WHITTIER'S DELINEATION OF NEW ENGLAND LIFE

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF M. A.

WILLIAM CECIL WILSON

1937

MICHIGAN STATE LIBRARIES
3 1293 01841 3371

131
061
THS

WHITTIER'S DELINEATION

of

NEW ENGLAND LIFE

by

WILLIAM CECIL WILSON

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Michigan State College in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of . . . . .

MASTER of ARTS

DEPARTMENT of ENGLISH

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE

1 9 3 7

N O T E

In presenting Whittier's delineation of various phases of New England life only his poems have been employed on account of the fact that his two prose works concerning New England life pictures the life of the seventeenth century and not of Whittier's own time.

The most useful collections of Whittier's poems employed in writing this thesis were The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier (Cambridge Edition) and A Study of Whittier's Apprenticeship as a Poet (1825-1835) by Frances Mary Pray, which contains poems not found in the former collection.

W.C.W.

TABLE of CONTENTS

Introduction

From the earliest time of its settlement to the present day New England has had something about it that is attractive. This something might be referred to as an 'aloofness', 'aloofness' in the sense that New England during colonial times and later was the leading section of our country, and knew it. New England prided itself upon religious freedom - the object of coming to this country -; yet there were actual persecutions of certain religious sects. New England prided itself upon intelligence; yet the majority of the populace was very superstitious, believing, for instance, in witchcraft. New England prided itself upon its literary distinction; yet nothing in the way of literary achievement in America was accomplished until the latter part of the eighteenth century.

In spite of these facts, however, New England did have some basis for esteeming itself because it did have the best that was to be found in America; but alterations in such characteristics as have been mentioned were soon to take place.

Some of these changes were the gradual waning from Calvinism to Unitarianism, the separation of church and state, the granting of rights to Quakers to worship as they pleased and to follow their conventional customs without interference from other sects, the noticeable division of classes - the Brahmins and the middle class, and the change

of the literary center from New England to New York.

During the larger part of the first half of the nineteenth century, there was no question of the literary predominance of New York; New England played, comparatively, an inconspicuous part in the field of national literature. A few of Longfellow's earliest poems were published previous to 1839, and some of Whittier's also; but it was really nearer 1840 than 1830 that either obtained general recognition as a poet. Emerson's first series of Essays was published in 1841, and Hawthorne's Mosses from an Old Manse in 1846. The Scarlet Letter did not appear until 1850. It was, nevertheless, a period of intellectual activity. In Boston and Cambridge, new ideas were stirring the minds of the thinkers, and throughout the New England States, which were advancing rapidly in material prosperity by the establishment of manufacturing interests and the building up of a rich trade with the East Indies, the intellectual life of the people was feeling the stimulus of its own energy in rather remarkable degree. [1]

Of the above mentioned writers it was Whittier who became the greatest delineator of New England life. His birth occurred on December 17, 1807, the year in which Longfellow was born. Unlike Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Emerson, Whittier was neither city-born nor college-bred. In his preparation for life the academic element was

---

[1] W. E. Simonds, A Student's History of American Literature, p. 149.

entirely lacking. He was a country boy of the genuine New England stock; for one hundred and sixty years his stalwart ancestors had cultivated the Whittier farm, and the very house in which he was born had been built by the great-grandfather of the poet in 1688. [2]

The birthplace of Whittier lies in East Haverhill, Massachusetts. The large farm, which is not hidden from the sight of the passers-by, was once secluded, first by its natural position and second by the unorthodox nature of the family. A rocky, hilly farming land, like Scotland, the Whittiers lived on. For days and weeks they might not see other than their own circle save on First and Fourth Days, when they rode eight miles to the Friend's meeting-house.[3]

A boyhood of hardest labor was his from the days of his earliest memories. To wring a living from a New England farm required work. The native winters were ferocious, and the father believed in the primitive doctrine that children should be "hardened in", should wear in winter the same clothing as in summer. It all but destroyed the boy, laid the foundation indeed of his later ills. Very little was there to stimulate intellectual life.[4] There were about twenty volumes of books in the Whittier home, mostly journals and memoirs of pioneers in the religious

---

[2] W. E. Simonds, op. cit; p. 234.

[3] F. L. Potter, The First Century of American Literature, p. 552.

[4] Ibid., p. 552.

society. In a brief autobiographic leaflet Mr. Whittier tells us that he was fond of reading at an early age and that when he heard, now and then, of a book of biography or travel, he would walk miles to borrow it; but in those early years the bulk of his reading was the Bible.[5]

One bright day the district schoolmaster brought a copy of Robert Burns into the Whittier home and read aloud the songs of Scotland's peasant poet. The New England farmer's son, then fourteen, listened with delight, and felt his own soul kindled with poetic fire. He began to write rhymes of his own, and the verses were passed about and admired. He borrowed all the books that were available, especially poems. One of his first purchases was a copy of Shakespeare's plays. His parents were devout Quakers, and it was natural enough that oftener than any other volume the Bible was in his hands. Meanwhile the youth was working hard at plow and scythe, steadily employed in the severe manual labor of the farm. He attended the district school during the twelve weeks' session every winter.[6]

Whittier's father was a subscriber to the Free Press, a weekly paper which young William Lloyd Garrison was then editing at Newburyport; and to this publication Mary Whittier, a sister two years older than the youthful poet, sent anonymously one of his early compositions. It was printed by

---

[5] F. H. Underwood, John Greenleaf Whittier, pp. 56-57.

[6] W. E. Simonds, op. cit., pp. 237-238.

the editor; and one day when the eighteen-year-old lad was mending fences the postman tossed him the weekly paper with his verses in the "Poet's Corner". Whittier could hardly believe his eyes. He stood dazed, reading the lines, scarcely comprehending the fact that one of his poems was actually in print. It was not long thereafter that Garrison himself drove over to have a look at his new contributor; and the lifelong friendship of these two men was begun. The visitor urged Mr. Whittier not to discourage the literary ambitions of his son and advised that the youth be given an education. While not indifferent to his son's desires, Mr. Whittier was a hard-headed, hard-working practical man, upon whom the necessity of a livelihood pressed heavily. His terse response to this appeal was "Sir, poetry will not give him bread!"[7]

It was against the more rigorous interpretation of the Friend's doctrine that literary culture should be made an end, and the notion that the boy should be sent to an academy was not encouraged; but a few months later, Garrison having left Newburyport for Boston, and Whittier making new connection with the Haverhill Gazette, the editor of that paper, Mr. A. W. Thayer, gave the same advice and pressed the consideration that a new academy was shortly to be opened in Haverhill. He offered the boy a home in his family and the father now consented, moved also by the

---

[7] W. E. Simonds, op. cit., p. 23.

doubt as to whether his son could stand the physical strain of farm work. He had no money, however, to spare; and Greenleaf had to earn his own living. This he did by making a cheap kind of slipper, and devoted himself so faithfully to the industry in the few months intervening between the decision and the opening of the academy in May, 1827, that he earned enough to pay his expenses there for a term of six months. "He calculated so closely every item of expense", says his biographer, "that he knew before the beginning of the term that he would have twenty-five cents to spare at its close, and he actually had this sum of money in his pocket when his half year of study was over. It was the rule of his whole life never to buy anything until he had the money in hand to pay for it, and although his income was small and uncertain until past middle life, he was never in debt." By teaching a district school a few weeks and aiding a merchant with bookkeeping, he was enabled to make out a full year of study, which was the extent of his scholastic training.[5]

After three terms at the academy ended Whittier's formal education, the newspapers and the political world supplemented academic courses with courses in the school of experience. During the winter of 1828-29, Whittier spent the greater part of the time in Boston as editor of the Boston or American Manufacturer. In 1830, from January 1 to July 10, he served

---

[5] Complete Poetical Works, pp. xii - xiii.

as editor of the Haverhill Gazette. This place he left on being invited to Hartford, Connecticut, to take charge of the New England Weekly Review during the absence on political business of its regular editor, George D. Prentice. Here Whittier remained for eighteen months and here again he was entertained in the best families where he met people of culture and of literary tastes, chief among them Mrs. Lydia Sigourney, who was something of a literary leader at the time. That the editorial work by Whittier was not unnoticed among his literary contemporaries, is shown by the following extract from a satire published in 1831. Evidently it was somewhat galling to certain writers of extensive education that a young man of twenty-four, self-schooled for the most part, should take a place of responsibility on one of New England's leading newspapers.[9]

"The wax still sticking to his fingers' ends
The upstart Wh--tt-r, for example, lends
The world important aid to understand
What's said, and sung, and printed in the land."

