 1968, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Sep., 1968), pp. 409-436

Published by: The New England Quarterly, Inc.

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/363986>

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## MEMORANDA AND DOCUMENTS

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### FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER VISITS NEW ENGLAND: 1887

RAY ALLEN BILLINGTON

TO young Fred J. Turner (as he then signed himself) the summer of 1887 was the most enlightening of the twenty-five that he had lived. For during that summer, circumstances combined to provide the opportunity to leave his native Midwest for the first time and spend six weeks on the Atlantic seaboard, most of them in history-rich New England. This was a memorable experience for Turner, and one not unimportant in shaping his historical concepts. The excitement of new places, the broader vistas that opened before him, the break with his provincial past, helped prepare him to develop the startlingly new interpretation of American history that he announced six years later in his essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History."

Plans for that summer were laid during Turner's second year as a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin where he was plodding toward a Master of Arts degree, supporting himself by serving as Instructor in Rhetoric and History.<sup>1</sup> His principal need was to complete the thesis on which he was laboring by fits and starts, a study of the early fur trade in Wisconsin. Fortunately for Turner, and for the world of scholarship, his mentor was Professor William Francis Allen, who had taught him the elements of history as an undergraduate and was now directing his progress toward his first advanced degree.<sup>2</sup> Allen's concepts were far in advance of his times. He inculcated his pupil with the belief that society was an evolving organism, taught him the critical

<sup>1</sup> The most comprehensive study of Turner's early career is Fulmer Mood, "The Development of Frederick Jackson Turner as a Historical Thinker," Colonial Society of Massachusetts, *Transactions*, 1937-1942, xxxiv, 283-352 (Boston, 1943).

<sup>2</sup> Allen, who had come to the university in 1867 as Professor of Latin and History, had only in 1886 been made Professor of History. Turner was his first graduate student. *Catalogue of the University of Wisconsin for 1887-1888* (Madison, 1888), 104-105, 115. A useful biography of Allen is a master's thesis, Owen P. Stearns, "William Francis Allen: Wisconsin's First Historian" (University of Wisconsin, 1955).

use of sources, and convinced him that multiple forces must be appraised to understand any past event. These were invaluable lessons, but they slowed Turner's progress toward a degree, particularly during the 1886-1887 academic year when he was pressed into service as Allen's assistant.<sup>3</sup> Still he could not resist temptation when he learned that his master was to visit Cambridge that June to attend the reunion of his Harvard class, and to rest at Nantucket. Why not go along and savor a ceremony at the nation's most venerated university?

Actually Turner had a far stronger motive for visiting New England. Just a year before he had met a charmingly petite young lady from Chicago who had come to Madison with her mother to enroll a younger sister in the university. By a stroke of good fortune, the three had stayed at Mrs. Bross's boardinghouse, where Turner was a patron. With both it was love at first sight, and in the spring of 1887 the engagement of Frederick J. Turner to Miss Caroline Mae Sherwood was announced.<sup>4</sup> "Darling little Mae," as she was to be saluted in his letters for the remainder of his days, was to be in Massachusetts that summer; she was a victim of hay fever and had to flee the pollen-laden atmosphere of the Middle West by early June. Why not attend the Harvard Commencement with Professor Allen, then spend an idyllic few weeks with Mae in the Berkshires? Turner had saved enough from his pittance of a salary to make the journey. And he could keep up his studies if he took along a few books.

Gradually their plans were perfected in an excited exchange of letters. Mae was to go directly to Conway, Massachusetts, the lovely town near Deerfield which was to be her summer home, reaching there by the middle of June. There she would stay at a boardinghouse kept by a Mrs. Davis, accompanied by her mother, Lucinda Allen Ware Sherwood, and her sister Tirzah Sherwood. Turner would take the train to Cambridge, attend commencement, and

<sup>3</sup> Professor Allen's course was so large that he was forced to divide it into sections. This allowed Turner to abandon some of the work in rhetoric and oratory that had occupied much of his time, and to assume the section on American history.

<sup>4</sup> Turner broke the news of his engagement to his parents in early Feb., 1887, but not until early April was it publicly announced. Andrew Jackson Turner to Frederick J. Turner, Feb. 6, 1887; Frederick J. Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, April 8, 1887. Frederick Jackson Turner Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, TU Box A. Hereafter cited as Turner Papers, HEH.

then spend a few days seeing Boston's sights. On July 1 they would meet in Boston and, if Mae's health allowed, spend a week on Cape Cod before returning to Conway. This seemed preferable to Nantucket where Professor Allen was to be staying, for there was no surf bathing on the island.<sup>5</sup> He had learned of a boardinghouse in Chatham where they could all live reasonably.<sup>6</sup>

With these plans agreed upon, Turner's anticipation steadily heightened. There would be walks on the beach, he promised Mae, and strolls over the green hills about Conway, where he would read her romantic verse. He would bring along volumes of Tennyson, Whittier, and Mrs. Browning, and teach her to love their authors as he did. But there would be work, too, for he was struggling to learn enough French to be able to read the fur-trade documents for his thesis.<sup>7</sup> Happily Mae had some training in the language, and would be his teacher. "Be assured, liebsten," he wrote, "when I reach New England you will have to study, for I propose to know lots of French before my few weeks of summer life are over and you will have to study how to instruct a pupil—dull, exceedingly, and very prone to tell his 'Je t'aime' with wordless lips and forget the book in looking at the teacher."<sup>8</sup>

Such visions only made the agony of waiting seem longer. There were "rhetoricals" to be heard, and endless papers to be read. He must arrange a banquet for his own Wisconsin class of 1884 which was having its third reunion, and prepare a speech for that occasion. "The contest is going badly," he reported, "the thesis is looking decidedly vague, the commencement work is piling up on me. . . . I am not even-tempered at all today, but filled with wrath and direful."<sup>9</sup> To compound his misery, Madison was gripped by an early-season heat wave that sent temperatures soaring. He could, he told Mae, summon an appetite for nothing save ice served to the slow music of a fan, and could sleep after his nightly stint of examination reading only by plunging briefly into Lake Mendota's cold waters.<sup>10</sup>

But the tasks were accomplished; the day of freedom crept near-

<sup>5</sup> Turner to Mrs. Lucinda Allen Ware Sherwood, May 20, 1887. HEH, Box A.

<sup>6</sup> Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, May 22, 1887. HEH, Box A.

<sup>7</sup> Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, June 8, 1887. HEH, Box B.

<sup>8</sup> Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, [June 16, 1887]. HEH, Box B.

<sup>9</sup> Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, May 27, 1887. HEH, Box A.

<sup>10</sup> Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, June 18, 1887. HEH, Box B.

er. Turner attended his class reunion on June 21, greeting the twenty-five who gathered at the Park Hotel.<sup>11</sup> After a brief trip to nearby Portage to bid his parents farewell, on June 24 he was off for Chicago. His first stop was at Niagara Falls which he observed with the awe of the typical tourist, but not until he left Albany did he experience his greatest thrill. "The hills wrote their rugged autographs against the skyline," he wrote Mae, "the people began to say na-ou, the farms were little patches of stone and daisies turned up slantingly on the hill sides—and I knew I was near New England."<sup>12</sup>

The adventures that followed, and his reactions to them, he preserved in a series of letters to his family: his father Andrew Jackson Turner, his mother Mary O. Hanford Turner, and his sister Ellen Breese Turner. Those letters provide an intimate picture of the three spots in Massachusetts that he visited: Boston, Chatham, and Conway. They also show that Frederick Jackson Turner was not only a tradition-shattering historian but a writer with some descriptive talent and a sensitive observer of the contemporary scene, who was capable of a brief love affair with New England:<sup>13</sup>

Young's Hotel, Boston  
June 27, 1887

Dearest father:

Bunker Hill seen and the Ocean. That is enough for one day—is it not?

I am in love with Boston—its quaint streets, paved and clean, and narrow and winding as the labyrinth. The pretty Boston girl who occupied the seat with me from Worcester in said that they followed the old historic cowpaths. I think her right, for they are as narrow and as devious as any cowpath that ever ran by a trout brook. Speaking of trout brooks, I have seen such dashing, capricious, crystal little streams winding down through the Catskill country near Kinderhook, as made me envious of the man who got off at that den of the old New York Fox and carried a pole and basket.