From Smith, A New Year's Gift for Northborns
By William G. Snelling
Foster, Boston, 1831.[10]

The death of Whittier's father in June, 1830, while it set him free from his father's occupation, made it still

---

[9] Frances Mary Pray, A Study of Whittier's Apprenticeship as a Poet, pp. 8 - 9.

[10] Frances Mary Pray, op. cit., p. 9.

more imperative for him to earn his living, since the care of the family fell upon him. He had been using his pen and studying meanwhile, and his verses were bringing him acquaintances and friends. Through one of these, the brilliant George D. Prentice, he was induced to take up editorial work again in Hartford; but after a determined effort it became clear that his health was too fragile to permit him to devote himself to the exacting working of editing a journal; and in 1832 he returned to his home. Just at this time he published his first book, a mere pamphlet of twenty-eight octavo pages containing a poem of New England legendary life entitled "Moll Pitcher". He had contributed, besides, more than a hundred poems in the three years since leaving the academy, and had written many more; but though thus active with his pen, his strongest ambition at this time was in the direction of politics.

For the next four years he remained on the farm at Haverhill; and when, in 1836, the farm was sold, he removed with his mother and sisters to the village of Amesbury, chiefly that they might be nearer the Friends' meeting, but also that Whittier might be more in the center of things. In his seclusion at East Haverhill he had closely watched the course of public events. He was a great admirer of Henry Clay, and a determined opponent of Jackson. With his engaging character, his intellectual readiness, and that political instinct which never deserted him, he was rapidly coming into public notice in his district; and his own

desire for office drew him on. To be a member of Congress he must be twenty-five years old, and at the election which was to occur just before his birthday there were many indications that he would be the nominee of his party. This was at the end of 1832, but before the next election occurred there was a grave obstacle created by Whittier himself; and thenceforward through the years when he would naturally engage in public life he was practically debarred.[11]

The last statement of the above paragraph seems a bit fallacious, for Whittier was elected a member of the State legislature for the year 1835, the only public office he ever held, except that of presidential elector. He was an able, well-informed, and useful legislator.[12] At the close of the term he was reëlected, but ill health prevented further service.[13] Even before engaging in the actual service of the state Whittier dreamed of politics. His friends were prepared even to run him for Congress; and eager he was to give to them his entire power. A letter to Mrs. Sigourney, February 2, 1832, seems like a farewell to the Muse:

> "I love poetry, with a love as warm, as fervent as sincere as any of the more gifted worshippers at the temple of the Muses. I consider its gift as

---

11 Complete Poetical Works, p. xiii.

12 F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 113.

13 W. E. Simonds, op. cit., p. 230.

something holy and above the fashion of the world... Politics is the only field now open for me."[14]

A few months later in January, 1833, he wrote:

"I have been compelled to plunge into the political whirlpool; for I have found that my political reputation is more influential than my poetical: so I try to make myself a man of the world - and the public are deceived, but I am not. They do not see that I have thrown the rough armor of rude and turbulent controversy over a keenly sensitive heart, - a heart of softer and gentler emotions than I dare expose."[15]

A reading of Garrison's Thoughts on Colonization (1832) and a meeting with the author in the spring after receiving a letter from him made Whittier an Abolitionist. For the next thirty years he devoted himself to the writing of Tyrtaean poems on subjects connected with slavery and its abolition.[16] One sentence of the letter from Garrison was the kindling spark:

"My brother, there are upwards of two million of our countrymen who are doomed to the most horrible servi-

---

[14] F. L. Pattee, op. cit., p. 556.

[15] Ibid., p. 556.

[16] Dictionary of American Biography, p. 174.

tude which ever cursed our race and blackened the page of history."

There was nothing mild or uncertain about William Lloyd Garrison. He followed his letter to Haverhill, and Whittier was ready to follow him to any extreme. Immediately came his war-cry salutatory: "Justice and Expediency: or Slavery Considered with a View to its Rightful and Effectual Remedy, Abolition." (June, 1833). From this moment he was first of all an Abolitionist, even to the addressing of mass-meetings, most of them hostile even to the extent of mobbing him, as in Concord, New Hampshire.[17]

Whittier's activities in the Anti-slavery movement were the tensest and most noble that swept over New England and roused its dull muse to ecstacy; he was the authentic laureate. It is impossible for the New Englander (even one who fancies himself a thoroughly emancipated modern) to detach Whittier's ruggedly heroic verses from the harsh soil of history; to see them except through the noon air of his pacific and serene personality. To hear his verses, as it were from his own lips gives them double dramatic force. His shy Quaker voice is hoarse with rage and his lips of innocence are white with scorn.[18]

It is interesting to see how loyal Whittier remained to the ideals and inspirations of this period, the distinctive epoch of his life. "The simple fact is," he wrote to

---

[17] F. L. Pattee, op. cit., p. 557.

[18] John Macy, American Writers on American Literature, p. 112.

E. L. Godkin, "that I cannot be sufficiently grateful to the Divine Providence that so early called my attention to the great interests of humanity, saving me from the poor ambitions and miserable jealousies of selfish pursuit of literary reputation." The poet himself never regretted the fact that this alliance had placed these limitations upon his verse; he rather saw it in the real inspiration of his life, the true birth of poetical power. "My lad, if thee would win success, join thyself to some unpopular but noble cause," said he in after years to a youth who came to him for counsel.[19]

In 1847 Whittier was selected by Gamaliel Bailey, editor of the National Era organ of the English and American Slavery Society, as assistant editor and he served in this capacity until 1859. Above eighty of Whittier's poems are contained in the files of this paper (from 1847 to 1859), and in number, power, variety, and interest they exceed any series, except, perhaps, that contributed to the Atlantic Monthly.[20]

When Whittier was editor of the National Era he wrote to Miss Kendall that he should have spent the winter in Washington but for the state of his health and the difficulty of leaving home on his mothers account.[21] In the same letter

---

[19] W. L. Simonds, op. cit., p. 283.

[20] F. W. Underwood, op. cit., pp. 176-179.

[21] T. W. Higginson, op. cit., p. 171.

(21. no. 21, 1847) he wrote:

> "I have of late been able to write but little, and that mostly for the papers, and I have scarcely answered a letter for a month past. I dread to touch a pen. Whenever I do it increases the dull wearing pain in my head, which I am scarcely ever free from."[22]

Yet at this time he was occasionally publishing eight or nine columns a week in the National Era, besides a large political correspondence. There was no literary man of his time who worked under such a lifelong restraint in respect to health as Whittier.[23]

Ill health bound Whittier down, but not his pen. In the quiet of his home he wrote not alone as an Abolitionist; during the stormy decade before the war some of the very best of his nonpolitical verse appeared. In 1850 he published his "Songs of Labor", the best proletarian poems yet produced in America, poems written from the life he knew - really the only life he knew, since slavery was for him a mere abstraction. To this early period, too, belong his best-known ballads - "Cassandra Southwick", "The Bridal of Pennacook", "Mogg Megone", "The Angels of Buena Vista", "Maud Muller", "Mary Garvin", "The Garrison

---

[22] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., I, p. 139.

[23] T. W. Higginson, op. cit., pp. 171-172.

of Cape Ann", "Skipper Ireson's Ride", "The Swan Song of Parson Avery", "Mabel Martin", "The Prophecy of Samuel Sewall".[24]

Then after the war came "Laus Deo", the most stirring of his lyrics, which has an interesting history. It was composed while the poet was sitting in the Friends' Meeting-House in Amesbury, at the regular Fifth Day meeting, listening to the bells of jubilation which announced the passage of the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery, January 31, 1865;[25] "Snow-Bound, A Winter Idyl" (1866); "The Tent on the Beach and Other Poems" (1867); "Among the Hills and Other Poems" (1869); "Ballads of New England" (1870). New England was always uppermost in the mind of Whittier. Recently John Macy has remarked that "No American poet has sung of his neighborhood with naïve passion, as if it were all the world to him." Whittier, however, has done so. He knew nothing else; he loved nothing else. Like a farmer, he loved it; like a peasant, he knew it and described it, omitting nothing.[26]

Whittier was the only one of the nineteenth-century group of New England poets who never went abroad. His later years were calm and prosperous. He held no public position after his early service in the Massachusetts Legis-

---

[24] F. L. Pattee, op. cit., p. 560.