From 5 A.M. until past Kinderhook the country was simply gorgeous. The Mohawk came first, winding leisurely along through the valley—lazy canal boats drifting after lazy mules and lazier

<sup>11</sup> *Wisconsin State Journal*, June 22, 1887.

<sup>12</sup> Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, June 27, 1887. HEH, Box B.

<sup>13</sup> These letters, all written in longhand, are in the Turner Papers at the Huntington Library, TU Box B. They are reproduced with the permission of the Huntington Library.

boys, all genuine Sleepy Hollow fashion. Then came Albany—a beautiful city crowned with its State House, and shortly after the Catskills writing their rugged autograph against the sky-line.

But the farms! Bits of rock-covered, daisy-decked, hill sides, hemmed in by stone walls. Not like our sweep of corn fields, and uninterrupted seas of wheat! I suggested this to the pretty Boston girl but she said what New England raised was men. I had the good fortune to think quickly and add—"and beautiful women."

There are a number of interesting little tunnels along the line that play hide and seek with the day light at times. The pretty B. g. said it was awkward sometimes. I felt so too!

Tonight after a fish supper I took a driver and hunted up the wharves and Bunker Hill. My Jehu looked blank when I suggested that a look at the site of the Boston mob would be acceptable, and inquired if I meant the one last summer and added that it wasn't one-half as much of a mob as Chicago had. But he made amends later by pointing out a very dingy and commonplace fish house as "Tea-wharf" where they had some sort of a rumpuss a good many years ago—"but," he added, "it has changed; and this end of town has been filled in and cut down so b'gosh! you wouldn't know it." I had lots of fun out of him at Bunker Hill. Mystic River, Charlestown, etc. are all as devoid of any historic information to him as they would be to a Sioux Indian.

Tomorrow I meet Professor Allen and expect to do up the city with him a part of the day. I find great enjoyment in going half a block and losing myself completely in the winding ways. Then all one has to do is to keep right on walking just as he would in any wilderness—and he bobs up serenely at his starting place.

The Harvard fellows are here in force attending commencement this week, tho' most of em went out to the boat races at New London today.

Love to everybody  
Fred

Young's Hotel, Boston, Mass.  
June 28, 1887

My little Breese,<sup>14</sup> . . .

I wrote home last night about my trip between the falls and here and said that I had seen Bunker Hill. Later in the evening I walked down the streets and saw the narrow old fashioned thoroughfares all aglow with many colored electric lights. It was a veritable Aladdin's palace. The people are not in such a hurry as in Chicago—and they have better faces. They stop and look at the shop windows—and such shop windows as they see Breesie! So many beautiful

<sup>14</sup> Ellen Breese Turner, Frederick J. Turner's sister, was always called "Breese" by her family and friends.

things and so very cheap. We don't know anything about it in the west.

Today I have wandered about the beautiful park called Boston Common—seen Fanuil Hall,<sup>15</sup> Old South Church, the Boston Art Gallery, the Public Library, Trinity Cathedral—and oh, so many other buildings of historic or architectural value. The Art Gallery has casts of all the greatest works of sculpture in the world and is worth a long study and some of its paintings are famous—for instance I saw Bastien-LePage's picture of Jean Darc, with those wonderful visions shining in her eyes and that determined look in her face that made her go forth to save France and expell the English.<sup>16</sup> You must read her marvellous story.

Tonight I went down to the Ocean, saw great steamers pouring out their stores of foreign goods,—& saw huge piles of bananas taken from the great hull of a Florida vessel. How the wharf rats did grab for the ones that fell into the water among the floating debris, and the medusae, the sea anemones, that look like little transparent umbrellas that open and shut and propell themselves along.

After I had sniffed the salt air, mixed with the fragrance of salt mackerel, I took the ferry steamer across to East Boston where the Cunard steamers land—and went aboard a great Ocean monster that was being fed its cargo of wheat by a huge steam elevator. It sails for Liverpool tomorrow. I went about it a good deal, and I grow impatient for the time when I can spend the week on the waters that lie between Boston and Liverpool.

Coming back at night I went through the sailor quarter. Pretty tough place! Millions of half naked children, and the roughest looking men one can imagine. Of course I got lost—that is the usual thing in Boston, but my trusty friends the police and street car conductors turned up at the right time as usual—so here I am.

This letter is more jumbled than it would be were it not for the fact that two Harvard classes (alumni) are holding wine suppers in the dining rooms just below—and after toasts are responded to, they all cheer "Rah! rah! rah! '81" or "'70!" at the top of their voices—it is a rousing noise, I tell you! Some grave looking middle aged men in the crowd—but they are all boys. Just now they are singing college songs very inspiringly—they all end with a cheer

<sup>15</sup> Turner's several misspellings, including that of Faneuil Hall, have been exactly reproduced.

<sup>16</sup> Jules Bastien-LePage, a French artist (1850-1886) well known in that day, painted his Joan of Arc in 1880. It attracted much attention by breaking with the traditional treatment of its subject, representing her as a poor and even squalid peasant girl, glorified by a mystical spiritual grandeur. George C. Williamson, editor, *Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*, I, 94 (London, 1920).

—and a tiger. You see Harvard has just beaten Columbia—so every Boston man sports his Crimson (the colors) with pride.<sup>17</sup>

Good night little one. Love to all,

Fred

The noise below is growing terrific.

Young's Hotel, Boston  
June 30, 1887.

Dearest Mum. . . .

Yesterday I left Boston at nine and took the cars to Cambridge—a half hours ride by street cars. Calling at Prof. J. H. Allen's, I found Prof. W. F. A. there and we three went over to the Harvard commencement.<sup>18</sup> You know Harvard has the finest college buildings in the new world, and their Memorial Hall is one of the finest specimens of architecture in this country.<sup>19</sup> I had a most desirable seat in the house—Prof. Allen was on the platform, being one of the older alumni.

The audience was not so “dressy” as one would see in Chicago, for instance, but was of a superior type of course. The graduating class—some 250—occupied the parquette, and were all in full dress. All announcements were made in Latin, the professors and speakers wore gowns and mortar-boards. The exercises began with the arrival of Gov. Ames and staff, attended by the brilliantly uniformed Boston Lancers.<sup>20</sup>

The magnificent Sander's Theater in Memorial Hall<sup>21</sup> was soon

<sup>17</sup> On June 27, 1887, at the annual boat race at New London, the Harvard eight bested the Columbia crew. *The World Almanac, 1889* (New York, 1889), 139.

<sup>18</sup> “Prof. W. F. A.,” is Professor William Francis Allen, Turner's principal mentor at the University of Wisconsin. J. H. Allen was Professor Allen's brother, Joseph Henry Allen, a Unitarian clergyman, who had graduated from Harvard in 1840. At this time he was lecturing on ecclesiastic history at the Harvard Divinity School. A short time later he became editor of the *Unitarian Review*. *National Encyclopaedia of American Biography*, xxviii, 443-444 (New York, 1940).

<sup>19</sup> Memorial Hall, built in the 1870's as a monument to Harvard men killed in the Civil War, was completed in 1876, at a cost of \$500,000. It was described by a contemporary guidebook as a “most magnificent and imposing edifice.” Later generations would not agree with Turner that it was “one of the finest specimens of architecture in this country.” Moses King, *Harvard and Its Surroundings* (Cambridge, Mass., 1880), 39.

<sup>20</sup> The governor of Massachusetts at this time was Oliver Ames, son of Oakes Ames of Crédit Mobilier fame, and himself a capitalist and railroad executive. Allen Johnson, editor, *Dictionary of American Biography*, I, 254-256 (New York, 1928).

<sup>21</sup> Sanders Theater occupied the east wing of Memorial Hall. Seating about 1,500 persons, it was long the scene of official occasions. King, *Harvard and Its Surroundings*, 40-41.



filled and a pompous officer in uniform came to the front, pounded with his sword scabbard on the platform and said "Let the assembly be in order." The quiet and inoffensive audience being already in the very primest of New England order, was then ready for the exercises.

The first oration was the Latin salutatory. The young fellow handled his periods in true Ciceronian Latin and took especial pleasure in welcoming fratres atque—*sorores*—(brothers and sisters); his comical smile and the gusto with which he pronounced *sorores* produced a mild titter among the audience which knew sufficient Latin to "take" the point.

The speakers were very finished, and used strong terse Anglo Saxon with none of the bombast that is found in our western college commencements. On the other hand they lost something in force and vigorous earnestness, and their gestures—except in the case of one young man, who was the embodiment of grace—were somewhat constrained.<sup>22</sup>

After the exercises came the alumni dinner which I did not attend, and I was sorry as you may believe that I could not get a peep at the beautiful dining hall.

In the afternoon I visited the Washington Elm (where W. took command of the army) and the Longfellow homestead—the old Craigie house, a beautiful colonial place embowered in the giant elms.<sup>23</sup>

In the evening I took steamer to Pemberton and returned after seeing the U.S. men-of-war of the Atlantic squadron, *The Puritan* (winner of the world yacht race), great ocean propellers, etc. etc. of all of which I'll tell you later.<sup>24</sup>

With love to all  
Fred

P.S. I meet Mae tomorrow here and we go to Chatham where you will direct my letters, remembering, however, that I expect to leave there July 8 (unless I change my plans) for Conway, Mass.

Yours lovingly  
Fred

<sup>22</sup> Turner was particularly interested in oratory. In addition to teaching "elocution" at the University of Wisconsin, he had been the leading orator of his undergraduate days, winning the coveted Lewis Prize in 1884.

<sup>23</sup> The site of the Washington elm, on Garden Street, is today marked with a bronze plaque. The Craigie-Longfellow House, at 105 Brattle Street in Cambridge, was built in 1759 and occupied by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Little did Turner realize as he viewed its impressive facade and the houses along "Tory Row" that he would live nearby. During his first year at Harvard, in 1910-1911, he occupied the home of Professor Roger B. Merriman, 175 Brattle Street.

<sup>24</sup> The sloop *Puritan*, representing the Eastern Yacht Club, won the America's Cup for the United States in 1885. *The World Almanac*, 1889, 141.

Young's Hotel,  
Boston, June 30, 1887

My dearest Breese,

I am just back from a look at Old North Church. Now, if you don't know about Old North Church, you must open your Longfellow, and begin at:

Listen my children and you shall hear  
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere.

You will then remember that Paul Revere was across the river and that he looked at many things—"but mostly he watched with eager search

For the belfry tower of the Old North Church.<sup>25</sup>

That is what I have been watching for this evening.

I left my hotel and started down Washington street past the monument that bears the noble face of old Sam Adams, (the man who organized the Revolution) then down Hanover street into Salem. Now Salem means, so I have somewhere heard,—“peace.” But of all misnamed streets this is the most misnamed. Hardly had I turned aside from the noise of Hanover street when an entirely different atmosphere was entered.

The word atmosphere is well chosen. In a moment I saw what had happened. I was in Jewry, the street consecrated to “old clothes,” pawn brokers, and similar followers of Abraham. It was a narrow *alley*, we would say in the west—and was fairly packed with swarthy sons and daughters of the tribe of Israel—such noises, such smells, such sights!<sup>26</sup> Did you ever see a bottle filled first with marbles, then the spaces with buckshot, then smaller shot added until the mass was packed tight? The street was like that bottle, filled with big Jew men—long bearded and carrying a staff as you see in a picture,—and with Jew youths and maidens—some of the latter pretty—as you sometimes see a lily in the green muddy slime,—and the little babies and children filled up all the chinks. At last, after much elbowing, I came upon Old North rising out of this mass of Oriental noise and squalor like a haven of rest.

It no longer stands—

—Among the graves on the hill  
Lonely and spectral and somber and still

But it is impressive none the less, and I felt paid for my wandering.

<sup>25</sup> Presumably Turner was traveling without a copy of Longfellow's poems. In this case he displays an accurate memory; the verses are quoted exactly, save for the addition of “For” in the last line. Longfellow, *Poetical Works*, iv, 24-28 (Boston, 1904).

<sup>26</sup> Turner's obvious anti-Semitism was, unfortunately, a product of both his rural background and of his era. It was all too common, even in the more sophisticated eastern cities.

One runs across so many things that it is impossible to tell you one-tenth of what I am seeing. For example, today on the street I met a group of Chinamen, and in a moment a long-haired Asiatic, with fez and swarthy face came by—I fancy he was a Turk or a Hindu, but I only got a glance at him in the crowd. Then came a couple of jolly Jack Tars in their sailor rigs of blue, arms about each others necks, chaffing the people they met; they were from the U.S. Man-of-war, *Ossipee*, that is now in Boston harbor. Next I saw a Cuban or Spaniard and his wife—then an Englishman of unmistakable type. So on down the street.

Before I went to Old North I loafed a couple of hours on Boston Common, and the Public Gardens, where are many choice pieces of sculpture—such as the Soldiers and Sailors monument. The monuments of Sumner, Everett, etc., etc.<sup>27</sup>

The boys were playing ball on one portion of the common just as they have done for two centuries back, I suppose. I came near having an adventure while on this trip. Coming to a particularly shady and inviting nook under some gigantic elms near a fountain I found a number of men and boys resting on the grass, and being tired I laid down too and was just passing to the land of nod when my dreams were interrupted by a little negro with mouth like a new moon shouting in my ear, "Get up, get up, the *cop's* a shakin' his club at ye!" And up I got to discover my late associates making hasty tracks in another direction while I stood gazing at the sign "Keep off the grass" which I had not before observed. However I collected myself, stalked leisurely down a side path with a cool stare at the excited policeman who, wonderful to relate, went right on about his business. So you will *not* see my name in tomorrow's police report.

Since I have begun to imitate the crabs and "go backward" I may as well continue and say that I began the day by a second visit to Cambridge where I did some work in the mammoth Harvard library, saw the memorial hall where the students dine—the walls lined with busts, and portraits of historic New Englanders—it is an inspiring hall to dine in.<sup>28</sup>

Then I went to the Peabody Institute of Archaeology and saw—but how could I begin to tell you what I saw!<sup>29</sup> Skulls, vases, im-

<sup>27</sup> Boston's Boylston Street Mall boasted several statues, including those of Charles Sumner and Edward Everett.

<sup>28</sup> On the west side of Memorial Hall, opposite Sanders Theater, was a dining hall vaguely resembling those of English colleges but vastly larger, measuring 164 by 80 feet. Here about 1,000 students could be seated. The busts and portraits belonging to the university were displayed along a wooden wainscoting twenty-two feet from the floor. King, *Harvard and Its Surroundings*, 40-41.

<sup>29</sup> The Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, established in 1866 with a gift from George Peabody of London, was opened in 1877. It contained the largest collection of North and South American Indian artifacts then in existence. King, *Harvard and Its Surroundings*, 42-43.

plements, idols, mummies, spears, clothes, canoes, Egyptian sculpture, Peruvian temple pillars—and an infinity of antiquities, chiefly from South America, but embracing large collections for the South Sea Islands, China, the Arctic and—everywhere. It is the greatest collection of the kind in America—and of course the greatest collection of American antiquities in the world.

I am tired now and shall say—good night.

Yours lovingly  
Fred.

Chatham, Mass. (Cape Cod)  
July 3, 1887

My Dearest Breese—

I wrote mother this afternoon just a note to say that we had gotten here and now having a few minutes before supper after my nap I will tell you what I have been doing.

We left Boston at four o'clock Friday afternoon and took the Old Colony road to Harwich and thence eight or ten miles by carriage to Chatham.<sup>30</sup> There are four or five Chathams—North C., East C., West C., Chatham proper and Chathamport—a peculiarity of New England villages. This one lies on the east coast of Cape Cod. We had our first view of the Ocean by moonlight as it stretched white and ghostly away into the distance. The Lovelands live in a quaint old Colonial house on the highest of hills along the shore. My room is situated so that I can look directly out of two windows on to the sea. About a half mile out is a long bar that makes a harbor for the little fleet of fishing smacks that lie within the smooth water which all goes out at low tide leaving a long level stretch of beach and seaweed and eel-grass. Against the outer bar the great breakers dash up like white drifts of wool or snow. Beyond is the Ocean and past it sail the schooners trading along the coast, the fishing vessels that salt their cod aboard, the ocean steamers, the whalers, yachts, etc., in one continuous procession which one never tires of watching. The sea breeze comes in strong, steady, and salt making one inexpressibly drowsy and as lazy as clams.

July 5.