[25] W. E. Simonds, op. cit., p. 295.

[26] F. L. Pattee, op. cit., p. 560.

lature, but during the period when the overseers of Harvard College were chosen by the legislature he once served, in 1858, as overseer, and alluded jocosely in a letter to Lowell, then editor of the Atlantic, to the fact that he had authority over Lowell. He received the Harvard honorary degree of Master of Arts in 1860, and that of Doctor of Laws in 1866, at the hundredth anniversary of the college, when he was the only literary man so decorated among a number of men of science, a fact which attracted some notice. He was made a trustee of Brown University in 1869. He was chosen a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1863, and was borne upon its roll for three years, but never accepted the office or even replied to the invitation, for some reason yet unexplained, so that his name was dropped. He declined membership in the Loyal Legion, a society of officers who had served on the Union side in the Civil War, and had a limited number of Civilian members; but this he refused as the principles of the organization were inconsistent with those of the Society of Friends.[27]

The society of his kindred and a few intimate friends he dearly loved; but he was too diffident to enjoy large companies, and he shrank from all publicity. The farmer of East Haverhill was most at home with common folks, understanding them perfectly and talking with them in

---

[27] T. W. Higginson, op. cit., p. 176.

language they could understand. He used the pronoun "thee", the Quaker form of address, and always remained heartily loyal to the simple manners of the Friends.[28] Only gentleness, universal good-will, and a beautiful simplicity of religious faith characterized him.

The popularity of Whittier increased among all classes of readers. His seventieth birthday was celebrated more profusely than had happened to any American author before; and more so than was at first wholly congenial to his modest nature. The issue of the Literary World of December 1, 1877 was devoted wholly to him and contained articles by various authors. On December 17, 1877, an elaborate dinner was given him by the publishers of the Atlantic Monthly, at Hotel Brunswick in Boston.[29] His birthdays, like those of Longfellow, were observed with note-worthy tributes of esteem. Upon his eightieth anniversary, the Governor of Massachusetts with other distinguished citizens visited the poet at Oak Knoll to present the congratulations of his native state. Upon one of these anniversary occasions, Whittier was deeply touched by a telegram sent by the Southern Forestry Congress assembled in Florida:

> "In remembrance of your birthday, we have planted a live-oak tree to your memory, which, like the leaves of the tree, will be forever green."[30]

---

[28] W. E. Simonds, op. cit., pp. 247-248.

[29] T. W. Higginson, op. cit., p. 176.

[30] Mrs. J. T. Fields, Whittier, pp. 95-96.

Together with his gentle dignity of bearing and his modest shyness of manner, Whittier possessed a keen sense of humor and had a homely wit that flashed out in conversation with his friends. Among these was a number of distinguished women: Mrs. Stowe, Lucy Larcom, Alice and Phoebe Cary, Sarah Orne Jewett, Celia Thaxter, and Mrs. James T. Fields. With Longfellow, Emerson, and Holmes Whittier had a pleasant but not an intimate acquaintance.[31]

In comparison with other American poets, Whittier must be recognized as essentially provincial. Aside from the fact that a large body of his verse, the Anti-Slavery poems, was necessarily of contemporary value, we must remember also that the best portion of his work belongs wholly to New England, which he so clearly delineates.[32]

---

[31] W. S. Simonds, op. cit., p. 243.

[32] Ibid., p. 249.

CHAPTER I

A NEW ENGLAND HOME

The homestead in which Whittier was reared is to this day so sheltered from the world that no neighbor's roof has ever been in sight from it; and Whittier says of it in "Snow-Bound"

> "No church-bell lent its Christian tone
> To the savage air; no social smoke
> Curled over woods of snow-hung oak."[1]

In a prose paper by Whittier, "The Fish I Didn't Catch", published originally in the Little Pilgrim, in Philadelphia, in 1843, there is a sketch of the home of his youth which is suggestive of a rustic boyhood. It opens as follows:

"Our old homestead (the house was very old for a new country, having been built about the time that the Prince of Orange drove out James the Second) nestled under a long range of hills which stretched off to the west. It was surrounded by woods in all directions save to the southeast, where a break in the wall revealed a vista of low, green meadows, picturesque with wooded islands and jutting capes of upland."[2]

The Whittier house is more open to view from the main

---

[1] John Greenleaf Whittier, Complete Poetical Works, p. 100.

[2] T. W. Higginson, John Greenleaf Whittier, p. 6

road than it was sixty years ago. The woods that hemmed it in have been mostly cleared, enlarging greatly the fields of pasture and meadow.[3]

The oaken frame of the house, composed of timber fifteen inches square, is built around a central chimney. The kitchen, which is the chief room, is thirty feet long; and the fireplace is eight feet between the jambs and was once broad enough to admit benches on either side.[4]

The square front rooms are unchanged. The marks of their century are upon every part of the work: strength and simplicity. The oaken beams, which a man of fair height can touch with an upraised hand, are fifteen inches square, and as firm as when laid. The wainscots and floors are well preserved.[5]

At one end of the kitchen was a bedroom known as the mother's room; but it was in the west front room that the poet was born. The small chamber overhead is the one he occupied as a boy. A flight of well-worn steps leads up to it from the kitchen. Above are the time-stained rafters and the boards pierced with nail-points which used to glisten like powdered stars on frosty mornings. Here it was, as the poet has told us, that on stormy nights, -

"We heard the loosened clapboards tost,

---

3 F. H. Underwood, John Greenleaf Whittier, p. 34.

4 F. H. Underwood, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

5 Ibid, p. 41.

The board-nails snapping in the frost;
And on us, through the unplastered wall,
Felt the light sifted snow-flakes fall."[6]

The severe coldness of the house - for warmed throughout it never was - cannot be reckoned today. How much more real seems the conflict with frost and snow upon Whittier's hearth as he describes the building of the fire in "Snow-Bound":

"We piled, with care, our nightly stock
Of wood against the chimney-back -
The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,
And on its top the stout back-stick;
The knotty fore-stick laid apart,
And filled between with curious art
The ragged brush; then, hovering near,
We watched the first red blaze appear,
Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,
Until the old, rude-furnished room
Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom;
While radiant with a mimic flame
Outside the sparkling drift became,
And through the bare-boughed lilac tree
Our own warm hearth seemed blazing free."[7]

If one would know the spirit of the household he may

---

[6] Complete Poetical Works, p. 405.

[7] Complete Poetical Works, op. cit., p. 400.

find it in "Snow-Bound". The farm itself was not a very profitable one; the land was only moderately fertile and could never have been the source of wealth to the most laborious cultivator. The farm was encumbered with debt. In the town assessment for 1796, it stood as the joint property of Joseph, John, and Moses, and was rated at $200, much below its probable value. At all events, when in 1806 Joseph married and removed to Maine, his share was bought by John, father of our poet, for $600. This sum was borrowed; and the interest even was felt as a burden. The debt remained during the father's life, and was at last cleared by the exertions of the son.[8]

It will not do to infer from such details that the family was actually poor, although money must have been generally scarce. In those days the wants of men and women were fewer or the spirit of self-denial and personal independence was more common. Each household had its plentiful supply of food from the crops and herds and the river; the field of flax and the annual fleeces, spun and woven at home, furnished most of the necessary clothing; neighborhood exchanges distributed comforts; and surplus wood, nuts, grain, and other farm produce helped to balance the account at the country store. Every natural want was supplied, and, little as the family had to spend, poverty was unfelt, or rather unknown.[9]

---

[8] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 43.

[9] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 44.