What do we do? Well, at 7 the breakfast bell rings and we go down to a meal of codfish caught the night before, or clams, or lobsters, or some other salt water fish. Then we talk or read aloud on the beach or in the arbor on the hill and watch the sea until the tide comes in when we go bathing in the salt water. I am having great sport teaching the girls to swim. After that we dine again on

<sup>30</sup> The Old Colony Railroad, chartered in 1844, at that time ran from Boston to Plymouth, then along Cape Cod to Provincetown, with a branch line from Fall River to Newport. The group that made the journey to Chatham included Caroline Mae Sherwood, her mother Lucinda Allen Ware Sherwood, and her sister Tirzah Sherwood.

fish if we wish, and then the girls take a nap and I go exploring the coast, talking with the fishers, digging clams, sailing, etc. In the evening it is moonlight, and Mae and I go walking on the beach until 9 or so and then we sleep with the coolest atmosphere and the drowsiest you can imagine.

Yesterday was a red letter day. I rose at 4 a.m. and went coddling with Mr. Corkish, an old salt who has been a sailor in the U.S. navy—lived 3 years in China, has been shipwrecked and gone through the mill generally. He rigged up his little yacht (20 feet long) and we got out from the clutches of the breakers into the open sea with a stiff gale and a heavy fog and made for the fishing grounds fifteen miles out at sea, where we found six other fishers who were not celebrating the fourth of July at home. I kept right side up until I had landed a good codfish, but then I did what every new man does. I sat down in a corner of the yacht and watched Corkish haul in 5, 10, 15, 40 pound codfish as fast as he could pull, while I tried to keep my stomach from turning all kinds of acrobatic maneuvers. We got back about 6 P.M. with 82 codfish.

You have no conception of how it is to be alone in a great waste of tumbling waters, steering by compass in a little craft, with the glorious salt sea breeze coming like wine across the Ocean, the boat going down into the waves like a toboggan down a slide and climbing up again to the white crest of the most watery hill. They are brave men these sailors and have a hard life of it. Few people go out with them as I did, so I am proud of my experience in spite of the touch of sea sickness, which was not a bad one. Corkish says I would be O.K. in a day or so—but I'm not anxious to be a sailor.

On the way home we saw a whale spouting, and in the evening one that had been harpooned came ashore. This morning the whaler came up and towed the great animal out to sea. We watched it several miles out with a glass. There was a great commotion in the village when it came ashore it being thought that a fishing boat had capsized on the outer bar, and it was reported that a young man and the girl to whom he was engaged were the victims. Fortunately it was only a whale.

This afternoon we are going riding. To-morrow we go to the beach near a grove and have a clam bake. This noon we eat clam chowder.

I am red as a boiled lobster and feel like one, but am healthy and as happy as could be wished. The Sherwoods inquire very cordially after you all, and Mae is just as lovely of course as she always was and always will be.

I shall hope to have a letter when I reach Conway. We now expect to leave here next Saturday—today being Tuesday.

With best love to all, I am  
Very affectionately your  
Fritz

Chatham, Mass.

July 6, 1887

My dear father,

Your very welcome letter reached me last night.<sup>31</sup> I am glad if I can at all share with you at home my keen enjoyment of what is really as you call it "a new world" to me.

I am not finding my trip so expensive as I feared it might be though Boston made a big hole in my pocket in spite of care about spending. A city is an expensive place. If I stay to go to the Adirondacks I may have to discount my next year's salary, which I would dislike to do, but if I return as I had expected I think I shall get along with what I have now.

I told Breese a little about my cod fishing, but you may care to know more in detail about that industry—and about this little fishing port.

When [Bartholomew] Gosnold first sighted these coasts at the very beginning of the seventeenth century, the old chronicle relates that the fish "bothered the boats so" that they named the place cape Cod. However that may [be] the Massachusetts Cod fishers have always been a most important element in the prosperity of the state, so much so that the Cod was once proposed as the fittest emblem for the seal of State. Chatham is in the very heart of these cod fisheries. In the ante bellum days it was quite a port. An old salt who is the *pater familias* of the vast congregation of uncles, nephews, grandchildren, cousins, sweethearts etc. that congregate in this old house where I am stopping related to me the other day—that he once was a member of a firm here that packed great quantities of cod and even sent fleets to the mackerel grounds at the Grand Banks. "In those days," said he, "before Syracuse salt mines were developed, there was also here the steady click, click of the pumping mills where we packed our cargos of salt."

But like many another New England port Chatham with its 2300 people has now become simply the rendezvous of a fleet of some 60 fishing smacks, and the place where Bostonians come to spend a month or so at summer time. Aside from other causes for the decay of Chatham as a harbor there was a natural cause. Over a quarter of a century ago the bar that now stretches across the inlets was not there. The storms and tides gradually silted up the sand until the days when great schooners furled their sails at Chat-

<sup>31</sup> On July 3, 1887, Turner's father, Andrew Jackson Turner, wrote him a sensitive letter in an attempt to dampen some of his enthusiasm for the East. Here in the West, wrote the elder Turner, we are new, and the ways of the people as well as the appearance of the country are quite unlike those of the East. He cautioned his son that he was seeing only the bright side of the East, the evidence of three hundred years of accumulated wealth and effort. Give us the same age, added Mr. Turner, and we will not appear to such a disadvantage. Then, like all good fathers, he inquired about his son's finances, and offered to help. Andrew Jackson Turner to Frederick J. Turner, July 3, 1887. Turner Papers, HEH, TU Box B.

ham port were gone by. Then the merchants tried to cut a channel through the bar, but all in vain, for the shifting sands came in on the tide and undid all the work of the previous days. "At last," so said my ancient mariner,—“at last God a’ mighty took it into his head to show what he could do, and one winter day he sent a great storm to Chatham port which drove the ice and the sea after it straight through the highest part of the bar, and left a way for our little cod fishing fleet yonder to go to the grounds once more.” But the days of Chatham as a harbor were gone.

And it is not such a highway to the sea, this channel, as God-a’-mighty might have been expected to make, for except at the fullest of tides it is a ticklish job running the little yachts in between the great breakers dashing up their white arms on the bar as if eager to snatch the brave fellows that stand by the tiller and hurl their tiny sails among their spray and roar.

One of the daily sights that the visitor never tires of watching is to be seen by standing at Lovelands high ground and looking out for the return of the fleet from the cod grounds. They time their going and their coming to suit the change of tide that they may cross the bar as safely as possible. Just as the ebb is well on and the shoals begin to climb into view through the green waters—the first of the little cat-rigged crafts flecks the sky-line with its white sail, dipping and skimming like the sea gulls near the beach; soon another, and another come up into sight until the whole fleet like a swarm of white winged butterflies flitting in eager chase for a flower, come swiftly down converging toward the narrow channel that but half cuts the bar—through this they pass in careful procession. If the waves be up there is need of much tacking and many a firm grasp of the tiller. At one place where the smacks dash into the very breakers they have to wait for the three great seas or waves to pass and then they chase them over the bar in the lull that follows. Three years ago some inexperienced hands neglected to count the waves before they took the plunge and the breakers caught their little ship and rolled it over and over mast downward and crushed it like an egg shell. No one ever saw the men again. On such days one can see the fishermen’s wives standing on the dunes shading their eyes with their hands and keeping keen glance at the perilous reef. I am learning the full meaning of Kingsley’s lines

Three fishers went sailing out into the West  
 Out into the West as the sun went down  
 Each thought of the woman who loved him best  
 And the women were watching them out of the town

. . . . .

“For men must work and women must weep tho’ the harbor bar be moaning”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Presumably Turner was quoting Charles Kingsley’s “The Three Fishers,” from memory. The actual lines were:

I have visited several fishermen's homes and find them a rugged brave lot of men with, strange to say, the tenderest of hearts toward their wives and children—and the tanned freckled women love their hardy "toilers of the sea" and each day shrink at the sight of the parting sail. One would think they would become used to it, but from what I can learn in most cases it is not so. Kind motherly people the women are and the men are good fellows too.

The families rise at 2 or 3 in the morning—and breakfast. Then the man goes down and prepares his boat and bait and lines—and if the tide looks right and the fog and the wind are not too severe they put their traps in their dories and pull out to the boat and sail their 15 miles right out to sea to the banks where the fish are found.

The day that I went (July 4) the fog had come in very thickly. We sailed two hours by compass and then estimated that the grounds were reached whereupon the boat was allowed to drift. The lines are like magnified pickerel trolling lines on big wooden frames that revolve and unwind. A biggest size pickerel hook, with a mass of lead just above it, completes the rig. The bait is a winkle—a snail-shell form of the size of a hen's egg—which is first denuded of its shell by being pounded with a hammer. Casting out about 20 fathoms of line one keeps up a sawing motion until a bite is felt—not much of a one either—there is no game to a cod fish—when he hauls in hand over hand as fast as possible leaving no slack line. The cod is yanked right over the rail and pitched into a locker—or "kid"—at the side. They average about 5 pounds or so, but get as high as 40. Sometimes the hook brings up lemons or pumpkins—not our familiar ones, but sea plants shaped and colored like them. Occasionally a haddock or other fish is taken. Ask a fisherman how many cod he has taken and he will say: so many "kindle." The term is properly "quintals" and is taken from the French weight for flour, 112 lbs, which seems to have been the standard for early fishers. We took "2½ quintals" or 84 cod—which was not a bad catch at all—worth about \$8. We were on the fishing grounds two or three hours. A fisherman takes in the season about 100 quintals—worth from \$600 to \$1000. He gets but about 3 or 4 hours sleep—but has to lay off every once in a while because of weather or tide, and so catches up his sleep. Starting at 3 or 4 A.M.—on an average—they get home between 3 and 6 P.M. and after they have cleaned and salted their cod in the fish houses along shore, it is time to go to bed, after supper.

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"Three fishers went sailing away to the West,  
 Away to the West as the sun went down;  
 Each thought on the woman who loved him the best,  
 And the children stood watching them out of the town;  
 For men must work, and women must weep,  
 For there's little to earn, and many to keep,  
 Though the harbor bar be moaning."

*Poems by Charles Kingsley* (London, 1889), 255.



In the winter they sometimes get a little dory fishing near shore, for cod come in shoal water at times. But chiefly they rest and dig clams for the market.

The boys all keep busy when out of school by digging clams or winkles &c for bait, and by tending lobster pots &c. Some little urchins of ten or so go coddling with their fathers—for as a rule but one man goes in a boat.

Perhaps you wonder what I did while my friend the fisherman was pulling in his cod. As Aeneas said—"Thou biddest me recall unutterable woes."<sup>33</sup> When we started out I behaved nobly—kept my sea legs clear to the grounds, took a turn at the tiller while Corkish lit his pipe and spun his yarns of life in China on a man-of-war and how he came to settle on Cape Cod by meeting a little country girl at Portsmouth, N.H. who didn't wish him to go to sea again. I even kept right side up until we had caught several cod and I had lost and caught enough to know the feeling. But then I took a look out on the tumbling waste of waters all shut in by the fog through which our neighbors of the fleet looked ghostlike. I felt the little boat *sea-saw*, and swing from one aqueous hillock to another—till at last—but why tell how I leaned over the side and meditated on philosophy and made resolves that I would never even eat another cod fish!

But the sea breeze! fresh and strong and satisfying! It lifted the fog for a time, and the sun came down and tried to dry our wet garments and salt encrusted cheeks. It makes one drowsy and yet has the sparkle and exhilaration of champagne. It can not be described, but it is right welcome to worn out nerves and a tired head, I can tell you.

The fog soon settled in again, but the wind kept strong and the return began. Like a pack of hounds each little smack chased along the waters. Here and there a haglin<sup>34</sup> rose from the water and circled over the boat, once a whale spouted in the distance, an hour and three quarters and no land to be seen. It was nearly three hours before the sharp eye of the skipper descried the outlines of the coast. I couldn't see it for ten minutes. Then dimly appeared the sails that pass the coast, the fog whistles sounded, the shoals appeared. We were among the breakers. Lashing the sheet and tiller taut the skipper climbed ahead to the jib hauled it in, seated like a figure head on the bowsprit—and got back just in time to

<sup>33</sup> Turner was remembering Aeneas' opening remarks in Book II of *The Aeneid*, which read (according to one modern translation): "Beyond all words, O queen, is the grief thou bidest me revive, how the Greeks overthrew Troy's wealth and woeful realm." *Virgil, with an English Translation by H. Rushton Fairclough*, I, 295 (London, 1916).

<sup>34</sup> For the benefit of those as little versed in the lore of the sea as the editor, a haglin, or "hagden" is one of the group of nautical birds known as "shearwaters" from their custom of shearing, or skimming, the waves.

seize the helm and pilot us along the channel, across the bar and into port!

On the hill were Mae, and her sister and mother looking anxiously out. For a yacht had capsized, it was said, an hour before, and they, like all women, were sure it was mine! The yacht proved to be a stranded whale, and we were welcomed back to a warm supper and the evening mail with Boston *Daily Advertiser* for a relish. Such is "codding."

I shall tell in my next letter of our clambake in the woods—visit to the light house—sail into the bay to see a yacht race—of the fog—(we have had lots of it)—of eating oysters just from the beds, of other things too numerous to tell.<sup>35</sup>

I will keep you posted as to my plans and will write you about Adirondacks later.

Give my best love to Mother and Breese.

Affectionately  
Fred

Chatham, Cape Cod, Mass.  
July 10, 1887

My dearest mum,

I have started a letter to you several times lately which has been each time interrupted by a call to bathe or to go walking or clam digging or some other imperative duty, and I have thus lagged behind.

Having written up the fishing to father, and Boston to Breese, I think you may be interested in Cape Cod folks and the clambake and yacht race.

Did you ever read "Cape Cod Folks"?<sup>36</sup> If not get it and read it, and then don't believe one-half you read—and yet you will find much truth in it. They have a kind of dialect—for instance they don't sound their *r*'s, and they say "yes, suh!" with accent strongly on the last word, for "yes, sir."

The town is not on a railroad but is reached by a drive of 8 miles from Harwich on the Old Colony railroad. If you are posted you engage a livery before hand; if not, you take the coach—an old fashioned "Concord coach," and ride two hours. If you have the experience that some of our fellow boarders, Chicago people, have, you will be landed in a little alley at the coach stable for a half an hour with no intimation of the cause of the delay—after which you will be transferred to a crazy old gig and taken to the lodgings.

The town of Chatham dates from 1660, so there are many quaint old pieces of furniture and china etc. to be found. Mrs. Sherwood

<sup>35</sup> Either Turner never wrote such a letter or it has been lost; in view of the care with which his parents preserved his letters this seems unlikely.

<sup>36</sup> *Cape Cod Folks* (Boston, 1881), a novel by Sarah Pratt McLean Greene.

bought for 50 cents a very odd old china milk pitcher which had been in a fisher's family about 60 years. They are simple folk and seem not to appreciate the value of antique articles. My room has the quaintest of old water pitchers but Mrs. Loveland won't sell it.

The houses are two story chiefly—slanting roofs, big chimnies on the outside, shingled not only on the roof but down the sides as well. This applies of course simply to the typical Cape Cod house; there are fine residences—summer cottages, etc. The barn, wood-house etc. are generally connected all together. In the door-yards are to be found seats made by putting on the ground one of the great vertebrae of a whale. This is a common ornament. A sea captain next door who lost \$75,000 by having his ship cast away on the rocks and who then retired to live a peaceful farming life on the cape, adorns his front yard by the “wheel” which he used to handle in Indian seas.

About the houses grow a few stubby trees—the wind blows them about so they have to devote all their energies to keeping right side up. For it did blow the day we were there! One strong impetuous continuous rush of wind down to the sea. The daisies on the wind swept sand dunes seem to struggle to keep their petals on, and the girls were fairly blown to pieces and were continually lamenting their frizzes which with the gusty air and the damp salt fog had a hard struggle.

The damp, salt fog! We had it all but the day we came and the day we left. It was so thick that you had to *push* your way through it. If you wore woollens they could be wrung out in a few minutes—it stuck to your cheeks in salt flakes, and you could feel its sticky moisture in your hair. But it made strange pictures sometimes. There is a fascination in looking out upon the sea in a fog. You hear the surf beating its alarm drum on the shoals; the fog horn sounds sepulchral in the distance; now and then a ghost of a sail that seems only thicker fog shaped into sail like form passes before you, while you wonder whether it be really a sail or not, and sometimes the mainmast will push up through the white veil and show its pennant in the clear air above the sheety dampness. Through its screen the sun shone with a silver soft glow looking like another moon. And one evening the moon played its own strange prank and drifted out into the sky like the sun having just opposite it a ghostly rainbow—devoid of colors, but looking like a pale dream of a rainbow.