The Whittier home was comfortable, and the picture it left in the poet's memory is an inviting one. The "old rude-furnished room" with its "whitewashed wall and sagging beam", its motley braided mat" upon the floor, and its ample fireplace ruddy with the flame of crackling logs, was a scene of contentment and homely cheer.[10]

"Shut in from all the world without,
We sat the clean-winged hearth about,
Content to let the north-wind roar
In baffled rage at pane and door,
While the red logs before us beat
The frost-line back with tropic heat."[11]

Here we have, absolutely photographed, the Puritan Colonial interior, as it existed till within the very memory of old men still living. No other book, no other picture preserves it to us; all other books, all other pictures combined, leave us still ignorant of the atmosphere which this one page re-creates for us; it is more imperishable than any interior painted by Gerard Dow. This picture we owe to a lonely invalid, who painted it in memory of his last household companions, his mother and his sister.[12]

Those whose memory reaches back fifty years, and especially those who were reared in places remote from large towns, will find in "Snow-Bound" perfect pictures of the old times. The poet himself calls them Flemish pictures; and it is true

---

10 W. E. Simond, op. cit., pp. 236-237.

11 Complete Poetical Works, pp. 400-401.

12 T. W. Higginson, op. cit., p. 9.

that they have much of the homely fidelity of Teniers, but they are far more than literal representations. The scenes glow with ideal beauty, - all the more for their bucolic tone. The works and ways of the honest people are almost photographically revealed; and we have afterwards nothing but recollections of cheerful piety, modest and steadfast truth, and heartfelt love. There is but one counterpart in the language: the "Cotter's Saturday Night" of Burns; and that is comparatively limited in scope and less poetical in treatment. An exposition of "Snow-Bound" such as could be given by a man of sympathy and knowledge would be a typical history of a New England family half a century ago.[13]

The family is the home, for it is the associations, affections, and influences of each member of the family that makes a home. Fortunately the Whittier home was an ideal one; everyone worked together harmoniously and lovingly for the betterment of all. The poet has left no better portrait of the Whittier family than the one that is found in "Snow-Bound", a beautiful idyl thoroughly realistic of the farm home in the grasp of winter. The family circle grouped in homely comfort about the roaring fire place is that of the poet's own frugal home, but it is typical of the rural life in New England during the nineteenth century; and the portraits are representative of the sturdy class to which the poet's family belonged.[14]

---

[13] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 86.

[14] W. E. Simonds, op. cit., p. 236.

Looking at the group around the fireside we see the poet's mother, who would often relate stories from the works of Samuel Bownell, the Quaker Historian. She would point out the glimmering reflection of the firelight in the small, thick panes of window glass and would teach Whittier the old rhyme about the witches making tea there, or would tell him of a point in the Country Brook where there was a tradition of a witch meeting consisting of six little old women in sky blue cloaks; or of a bridge where a teamster had once seen a ghost bobbing for eels.[15]

According to Mrs. Fields, who has written some reminiscences of Whittier, Mrs. Whittier had a firm belief in witchcraft in her younger days and joined with her sister in making a wax image of a minister they did not like; and then they melted it with fire, believing, as they did, that the disliked man would die.[16]

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, during his pastorate in Newburyport, frequently visited Mr. Whittier; and he has described Mrs. Whittier as being a "most typical Quaker woman." The mother, placid, equable, elevating almost into religious rites the whiteness of her bread and the purity of her table linen, was of a nature simple, noble, and direct.[17]

"Whittier's mother, Mrs. Abigail Whittier, was a woman of natural refinement of manners," says Mr. C. C. Chase, a neighbor of the Whittiers. "Being a friend of my mother,

---

15 T. W. Higginson, op. cit., p. 11

16 Mrs. J. T. Fields, Whittier, pp. 34-36.

17 Samuel Pickard, Life and Letters of John G. Whittier, p. 30.

she never failed, when she came, politely to inquire for her. Her language was always the same. 'How do thee do, Charles? - and how is thy mother?' Her face was full and very fair. Her bearing was dignified rather than lively. The word 'benign' best comprehends the expression of her features. Being of a deeply emotional and religious nature, pure, chastened and sweet, lovable, and kind-hearted to a fault, she was loved and honored by all who knew her."[18]

With the family on that cold winter night was Whittier's bachelor uncle, Moses Whittier, the youngest brother of the poet's father. Uncle Moses spent his whole life at the homestead, in which he owned an equal share with his brother John. Such a situation was not uncommon in nineteenth century New England, for the family ties were very close.

Moses Whittier had never read much or travelled far; but he was wise in the traditions of the family and neighborhood. He was an oracle to be consulted about the weather. He delighted in story telling, fishing, and hunting; and his nephews found him to be a charming companion in their rambles. In Greenleaf especially Uncle Moses had a sympathetic listener. As they worked together in the fields or sat by the evening fireside, Greenleaf enjoyed the marvelous stories of the denizens of the forest and stream, traditions of witchcraft, and tales of strange happenings in his own times.[19]

We can imagine the moods in which these stories were

---

[18] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

[19] Samuel Pickard, Op. cit., p. 30.

received, and how they would be warmed and colored in the kindling fancy of the youth. Sometimes as Greenleaf stood at his uncle's knee, he would fall into reveries from which his uncle would arouse him by the sharp exclamation, "Come boy, get out of that stood!"

Uncle Moses, who was born in 1760, died January 03, 1824, of a fatal injury received from a falling tree, which he had cut down and which, taking an unexpected direction, pinned him to the ground.[20] His faithful dog gave warning at the house, and Moses was soon found and extricated; but he did not long survive the accident.

Mr. C. J. Chase, a neighbor of the Whittiers, gives a detailed account of Uncle Moses' death:

> "He was a man for the little folks to love. I well remember the shock which the neighborhood felt when the news spread that Uncle Moses had been killed. This was in 1824. He had felled a tree in the woods which had lodged against another tree. To bring the first to the ground, he felled the second tree. The two dropped at the same time, and, taking unexpected directions, he was caught and killed by one of them. On a bitter cold day the good old man was carried to his grave beside those of his relatives in the corner of the field a few rods in the rear of the house. He comes to my mind as a tall, plain, sober man, far less stout and stirring than his brother John."[21]

---

[20] Ibid, p. 33.

[21] F. H. Underwood, Op. cit., p. 47.

The picture of the uncle in "Snow-Bound" is more distinct than that of either the father or the mother, because the poet tells us directly the uncle's qualities besides telling us of the life he led.

In turning to the next member of the family by the fireside we see Whittier's aunt, Miss Mercy B. Hussey, who was the younger sister of the poet's mother and who lived in the family from Whittier's earliest memory to the time of her death in 1846. With less of dignity and presence than the sister she had a singular sweetness of disposition, and loving, helpful ways.[22] Her gentle ministrations at the bedside of the sick and suffering gave a peculiar significance to the name her parents bestowed on this Quaker "sister of mercy".

Concerning the dignity of Aunt Mercy, Mr. Chase says:

> "Her sister, Aunt Mercy Hussey, was for many years an honored member of the family. She, as I remember her, though a person of less dignity of bearing, had a face which revealed a singular sweetness of temper. She was a devout member of the Society of Friends."[23]

He also says:

> "The dress of the two ladies I well remember. The plain Quaker gown, so comely and so spotless, and the neatness and fitness and appearance of their whole attire attracted my youthful fancy. They seemed to

---

[22] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 33.

[23] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 42.

me to combine all that was sweet, lovable, and excellent in women."[23]

Even the story of Aunt Mercy's quiet life was not without a tinge of romance. In her youth, according to the tradition of the family, she was betrothed to a worthy young man. Late one evening as she sat by the fire in the old kitchen, after the rest of the family had retired, she felt impelled to go to the window; and, looking out, she recognized her lover on horseback approaching the house. As she had reason to believe that he was in New York, she was surprised at his unexpected return and his call at so late an hour.[24] Passing the porch window as she hastened to open the door, she saw her lover ride by it, and turn as if to dismount at the step. The next instant her door was open, but no trace of man or horse was to be seen. Bewildered and terrified, she called her sister, who listened to her story and tried to soothe her and efface the painful impression. "Thee had better go to bed Mercy, thee has been asleep and dreaming by the fire," she said. But Mercy was quite sure she had not been asleep, and what she had seen was as real as any waking experience of her life.[25]

In recalling the circumstances of her vision, one by one, she at length noticed that she had heard no sound of hoofs. It may be imagined what the effect of all of this was upon Aunt Mercy; and she was not unprepared, after a weary

---

[23] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 45.

[24] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

[25] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 27.

waiting of many days, to learn through a letter from New York, written by a strange hand, that her lover died on the very day and at the hour of her vision. In her grief, however, she did not shut herself away from the world, but lived a life of cheerful charity. She did not forget her first love, and gave no encouragement to other suitors.