With all this damp, and wind no one ever takes cold. You cannot! The fog wraps you up, saturates you, the wind buffets you, you plunge in the sea and lie on the wet sand for an hour in your damp bathing clothes, and so to bed with sheets fairly sticky with salt moisture, while the humid clouds sail in at your open window—but no cold. And all this time it was 60° in the shade at Boston!

The horses are stubby little nags that refuse to go unless you pull

up hard on the reins; and refuse to stop unless you say "Sh—h!" and slack the reins. When therefore we inexperienced people first tried to stop by saying "whoa!" and drawing up the lines, we nearly had a runaway.

The town was settled about 1660. There are some quaint old town records which we hunted up and which go back to about 1690 in the scrawling chirography of Wm. Nickerson, the first town clerk.<sup>37</sup> His descendants still live at Chatham.

Here is an extract from the record—interesting to me since it shows the status of my own profession at the time.

—And at the same town meeting it was voted that Mr. Dan'l Legg should be our schoolemaster for one half year and that he should have six pounds (!) for his half year, viz. six pounds for his six months and also to give him ye use of an hors to ride to Yarmouth if nede be twice within ye six months time and allso to mend his cloths if ned be within ye six months' time.

Such was teaching in the good old days on sandy Cape Cod.

From an old book—which I bought for 25 cents of my landlady—and which bears the title "A brief relation of the most memorable and remarkable passages of the providence of God manifested to the planters of New England in America" etc.,<sup>38</sup> I was gratified to learn that one of the pilgrims who sighted Cape Cod and put in at Plymouth harbor bore the name of John Turner<sup>39</sup>—and the same book related the happy fact that Peregrine White was ushered into the world and was still living.<sup>40</sup>

One of Mae's ancestors was Richard Clark who was master's

<sup>37</sup> The site of Chatham was purchased from the Indians in 1656 by William Nickerson, or Nicarson, of Yarmouth. The purchase was disputed by the colonial authorities, inaugurating a long period of controversy. Eventually, however, Nickerson made good his claim to about 4,000 acres. This area was incorporated as the town of Chatham in 1712. William C. Smith, *A History of Chatham, Massachusetts. Part I*, 55-77 (Hyannis, Mass., 1909).

<sup>38</sup> Turner had the good fortune to buy Nathaniel Morton's *New-England's Merriall: or, A Brief Relation of the Most Memorable and Remarkable Passages of the Providence of God, Manifested to the Planters of New-England in America* (Cambridge, 1669). Presumably he did not purchase the 1669 edition; others had been published in 1721, 1772, and 1826. Yet in purchasing any one of these for twenty-five cents, he made a remarkably good investment; a copy of the 1669 edition recently sold for well over \$2,000.

<sup>39</sup> John Turner is listed as a passenger on the *Mayflower* and a signer of the Mayflower Compact. Nathaniel Morton, *New-England's Memorial* (Cambridge, 1669), 15-16.

<sup>40</sup> Morton writes: "About this time Mrs. Susanna White was delivered of a son who was named Peregrine; he was the first of the English that was born in N. E., and still surviveth, and is the Lieutenant of the Military Company of Marshfield." Morton, *New-England's Memorial*, 18.

mate, "and first stepped ashore" upon an island afterwards called after him.<sup>41</sup>

We drove ten miles across the Cape to Brewster, one day and looked up the old cemetery where are laid the bones of the early Clarks. The headstones bear dates about 1700 and are adorned with the most pathetic looking sad-mouthed fat cheeked cherubs with night caps, surmounted by a pair of cross bones.<sup>42</sup> Brewster is a beautiful New England village by the sea—the home of many retired sea captains and full of beautiful old houses. The very picturesque little library building (with reading room and so on) is attended by the ladies of the town who meet in groups of two or three turn by turn to care for it. Cape Cod, inland is still the same sandy country with slope and dip and little lakes—and scraggy pines—and even the oaks covered with dull gray moss. One's remembrance of the Cape is almost entirely that of monotony, and desolation—for the fog, and the sand, and the dwarf firs, and the low shingled houses are certainly not full of life and vivacity. And yet there is a charm about it all and the memory of Chatham cannot soon be lost.

But see how I have wandered away from what I was going to tell you of—the clam bake and the yacht race. Perhaps I will do them up in detail later; now I will close this letter and in my next I'll wind up Cod, and tell you about this beautiful sweep of hills, that look like a pudding all beaten up by a hand of power and left in their jumble of green and brown, slope and valley, to be a rest to tired people's eyes.

Very lovingly yours  
Fred

Conway, Mass.  
July 15, 1887

My dearest mum,

Among the hills! I did not find it hard to describe the Cape Cod life. One can always treat odd things more successfully and easily than he can matters that derive their charm from delicacy and beauty.

<sup>41</sup> Morton relates that on December 6, 1620, the Pilgrims sent out a shallop on the third voyage of discovery. After encounters with the Indians they were driven into a strange harbor by a storm, finding shelter in the lee of an island. "This was later named Clark's Island because Mr. Clark, the Master's Mate, first stepped on shore there." Morton, 19-20.

<sup>42</sup> The Old Burial Ground at Brewster was founded with the first church in 1700. The searchers would not find Richard Clark's grave there, but they could feast their eyes on an imposing assemblage of Clarks, including Patience Clark (1756), Temperance Clark (1760), Ebenezer Clark (1725), Sarah Clark (1743), and Thankful Clark (1802). Charles E. Mayo, *Mortuary Record from the Gravestones in the Old Burial Ground in Brewster, Mass.* (Plymouth, Mass., 1898).

I am glad I saw the level white sands of Cape Cod, the fog, and the wide stretch of sea before I came up here into this charming land where—

“All the hill tops lay asleep  
Like green waves on a sea”

where it seems as if some ocean tossing up its great crested waves had suddenly been touched by an Almighty hand and forever turned to emerald silence.

We left Boston on the Fitchburg-Hoosac tunnel route—and as the evening came on we reached the Connecticut valley and the pillowy hills.<sup>43</sup> It had been a rainy, cloudy day but when we came upon this queenly river pacing stately down the green-carpeted valley, of a sudden there fell upon it the amber light of the descending sun. Do you know what a change can be wrought by light? A new world burst upon us. The hills caught the sun's lances on their green shield and shot them down the broad valley; the deep green of the meadow grew a brighter green, the river flashed like a silver ribbon among the hills, green nearby, blue farther on, and purple and hazy, as they cut the horizon's azure, and all glorified by the baptism of the sunlight. Soon the clouds above turned red and golden and dashed the river and the woods with crimson tints, as tho' a painter's brush had dropped upon a glorious landscape. The shadows in the valley deepened and the hill tops shimmered with the dying beams.

The train curved and wound about as it threaded the Deerfield valley—and an endless succession of hill and dale, hill and dale began. Each hill seemed more beautiful than its neighbor—and they were all one family. They seemed to smile down on one and say, “Look at me, oh, you of the Western plains! Am I not worthy of your look—I and my sisters here? See how my silken robes of green and gold glance and glimmer in this sheen; see how gracefully I bend and bow, and rise to kiss the clouds that love to descend to meet my upturned face. Am I not beautiful? Do you not feel my fragrant breath, odorous with the pine, with new mown hay, with this clear sweet champagne of the upper air? Tell me, what think you of New England?”

And I was forced to say, “Oh, hills, your pines are not so large as are Wisconsin pines, your new-mown hay comes from little bits of meadow land so hemmed in by stone walls that the farmer has hardly room to swing his primitive scythe, your farms look in peril of slipping off their slanting hillsides into the wee brook that you call a river and of being lost forever with their thimbleful of grain—but you *are* beautiful! I doff my cap and say it in sincerity—beautiful, indeed, are you, New England!”

<sup>43</sup> At this time the Boston and Fitchburg Railroad operated a line through the Hoosac Tunnel to Greenfield and North Adams.

Bardwell's Station came at last and we climbed into the carryall and turned our faces up toward Conway.<sup>44</sup> Upl truly. For as we left the Deerfield river, for several miles the wagon made a decided slant toward the zenith. We passed the erratic stone walls that crept along beneath the apple trees, which must be inexpressibly lovely when they are making pink the hills with a wealth of fragrant blossoms. We passed the firs and hemlocks with the fireflies flashing like tiny meteors among their shadowy branches, the river gleamed again at the side as the stars came out, and it sang as it danced down the dark valley and nestled close to the protecting hills.

At last we reached the summit and set the brakes and began the descent. Such a glorious place for coasting, Breesie! Winding down the hills for three miles the road drops like an arrow, so that the wheels fairly screeched as the iron brake pressed their tires and held them back from their wild wish to rush down to the end like those "circling moons" that Bret Harte tells of in his "Driver's Story."<sup>45</sup>

We reached Mrs. Davis's in time to get a good warm supper before retiring. Mrs. Davis is a typical New England woman. She is a widow and has her father, an aged man of 87, with her. He is very deaf, but can see to read without glasses and gets around very briskly. New England seems to be good for bringing people to a hale old age. I saw a man making hay today who had celebrated his golden wedding last year. Mr. Lyons is a very pious old man who has morning and evening prayers and grace before meals.<sup>46</sup> Something of a task at first but I am getting considerable fun out of studying the old man. He makes an excellent prayer—asks for the whole world, and doesn't try to have the Lord arrange His business to suit his. Besides I am getting more Scripture than I have heard

<sup>44</sup> Conway was a pleasant hill town on the southern border of Franklin County, bounded on the east by the town of Deerfield. It was settled in 1762 and incorporated as a town in 1786. At this time the town contained two stores, a bank, a public library, a high school, three churches, a cooperative creamery, and a fire company with eighty members. *Western Massachusetts: A History, 1636-1925*, II, 737-739 (New York, 1926).

<sup>45</sup> Bret Harte's poem, "The Stage-Driver's Story," tells of a driver who descended a hill so rapidly that he lost three wheels from his coach. As he came into the station on one wheel, he looked back and saw:

"the three wheels following still,  
Like moons on the horizon whirling,  
Till, circling, they gracefully sank on the road  
At the side of the station."

Bret Harte, *Poems and Two Men of Sandy Bar* (Boston, 1894), 175-177.

<sup>46</sup> Before Turner was admitted to Mrs. Davis' boardinghouse, he had to assure Mae Sherwood that he would not offend Mr. Lyons by smoking. He did so, but confessed to being a perennial backslider who might succumb again in the Berkshire woods. Could Mr. Lyons then be persuaded that he was a new kind of insect exterminator? Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, [June 16, 1887]. Turner Papers, HEH, TU Box B.

for several years before. It is a pity that the supernatural has been so strongly urged in connection with the Bible that its value as a literary work is not appreciated properly by many of us who cannot accept the interpretation given by the older churches. I have not read it as I would have read other books of equal worth—if indeed there be any such—because of an early prejudice aroused against it by the nonsense that my first Sunday school teachers tried to have me believe.

Since I came I have spent the days largely in climbing hills with my dear little girl. The other evening our party—together with Miss Ray, a Smith's College girl—very pretty and very cultivated, a cousin of Mae's—went to Fields' Hill and had the magnificent view which it commands.<sup>47</sup> Such a sweep of hills and such a beautiful valley! To the left the hills were like dancing oreads—sprightly—a gay jumble of tree-clad heights with most graceful undulations as far as the eye could reach, the charming purple haze falling like a veil over the range that cut the verge—and especially upon old Graylock as he lifted his dome-like head in the west where the sun was setting. To the east were the heavy hills, Sugarloaf, the Pelham range and others that crouched dark and gloomy like great beasts of prey looking down on the Connecticut valley to the south where we could see the spires of Amherst and many little villages. Within a range of twenty miles are such historic towns as Deerfield, Old Hadley, North Hampton, etc. Mt. Holyoke, Mt. Tom and Monadnoc, lie to the west but nothing could be more satisfying and restful than this endless sweep of soft hills with the little New England villages sprinkled among them like white grain in the furrows. Such men as Geo. Wm. Curtis, and Cable, make their homes within a few miles of here—and no wonder.<sup>48</sup>

I drove yesterday to the home of Curtis, Ashfield, six miles from Conway. The village is not so beautifully situated as Conway, but is a better type of village—showing more of New England culture and solid worth in its old homes. Curtis has an unpretentious home with a generous stretch of grounds. Before I go I shall visit Smith's College and Cable's home at North Hampton.

The roads are very good. Despite the fact that they climb over hills they are kept in the most excellent condition, hard and smooth and shaded by great elms, with little drinking fountains

<sup>47</sup> Julia Lincoln Ray from Chicago studied music at Smith College between 1883 and 1887, graduating the latter year. She married James P. Andrews in 1895, and lived in Hartford, Connecticut. For this information I am indebted to Mrs. Marcia Williams Bradley, Archivist of Smith College.

<sup>48</sup> George Washington Cable, whose realistic stories of the South forced him to flee that region, moved to Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1885. George William Curtis, who played a leading role in the Liberal Republican movement of the time, was living in Ashfield, a short distance from Conway. Philip Butcher, *George W. Cable: The Northampton Years* (New York, 1959); Gordon Milne, *George William Curtis and the Genteel Tradition* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1956), 179-191.



that are fed by the springs at the side. The woods are tuneful with birds, and the thimble berry, the daisy, the wild and brier rose, the yellow daisies, and so on make them very pretty. Brooks are abundant and near them grow all kinds of ferns and mosses. The farmers are just getting in their hay—so from every field comes a delightful perfume. The chestnut trees have their tops edged with silver from the sprays of blossoms, looking wonderfully pretty among the green of the evergreens and elms—some of which are very old and very large. . . .

I ought soon to return to work but I can hardly bear the thought of leaving my sweet Mae. I am, I fear, just beginning to really comprehend what it is to fall thoroughly, head over heels, in love.

No picture of this girl of mine gives you any idea of the fascinating and dear little bit of womanhood she is. Her face is constantly changing and can not be caught by a camera. Besides being as gay as a bird and as pretty, she is at heart a true, pure, noble woman. I am sometimes very much thrown into wonderment and confusion at my selfishness in coveting so rich a piece of God's workmanship, designed for a better man than am I, but I love her—and she me—and that for the present is enough.

With love to all of you, your son

Fred

Conway, Mass.

July 22, 1887

Dear Breesie—

I got a letter from mother yesterday, and now I want one from you and from father and Billy. What is Billy doing or going to do?<sup>49</sup> Tell him that he had better come to these New England hills and go to farming. I would if I weren't engaged otherwise. I would buy a few acres set at an angle of 80 degrees with the sea level—then I would put ice creepers on my shoes, tie a rope around my waist and to the stone wall at the top of my farm, and sow the grain covered with mucilage to keep it from dropping down into the valley—and having done my duty as a farmer I would import a few trout from Wisconsin and dip them into the many brooks that go dancing and tumbling down these rocky slopes and through the meadows—and if I didn't grow rich I would have lots of fun. But I would grow rich too—if the mucilage stuck—for everybody about here is well to do—spite of the wee farms.

<sup>49</sup> Turner was inquiring about his brother, Will F. Turner, who rebelled against the family's intellectual tradition and worked in various jobs about Portage, serving for some time as a brakeman on the railroads. At this time Turner's father had written that Will had gone to Freeport to work. "He is a queer boy," the father added, "but someday he will catch on. He is very proud of his older brother." Andrew Jackson Turner to Frederick J. Turner, July 3, 1887. Turner Papers, HEH, TU Box B.

It is post time. I will write to some of you describing the Connecticut valley and old Deerfield to which I walked 8 miles yesterday.

It is delightfully cool and rainy among the hills.

Love to all of you

Fred

Conway, Mass.

July 26, 1887

My dearest mum,

The people of New England are economical in all things—except in dinners and distances—for a New England mile is like a New England dinner, a good round generous one, no lean starving, but plump, and abundant—garnished at either end by one or two of our wee Western miles. This I experimentally determined by walking to Deerfield—eight miles away, and returning, the other day. Deerfield is an interesting old place that figures in history as the scene of a famous Indian & French massacre in 1704 when Sieur Hertel de Rouville and his party made their trip on snow shoes to this valley and climbing over the palisade on the snow into the sleeping hamlet, burned all houses except one and slaughtered or took into captivity the inhabitants.<sup>50</sup> You have read of the hardships of that cold march of children and babes upon the crust into the north. It is still a quaint old place. Its two chief points of interest are found in the Dickinson Academy and the Memorial Hall. I visited the Academy—a modern structure tasteful in architecture—such as our western towns dream not of—containing a beautiful, and yet simple, town library, lecture room, finished in oak—and school rooms.<sup>51</sup> The Deerfield summer school was in session. Men like Cable, Hosmer, Chas. Dudley Warner, etc. are the lecturers.<sup>52</sup> I listened to a talk on Folk Lore, not very remarkable. Among those called on to speak were a returned mission-

<sup>50</sup> The raid on Deerfield by Abenaki Indians under Sieur Hertel de Rouville, on February 28 and 29, 1704, was one of the most tragic episodes in Queen Anne's War between the French and British. Half the town was burned, 49 inhabitants were killed, and 110 taken into captivity.