Another member of the Whittier family was John Whittier, the poet's father, a tall, strongly built man, who was typical of the New England farmer and who had been famous in his youth for the strength and quickness he displayed in athletic games and exercises.[26] He was a man of few words but prompt and decisive in his utterances. He was several times elected a selectman of Haverhill and was often called upon to act as arbitrator in settling neighborhood differences.

In speaking of his father's connection with town affairs, Mr. Whittier once quoted this saying of his, illustrating his opinion in regard to public charities:

> "There are the Lords' poor, and the Devils' poor; there ought to be a distinction made between them by the overseers of the poor."[27]

Before he married, Mr. Whittier made several trips to Canada through the wilds of New Hampshire, carrying on a barter trade in various commodities. His adventures in early life, when vast forests stretched from southern

---

[26] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[27] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 27.

New Hampshire to Canada, were many. It was very common for him to skirt the northern lake, camp with Indians and trappers, and enjoy a hunter's fare. He was a rough but good, kind-hearted man going by the name of " Uncle Lycher".[28]

In "Snow-Bound" we read about his eating moose and game in the trapper's hut and the Indian camp on Memphremagog's wooded side and how he danced beneath St. Francois' hemlock trees and ate chowder and lake-broil at the Isle of Shoals. Indeed John Whittier, like most New Englanders loved to be out-doors, loved to travel, and loved to hunt.

The poet had from his father this anecdote of his visit to the Canadian frontier:

> "He gained a party of horsemen and they rode through the wilds up to the Lake Memphremagog. There they met a tribe of friendly Indians. The country was wild. No settlement had been made there by the whites.[29] On the day of my father's arrival there these Indians had gone on a spree, and every man in the camp was tipsy, with but one exception; and he was kept busy looking after his companions to prevent them from rolling into the lake and getting into mischief. My father asked the sober Indian if he never got drunk. He replied, 'Oh, yes. He got drunk sometime; not now; he keep watch this time; next time he get drunk."[30]

---

[28] Ibid., p. 28.

[29] Ibid., p. 29.

[30] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 28.

Although Whittier's father was a tradesman and liked to go on trips, he must have become tired of doing so, for a manuscript note has been found written by John Whittier on the back of one of the drawers in the old Whittier home, reading thus: "Last time Canada, I believe, 1799".[31]

Such trips, however, were very dangerous. Indians would often attack the travelers. Wild animals often made their appearance. The route that was used had not been settled and anything could be expected to happen.

Looking again at the family gathered around the fire on that cold night we see Elizabeth Hussey Whittier, the younger sister and intimate literary companion of the poet. She was a person of rare and saintly nature, possessing many of the qualities of her mother.

Perhaps the most affectionate touch in "Snow-Bound" is found in the lines referring to Elizabeth, who spent her whole life with the poet, sharing the enthusiasm and the dangers of his labors in behalf of uplifting mankind, and the cares and pleasures of his home life.

Eight years younger than Whittier, she was from childhood his special pet and favorite, and as she grew older, she responded to his love with all the wealth of her warm affections and keen appreciation of his gifts. She became his most intimate and confidential literary friend, and with the same poetic temperament and tastes she possessed some

---

[31] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

qualifications in which he was deficient.[32]

Being very lively, at ease with anyone, witty, and charming, Elizabeth could overshadow Whittier's shyness. Her conversation always embodied heavy phrases that could not be readily forgotten. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, during his pastorate in Newburyport, visited Mr. Whittier quite often. Concerning the youngest sister he says: "There was the gifted sister Lizzie, the pet and pride of the household, one of the rarest of women, her brother's complement, possessing all the readiness of speech and facility of intercourse which he wanted; taking easily in his presence the lead in conversation, which the poet so gladly abandoned to her, while he sat rubbing his hands and laughing at her darling sallies. She was as unlike him in person as in mind; for his dignified greatness, she had endless motion and vivacity; for his regular and handsome feature , she had a long Jewish nose, so full of expression that it seemed to enhance, instead of injuring, the effect of the large liquid eyes that glowed with merriment and sympathy behind it.[33] The quick thoughts came like javelins; a saucy triumph gleamed in her great eyes; the head moved a little from side to side with the quiver of a woman and lo! you were transfixed.

Besides being a delightful personality and having a magnetic attraction for everyone, Elizabeth also had poetic

---

[32] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 29.

[33] Ibid., p. 30.

ability. As is indicated by her correspondence and published poems, which are usually included in the complete editions of Whittier's poems, she was a writer of no small merit. It was Whittier's opinion that "had her health, sense of duty, and almost morbid dread of spiritual and intellectual egotism permitted, she might have taken a high place among lyrical singers."[34]

"Hazel Blossoms" has attached to it some of Elizabeth's poems which were published after her death and which certify that her poetry was of a fairly high order. In the prefatory note to "Hazel Blossoms", Mr. Whittier says:

"I have ventured, in the compliance with the desire of dear friends of my beloved sister, Elizabeth H. Whittier, to add to this little volume the few poetical pieces which she left behind her. As she was very distrustful of her own powers, and altogether without ambition for literary distinction, she shunned everything like publicity and found far greater happiness in generous appreciation of the gifts of her friends than in the cultivation of her own. These poems, with perhaps two or three exceptions, afford but slight indications of the inward life of the writer, who had an almost morbid dread of spiritual and intellectual egotism, or of her tenderness of sympathy, chastened mirthfulness, and pleasant play of thought and fancy, when her shy, beautiful soul opened like a flower in the warmth of social communion. In the lines on Dr. Kane, her friends will see something of her fine individuality, - the rare mingling

---

[34] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 30.

of delicacy and intensity of feeling which made her dear to them. This little poem reached Hubs while the great explorer lay on his death-bed, and we are told that he listened with grateful tears while it was read to him by his mother.

"I am tempted to say more, but I write as under the eye of her who, while with us, shrank with painful deprecation from the praise or mention of performances which seemed so far below her ideal of excellence. To those who best knew her, the beloved circle of her intimate friends, I dedicate this slight memorial."[35]

Whittier's eldest sister, Mary, had many of the traits of her father. She was not as lovely and as great as her sister Elizabeth. Yet she had:

> A full, rich nature, free to trust,
> Truthful and almost sternly just,
>
> Keeping with many a light disguise
> The secret of self-sacrifice.[36]

Among the characters mentioned in "Snow-Bound" is the "master of the district school" who would visit the Whittiers and always have a favored place at their fireside. Until near the end of Mr. Whittier's life, he could not recall the name of this teacher whose portrait is so carefully

---

[35] W. Sloane Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

[36] John Greenleaf Whittier, op. cit., p. 403.

sketched, but he is sure he came from Maine. At length he remembered that the name was Marshall, and from this clue it has been ascertained that he was George Marshall, and that he came from Waterford, Maine.

Many readers of "Snow-Bound" have doubtless often wondered who the beautiful and mysterious young woman is who is sketched in such a vivid portraiture: "In her unformed, half-welcome guest," Half saint and half elf-seer. She is said to be none other than the religious and frantic "pilgrim preacher", Harriet Livermore, who had been for a time a convert to the doctrines of the Friends until she quarrelled with her lover on a minor point of doctrine and knocked him down with a stick of wood. Her misfortune from birth was the violent temper which she inherited from her father. She had a certain exaltation of mind that bordered on insanity, and she quarrelled with nearly everyone with whom she was associated. Even the children were heartily afraid of her, for she was very sharp towards them as well as towards such older persons as she did not incline to.[37]

The poet says she often visited at his father's home, "and had at one time an idea of becoming a member of the Society of Friends, but an unlucky outburst of rage, resulting in a blow, at a Friend's house in Amesbury, did not encourage us to seek her membership." She embraced the Methodist Perfectionist doctrine, and one day strenuously

---

[37] W. Sloane Kennedy, op. cit., p. 61.

maintained that she was incapable of sinning; but a few minutes afterwards she burst out into a violent passion about something or other. Her opponent could only say to her, 'Christian, thou has lost thy roll.'[38]

The portrait of such a woman, as well as the analysis of her puzzling character, is done with exceeding care. It is most likely based upon observation and not a creation of the fancy; and how deep was the impression made upon the boy Whittier is exemplified by the wonderful reproduction of all its force and all its delicacy after so many years.[39]

In a passage of "Snow-Bound" is found a reference to Whittier's brother, Matthew Franklin.