<sup>51</sup> The Deerfield Academy, one of the oldest of New England's many private secondary schools, was founded in 1797. At this time it was also serving as a high school under an arrangement made in 1878 as a result of a large bequest from a local citizen, Mrs. Esther Dickinson. Later, in 1924, it resumed its private status. *Western Massachusetts: A History, 1636-1925*, 718-719.

<sup>52</sup> George W. Cable's concern was largely with social problems during his Northampton period, and he lectured often on reform programs. James K. Hosmer (1834-1927), had been born in Northfield and frequently returned to New England from his post as professor of English and Germanic Literature at Washington University. Charles Dudley Warner (1829-1900), essayist and editor, who collaborated with Mark Twain in writing *The Gilded Age*, was a native of Plainfield, Massachusetts.

ary from India and Col. Nicolay who writes the life of Lincoln in the *Century*.<sup>53</sup>

I lunched at the Post Office, listening to the charming prattle and giggles of a bevy of Smith's College girls. In the afternoon I went to the Memorial Hall—a large three-story brick building containing—indeed jam full—of New England relics.<sup>54</sup> One room was an old fashioned kitchen—with all the antique appurtenances—and a great fireplace. There was a spinning room—full of all sorts of domestic apparatus for turning wool into clothes. A china room with much old china &c, and a spinet. Then there were rooms containing relics of the French and Indian war—particularly the door of the only house that was left unburned when Deerfield was sacked. It has a hole chopped with tomahawks by the Indians, through which they thrust a musket and shot the owner's wife.<sup>55</sup>

There are many quaint old houses still there. As in many New England villages, there is on the grounds of the academy a large and well executed Soldiers monument, erected to the sons of Deerfield who died in the Civil War. This is something that our busy western towns have neglected. Portage should have such a monument.

There is a public spirit in New England where you would scarce expect to find it. For instance the Dickinson Academy and library was donated by a man whose wife was so stingy (so I was told by a lady who saw the occurrence), that when the minister came to borrow a lamp for the church sociable across the road, she said she could not lend one. "But," said the preacher, "I will pay for the oil." "Oh," was the quick answer, "you may have it, then."<sup>56</sup>

Our landlady's father, Mr. Lyon a man of 87 years, is a less pronounced type of New England frugality, but he is the hero of a good story. Some five years ago he was working on the roof of his house when he fell and broke his leg. Father knows old Tom Reynolds the witty Irishman of Madison who saved his leg from

<sup>53</sup> The well-known biography of Abraham Lincoln by John G. Nicolay and John Hay, later published in book form, was at this time being published serially in *The Century Magazine*. John G. Nicolay and John Hay, "Abraham Lincoln: A History," *The Century Magazine*, xxxiii, 1-37 (Nov., 1886), to xxxix, 561-576 (Feb., 1890).

<sup>54</sup> The Deerfield Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, chartered in 1870 to collect and preserve records that would illustrate the early history of the region, in 1878 purchased the three-story old Deerfield Academy Building which in 1886 was opened as a museum. Its collections included deeds, manuscripts, Indian relics, and the tools and artifacts of the pioneer settlers. The reproduction of a pioneer kitchen was one of its most popular attractions. *Western Massachusetts: A History, 1636-1925*, II, 719-720.

<sup>55</sup> The "Indian House Door" was a door taken from a home destroyed in the 1704 Indian raid on Deerfield.

<sup>56</sup> The Dickinson high school and the town library resulted from the generous bequests of Mrs. Esther Dickinson. The library was built in the 1880's.

the surgeon's knife by reminding them that he prized it especially since it was an *imported leg*. Mr. Lyon's leg was of genuine New England manufacture, and he was not so particular about his leg anyway, but when he heard the doctor say that his "pants" and boot must be *cut off*, he lifted up his voice in indignant protest. Spite of his earnest prayers against the operation they cut the trousers off, but when it came to the boot he said, "Don't you *touch* that boot! I paid four dollars for them boots down at North Hampton. M'riar, don't you let 'em cut them boots!" and then he fainted. When he regained consciousness his first audible words were "Mariar, have you got them pants mended?"

The old man takes long walks over the hills despite his age—and he can pray good sound New England prayers too. We have 3 blessings, two prayers and a couple of scripture readings every day.

Time for post office to close. . . .

Very lovingly yours  
Fred

That was the last of the letters, for the time had come for Turner to leave his "darling little Mae" and start the homeward journey. This was roundabout, for he first visited New Haven to see Yale College—a visit that was wasted for all he could hear was "Masie, Masie, Masie" ringing in his ears<sup>57</sup>—then spent three unhappy days in New York. His trunk was lost, he was hot and lonesome, and the impersonality of the great bustling city overawed him.<sup>58</sup> By August 11 he was back in Portage, still missing his Masie, but happy to be back with his family and friends in an environment he understood.<sup>59</sup>

The quiet of that little town gave Turner a chance for a bit of introspective self-examination. The results were recorded in a letter that forms a fitting evaluation of his New England visit: "I understand myself better since I went to New England in many ways," he wrote. "In the first place, I was getting very provincial, spite of my reading and examination—this my trip has neutralized. Then I was growing somewhat ascetic as far as theory was con-

<sup>57</sup> Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, [August 2, 1887]. Turner Papers, HEH, TU Box B.

<sup>58</sup> Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, Aug. 4, 1887, Aug. 6, 1887, Aug. 8, 1887, Aug. 10, 1887. HEH, TU Box B.

<sup>59</sup> Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, Aug. 11, 1887. HEH, TU Box B. The Madison paper reported that Turner was back from a two-months sojourn in the East during which he had viewed many sights, caught a few codfish, and had a first class time. *Wisconsin State Journal*, Aug. 17, Aug. 22, 1887.

cerned at least—this I am losing a little. The scenery, too, taught me something about myself. I have lived all my life in a comparatively monotonous country. Portage has, it is true, for a sky line, some fairly good sized bluffs, but aside from these distant hills, the whole surroundings of my childhood and youth were made up of sand slopes and marshes. There were no wide sweeps of land and water horizontally, no lofty hills, no deep valleys. It was *common-place*. Even in Madison there is something of this—though in a much less degree. My life caught something from the landscape, and from the people like the landscape, for I am sympathetic. I thank heaven that I have an imagination and a love of books, two things that have lifted me out of my surroundings at Portage. Life, in any case, is more or less coarse, and requires imagination to idealize it a bit, but this is especially so in such an environment as that in which my early life has been spent.”<sup>60</sup>

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, JR.  
AND THE NEGRO QUESTION

L. MOODY SIMMS, JR.

IN his excellent biography of Charles Francis Adams, Jr., Edward Chase Kirkland provides a thorough account of Adams' varied and impressive activities as Union army officer, businessman, reformer, and historian.<sup>1</sup> Adams is also depicted as a prolific lecturer and writer with pronounced views on a wide variety of subjects, including, in Adams' words, "The Everlasting Nigger Question." Citing letters (written during the last years of the Civil War) in which Adams discussed his experiences with a Negro cavalry regiment, Kirkland observes: "There was a touch of idealism . . . in his conviction that the enlistment of Negroes would ensure 'the freedom and regeneration of the African race.'" Kirkland quickly adds, however, that "this idealism was muted, . . . for his previous contacts with Negroes incited misgivings."<sup>2</sup>

By 1900, Adams' speeches and writings reveal that this muted

<sup>60</sup> Turner to Caroline Mae Sherwood, Aug. 24, 1887. Turner Papers, HEH, TU Box B.

<sup>1</sup> Edward Chase Kirkland, *Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 1835-1915: The Patriot at Bay* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965).

<sup>2</sup> Kirkland, *Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 1835-1915*, 29.