> "Ah, brother! only I and thou
> Are left of that circle now."[40]

Matthew, who was nearly five years younger than Whittier, was Whittier's superior in strength, and led off in "breaking" the steers and colts, and in other enterprises requiring bodily vigor.

On warm summer afternoons when no work was pressing, the top of Job's Hill was the favorite resort of the boys, and of the cattle as well. The summit is a plateau of several acres, which was formerly dotted with large oaks. To this pasture came the cattle to lie in the shade of the wide-spreading trees. All the winds found their way to this breezy height, and in the sultriest day the air was never

---

[38] Ibid., p. 62.

[39] M. Sloane Kennedy, op. cit., p. 62.

[40] Complete Poetical Works, p. 101.

etagment. The varied charms of the fine outlook were not lost upon the young poet and his lively brother. Directly beneath them was the ancient homestead, and they could almost look down into the flues of the great chimney.[41]

The boys delighted in petting the oxen, which were large ones and seemed to appreciate all the kindness that was shown them. As the oxen lay chewing their cuds under the trees the boys would often sit on their foreheads and lean on their horns or on an armchair. Although always disposed to tease his pets, Whittier secured the love of every living thing that came under his care.

In middle life, during his residence in Portland, Matthew Whittier took a deep interest in the anti-slavery cause and wrote a series of humorous letters over the signature of "Timothy Dike of Hornby," satirizing in a most caustic manner the foibles of the pro-slavery politicians of the day. The last thirteen years of his life were spent in Amesbury custom-house, where he died January 7, 1873.[42]

Thus the portraits of the characters around the fire are completed; and by looking at them as presented in "Snow-Bound" we learn something about the habits customs ideals, and occupations of life in a typical rural New England home--a quiet, uneventful life, usually of much hard work and at the same time much real happiness.

Whittier's talent was a genuine product of American soil. The importance of "Snow-Bound" from a national point of view can hardly be over-estimated. The poet gives us

---

[41] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., pp. 23-24.
[42] Ibid., p. 26.

an authentic picture of New England life, and the sentiment is sincere. He has made himself a photographer of the simple and the homely, appealing directly to the patriotism of the people. His chief merit is an unmistakable interest of truth and accuracy of detail. Then there is the vigorous life of the portraits, which is largely due to Whittier's skillful use of action to support character, and also the description of the snow-storm which forms the setting of the poem. The excellent realism and historical value in representing phases of life that have passed away is of great importance.

"Snow-Bound" is indeed typical of the many thousands of homesteads that dotted the New England country side, rearing in the old Puritan and Quaker tradition a sturdy pioneering group that was to blossom into the flower of political and ethical passion, of statesmanship and oratory, and of letters.

CHAPTER II

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL LIFE

During Whittier's boyhood and early manhood the two chief types of educational institutions in New England were the district school and the academy, both of which were very important in the half century from 1790 to 1840, which is referred to as the picturesque period of Massachusetts educational history. In the prelude to Dr. Holmes's ophidian story, Elsie Venner, there is a description of a "deestrick skule" in Pigwacket Center, from which the young medical student moved onward and upward to more congenial work in the Apollinean Female Institute in a distant town.[1]

Exerting a profound influence upon the generation which was trained in them, the district school and the academy have effected scarcely less strongly the imagination of the generation which has followed them. The traditions which gathered about them and the embellishments of literary art to which they readily lent themselves have idealized them unto the source of most that is great and good in New England character.[2]

In the latter part of the eighteenth century scattered families and the isolated families asked for school privi-

---

[1] G. H. Martin, The Evolution of the Massachusetts Public School System, p. 90.

[2] Ibid., pp. 90-91.

leges, and the master was sent upon his rounds to keep the "moving schools." Later, in many towns, lines were drawn squadroning out the territory; and to the people within these lines a share of school money was given to be used as they saw fit.[3]

In 1789 the division of districts was sanctioned by law; and rapidly, after this, district divisions were fixed. The new law, however, gave no power to the district. If a schoolhouse was needed, it had to be built by the voluntary contributions of the people. This state of things did not continue long, and in 1800 the chief element of sovereignty - the power to tax - was conferred upon the people of the school districts. They were authorized to hold meetings to choose a clerk, to decide upon a site for a schoolhouse, and to raise money by taxation for buying land and for building, repairing, and furnishing the house.[4]

The school district now, from being a mere social convenience, had become a political institution. The year 1827 is a memorable one. It marks the culmination of a process which had been going on steadily for more than a century; it marks the utmost limit to the subdivision of American sovereignty - the high-water mark of modern democracy, and the low-water mark of the Massachusetts school system.[5]

---

[3] G. H. Martin, op. cit., p. 91.

[4] Ibid., pp. 91-92.

[5] G. H. Martin, op. cit., p. 92.

Each school district now became a center of semi-political activity. There were questions involving the location of a fifteen-by-twenty district schoolhouse. Such questions often called for ten district meetings, scattered over two years, bringing down from mountain farms three miles away men who had no children to be schooled and who had not taken the trouble to vote in a presidential election during the period.[6]

Again, when a teacher gave dissatisfaction to a part of the district, possibly to a single family, a contest arose over the choice of a prudential committeeman. Into the discussion were often brought a revival of family feuds and a creation of new ones; and all the petty jealousies and rivalries, masculine and feminine, were brought to the surface until the whole district was disturbed. The poor little teacher who was the innocent cause of all the disturbances was forgotten, and a social war raged.[7]

In the choice of a site for the schoolhouse, upon one point there was unanimity: the land must be valueless, or as nearly so as possible, for frugality was ever a New England virtue. A barren ledge by the roadside, a gravelly knoll, the steeply sloping side of a bosky ravine, the apex of the angle of intersecting roads - such as these were choice spots, provided one could be found near enough to the

---

[6] Ibid., pp. 93-94.

[7] Ibid., p. 94.

geographical center of the district. Absolute equality of privilege was the standard aim. This was the right for which the embattled hosts were marshaled in the district meetings. The district was surveyed and measured; often the exact distance of every house from the proposed location was determined - each two-mile family on one side having a two-mile family on the opposite side to balance it. If this ideal condition was not reached - if, as sometimes happened, the rights of individuals were overborne for the convenience of the majority - a rankling sense of injustice remained - an old score waiting to be paid off, may be in the town meeting, perhaps in the election to the General Court, possibly in a church quarrel.[6]

The size and architectural features of the building varied with the populousness, wealth, and liberality of the district. It was not an uncommon thing to find more than a hundred children crowded into a room thirty feet square. The interval arrangement made crowding easy. In the rural districts the fireplace and the door often occupied one end of the room. In the middle of one side was the teacher's desk. Against the wall, on three sides, was a slightly sloping shelf, with a horizontal one below, and in front was a bench without a back. On the bench the older pupils sat; on the sloping shelf they wrote; on the one below they kept their books. Thus, while writing, they faced the wall.

---

[6] G. H. Martin, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

Another lower bench in front served for a seat for the younger pupils who did not write. The school on all three sides was arranged like a hollow square. How many pupils the room could hold depended on how closely the children could be packed upon the benches. In the center of the square the classes stood for recitation.[9]

In another type of schoolroom the seats were arranged in long rows across the room, in terraces, the back seats only having desks in front; the older scholars thus overlooked the younger ones, the teacher having an elevated platform opposite. The descent of the pupils from their high seat to the floor, coming in contact, perhaps, with some unconsciously extended foot, was often sudden and precipitate. The seats and desks were of native wood, pine or oak, worked out by hand, unpainted, never elegant, often rude in the extreme. When the carpenter's work ended, the boys' work began; and in the process of time the furniture was carved elaborately.[10]

The amount of schooling in any district depended, first, upon the liberality of the town in its annual appropriation; and, second, upon the method of distribution which the towns adopted. It is a curious fact that the State never prescribed the mode in which the school money should be apportioned among the districts. More than thirty different

---

[9] G. H. Martin, on. cit., pp. 95-96.

[10] Ibid., pp. 96-97.

modes of apportionment are reported: in one town, the number of ratable polls was the basis of division; and in one, the number of able-bodied persons over twenty-one, not paupers. In many towns the money was divided equally; in others, the basis was the number of children of school age; and in as many more the districts received back what they had paid in taxes. These last two methods bore heavily upon the poorer and the more sparsely populated districts. A majority of the towns endeavored to equalize the school privileges by combining two or more of these methods, distributing a part equally, and a part according to the valuation or the number of children, or both. Frequently a sum was set aside to be used at the discretion of the selectmen or the school committee to aid the poorer districts; but, in spite of this, there were districts whose school money was the merest pittance. As late as 1844 several districts were reported as receiving less than ten dollars, and one received only five dollars and sixty cents, to provide its children with schooling for a year. Each district aimed to get the most for its money; quality and quantity were likely to be in inverse proportion. A cheaper teacher meant more weeks of school; so that the phrase by which the law described the work of the prudential committee, "to contract with the teacher", was most expressive.[11]

---

[11] G. H. Martin, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

In the largest towns the schools "kept" the most of the year. In the great majority there was a winter term of ten or twelve weeks, attended by the older children, and kept by a master; and a summer term of equal length, kept by a woman, for the benefit chiefly of the little ones. In the poorer towns a single term of two or three months was all that was furnished, and some of the poorest districts had but a few weeks.[12]

During the eighteenth century the curriculum was enlarged. Up to 1795 the elementary schools had been required to teach only reading and writing; most of them had taught the boys some arithmetic; the new law made arithmetic compulsory, and added the English language, orthography, and decent behavior. In 1827 geography was required for the first time. Early in the eighteenth century the catechism, the Psalter, and the Bible were almost universally displaced by the Spelling Book and the Reader. This change had been going on gradually for many years. The general unity of religious doctrine which had characterized the people during the first century had given place to a diversity. Under the influence of these changes the Calvinistic New England Primer gave way almost everywhere to the Spelling Book - chiefly Perry's or Dilworth's, both of English origin -; these in their turn yielding place to that most famous American classic, the blue-backed Spelling Book of Noah

---

[12] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

Webster. Not without strenuous opposition in some towns the Psalter and the Bible were replaced by some of the many reading books which began to be published soon after the Revolution and which have been pouring forth in ever-increasing numbers to the present time.[13]

Of the teachers of these schools there were three classes. A majority of the winter schools were kept by men who might be called semi-professional teachers; that is they reckoned on the wages of a winter's teaching as a regular part of their annual income. In a certain irregular way many of them were itinerants. In the course of a long life they taught in all the districts of a number of contiguous towns - sometimes keeping the same school for two or three successive winters, making a new contract each time. There were many roving characters, who journeyed more widely, in search of novelty or because of the honor this would receive among strangers. Such a one was Ichabod Crane, a Connecticut schoolmaster, but domesticated in Sleepy Hollow. During the larger part of the year these men were engaged in farming or in some mechanical industry.[14]

Another class was composed of students who, by dint of labor in the district schools in the winter and in the hay-field in the summer, contrived to work their way through the academy and the college. Thus, the students of law,

---

[13] G. H. Martin, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

[14] G. H. Martin, op. cit., p. 106.

medicine, and divinity helped to pay their way.[15]

The summer schools were almost always kept by women. A majority of these were young, ambitious girls, eager for a term at the academy, which they must earn or go without. Some of these grew old and passed into the class of "school-marms".[16]

The wages of the teachers varied widely. Ten or twelve dollars a month was common; though, in rare cases, in wealthy districts, a man of experience and more than usual culture earned twenty. Women received from four to ten dollars. Besides this money payment the districts boarded the teachers. By this arrangement the district supplemented the county town appropriation and secured a longer school. Usually the teacher "boarded round" among the parents of his pupils, proportioning his time to the number of children who attended his school.[17]

As to the qualifications required to teach these district schools, the law made good moral character and competence to teach the branches indispensable; but custom and necessity prescribed two others, which obscured the legal demand. For women, the surest passport to employment was to be related by blood or marriage to the prudential committee of the district. No little friction sometimes accompanied these

---

[15] Ibid., pp. 106-107.

[16] Ibid., p. 107.

[17] Ibid., pp. 107-108.

family arrangements. For men, to keep the winter schools, the highest qualification was pluck.[18]

In the early part of the eighteenth century there began a migration from the towns to Boston, when country boys who had learned industry and frugality on the farms, in spite of the limited opportunities for education, laid the foundations for princely fortunes. From 1610 to 1630 Boston gained nearly one hundred per cent in population. Emerson has sung, "Things are in the saddle and rule mankind." Already things were counting, and material success gained by men with scanty learning made literary culture seem a luxury rather than a necessity.[19]

The ministers were less potential than in the early days, and could do less to stem the current. Added to this was the poverty which followed the Revolution and from which in the first quarter of the century the people at large were only just recovering. Public spirit was not broad and high enough to induce people to tax themselves for what all could not enjoy and what many deemed unnecessary.[20]

While the free public schools were in this state of decline, a new institution came into being - the incorporated academy, which has an honorable place in the history of Massachusetts. In its inception it reminds one of the

---

[18] G. H. Martin, op. cit., pp. 106-109.

[19] Ibid., p. 117.

[20] G. H. Martin, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

early grammar schools in England. In 1761 William Dummer, who died in Boston, left by will his mansion house and farm in Newbury for the establishment of a free school to be maintained forever on the estate. In accordance with the terms of the will, the Dummer Free School was opened in 1763, and Samuel Moody was called from New York to be its first master. In 1782 the Dummer School was incorporated under the new name Dummer Academy.[21]

Other academies were founded until it became necessary for the state to determine the relation between these schools and the public so that a uniform policy might be established by the Commonwealth in its dealing with them. The subject was referred to a committee which, through Nathan Dane of Beverly, gave the following report favoring the continuance of giving State aid to the amount of a half township to academies founded under certain conditions: 1. There must be a neighborhood of thirty or forty thousand inhabitants, not accommodated by existing academies. 2. State grants should only be in aid of schools which had a permanent fund contributed by towns or individuals. 3. All parts of the State should share alike in the distribution of State aid.[22]

The list of studies included in the acts of foundation were English, Latin, Greek, French, writing, arithmetic, geography, the art of speaking, practical geometry, logic,

---

[21] Ibid., pp. 118-119.

[22] G. H. Martin, op. cit., pp. 120-123.

and philosophy. The possibility of future growth was provided for by the general clause: "Such other liberal arts and sciences as the trustees shall direct."[23]

When we hear of the scanty opportunity that the district schools and academies afforded the children in the first half of the nineteenth century - the few weeks in the little red schoolhouse under the ignorant and incompetent instructor and a term or two at the academy - we must keep in mind that in every town some of the children, as they reached years of maturity, were receiving the elements of culture. A single term at the academy might serve - often did serve - to give a new turn to life; to open the windows of the mind, often of the soul, to new and refining influences; to make the young man or woman more susceptible to the spirit of progress, which was the spirit of the age. If we ask what the district schools and academies did, the answer is: They trained the leaders of two generations.

One of these leaders was John Greenleaf Whittier, who, from early childhood, was very anxious to receive an education. He made his appearance in the district school at seven - before he was of "school age". He accompanied his older sister, Mary; but he was too young to be put in any other class except that in which the alphabet was taught by Joshua Coffin. The school was about a half-mile from the Whittier home on the north road of East Haverhill and at the time of Whittier's entrance was kept in the ell of a

---

[23] Ibid., p. 123.

private dwelling house because the schoolhouse was being repaired. Whittier attended school intermittently, being instructed by a new school-master nearly every winter.[24]

A little incident pertaining to Whittier's training at the district school may be referred to before turning from this phase of his education. A story has been published to the effect that young Whittier was punished at school for refusal to learn the Westminster catechism. It has only slight foundation in fact. The teachers required the scholars to learn the catechisms on saturdays from the New England Primer. Greenleaf had no Primer and was told by the teacher to get one. His father told him he need not study the catechism, as it contained errors. He reported this to the teacher, and the study of the Primer in his case was not enforced.[25]

At the age of nineteen Whittier's education at the district school ended, but Whittier desired to continue his training. This desire was increased after Garrison made a visit to Whittier's father and urged him to send his son to some public institution for such a training as his talents demanded. His clear and intelligent counsel made a deep impression, although at first the obstacles seemed insurmountable. The father had not the money for the purpose; the farm did not produce more than enough for the necessary expenses of the family. But the son pondered over the matter and determined to make every effort to secure

---

[24] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 41.

[25] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 43.

a higher and more complete education. A way was opened for him that very year, - not by charity or loan, but by the labor of his own hands. A young man who worked for the elder Whittier on the farm in summer used to make ladies' slippers and shoes during the winter. Seeing the desire of young Whittier to earn money for his schooling, he offered to instruct him in the trade. The youth eagerly accepted the offer, and during the following season he earned enough to pay for a suit of clothes and for his board and tuition for six months.[26]

W. Sloane Kennedy in his Life of Whittier differs with most biographers on the point that Whittier worked in the shoe shop solely because he wanted to go to school. He says: "Let us correct an erroneous statement that has been made about him. It has been said that he worked at the trade of shoemaking when a boy. The truth is that almost every farmer in those days was accustomed to do a little cobbling of his own, and what shoemaker's work Whittier performed was done by him as an amateur in his father's house."[27]

However he may have got the money, Whittier at the age of nineteen began attending the Haverhill Academy or Latin School, May 1, 1827. The event in a way signalized a speedy reputation for Whittier. It was the first term of

---

[26] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 63.

[27] W. Sloane Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

a new academy; and on the program was an ode, to be sung, composed by John Greenleaf Whittier, a young citizen of the town and student at the academy. The fact that a townsman had written an ode for a public ceremony, as well as verses which had attained the honor of print, was known in the little village; and he was naturally a youth of distinction. It is said that when he handed in his first composition in prose, an exercise required of all mature pupils, the master asked, "Do you mean to say that this is your composition?" "Yes", was the answer. "Do you say you wrote it without copying either language or thoughts?" "Yes." "Had you no assistance or prompting from any one?" "No." The master was non-plussed; but when, week after week, there came other themes equally original and striking, incredulity gave way to admiration, and from that time he gave him counsel as a friend as well as a teacher. Whittier pursued the ordinary study of English and took lessons in French. He remained six months at the academy, during which time it was his custom to return each Friday evening and spend Sunday at home.[25]

While attending the academy Whittier boarded in the family of Mr. Abijah Hyman Thayer, then the publisher and editor of the Haverhill Gazette. Mrs. Thayer took great pleasure in recalling her impressions of the poet in his youth. She remembered his handsome face and figure

---

[25] F. W. Underwood, op. cit., p. 72.

and the appearance of extreme neatness which he always bore; but she said more of his liveliness of temper, his ready wit, his perfect courtesy and infallible sense of truth and justice. On account of his abilities and his exemplary conduct, no less than on account of his reputation as a rising poet, his society was much sought after. The gatherings of young people, she said, were never thought complete without Whittier; and the young ladies of the school and village were never quite so happy as when they were invited from time to time to tea at her house.[29]

The following is said concerning Whittier in a letter to Mr. F. H. Underwood from Mrs. Harriet H. Pitman of Somerville, Massachusetts, who was a native of Haverhill and daughter of Judge Minot:

"He (Whittier) went to school awhile at Haverhill Academy. There were pupils of all ages, from ten to twenty-five. My brother, George Minot, then about ten years old, used to say that Whittier was the best of all the big fellows, and he was in the habit of calling him 'Uncle Toby'. He had a great deal of wit. The study of human nature was interesting to him, and his insight was keen. He had a retentive memory and a marvelous store of information on many subjects. The great questions of Calvinism were subjects of which he often talked in those days. He was very exceedingly conscientious.[30]

At the close of this term, which was in the autumn of

---

[29] Ibid., pp. 73-74.

[30] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

1827, Whittier had his first and only experience as a teacher at the Birch Meadow District School in West Amesbury, now Merrimac. He went to be examined as to his qualifications for teaching; but the committee only asked for a specimen of his penmanship. He had no reason to be ashamed of his handwriting, for it was modelled upon the style prevailing during the previous century. His principal trouble as a pedagogue was with the mathematical puzzles the large boys would bring him for solution. A failure to solve these was a disgrace to a teacher in those days. As a descendant of the Greenleafs he inherited some facility with figures; but the problems handed him by the mischievous young men among his scholars caused him many a sleepless night.[31]

In the spring of 1828 Whittier was able to return to the academy, and after six months of study his school days were ended. Thus we see that Whittier had only one year of higher education in addition to the training he received in the district school, and that the higher education he did receive was due to force outside the family.

Although Mr. Thayer of the Haverhill Gazette tried to further Whittier's education by advertising an edition to be entitled "The Poems of Adrian", the attempt failed because there were not enough subscribers. More and more, it seemed that a formal education became for Whittier an impossibility. Finally he gave up the idea of receiving

---

[31] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 64.

a college education, and in his twenty-first year he wrote the following to Mr. Thayer:

"I have renounced college for the good reason that I have no disposition to humble myself to meanness for an education - crowding myself through college upon the charities of others, and leaving it with a debt or an obligation to weigh down my spirit like an incubus, and paralyse every exertion. The professions are already crowded full to overflowing; and I, forsooth, because I have a miserable knack of rhyming, must swell the already enormous number that struggle with debt and difficulty, and then, weary of life, go down to my original insignificance, where the tinsel of classical honors will but aggravate my misfortune."[32]

Some of Whittier's poems refer to incidents of his school life. One verse written by Whittier shows his desire for an education. The verse reads thus:

> And must I always swing the flail,
> And help to fill the milking pail?
> I wish to go away to school;
> I do not wish to be a fool.[33]

Whittier would often scribble verses for the pleasure of his companions at the district school.[34]

---

[32] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

[33] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 46.

[34] Francis Mary Pray, op. cit., p. 7.

The poem "In School Days" gives a vivid description of the old brown district school-house that he attended. First he gives the location and outward appearance of the school.

Still sits the school-house by the road,
A ragged beggar sleeping;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
And blackberry-vines are creeping.

The school-house was half a mile from Whittier's home on the north road. It was in a tolerable state of preservation until a few years ago when it was proposed to move it into the centre of Haverhill; but after it had been transported for some distance on the road it was burned by thoughtless boys for sport.[35] The second line, "A ragged beggar sleeping", clearly suggests that the school was in need of repair.

The next two stanzas of the poem tell about the master's reading on the desk for order, and describes the interior of the school-room.

Within, the master's desk is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The jack-knife's carved initial;

---

[35] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;
Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing!

The remaining stanzas of the poem mostly refer to a girl who admired Whittier and hated to "turn him down" after she spelled a word he could not spell.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the trouble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:
I hate to go above you,
Because", - the brown eyes lower fell, -
"Because, you see, I love you!"[36]

Whittier commemorates his first schoolmaster, Joshua Coffin, in the delightful poem, "To My Old Schoolmaster", which begins:

Old friend, kind friend! lightly down
Drop time's snow-flakes on thy crown!

Coffin was a staunch friend to the Whittiers, and he especially admired Greenleaf. He used to visit the Whittier

---

[36] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 407-408.

home and read aloud on winter evenings. In a leaflet written by Whittier reference is made to Coffin:

"When I was fourteen years old my first schoolmaster, Joshua Coffin....brought with him to our house a volume of Burn's poems, from which he read, greatly to my delight. I begged him to leave the book with me, and set myself at once to the task of mastering the glossary of the Scottish dialect at its close."[37]

In an article that appeared in the Atlantic Monthly, February, 1874, Whittier again refers to Coffin who was at an Anti-slavery convention:

"In front of me, awakening pleasant associations of the old homestead in the Merrimac Valley, sat my first school-teacher, Joshua Coffin, the learned and worthy antiquarian and historian of Newbury."[38]

Whittier refers to the dilapidated condition of the school house in "To My Old Schoolmaster" just as he does in "In School Days".

> In that smoked and dingy room,
> Where the district gave thee rule
> O'er its ragged winter school,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Through the cracked and crazy wall
> Came the cradle-rock and squall,
> And the goodman's voice, at strife
> With his thrill and tipsy wife, -

---

[37] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 62.

[38] T. W. Higginson, op. cit., p. 53.

The last two lines quoted refer to the tiny and quarrelsome couple that occupied a portion of the dwelling house in which the classes were being held while the school-house was undergoing repairs.[39]

In the poem Whittier also shows that Coffin was the first schoolmaster, who taught him the alphabets. From the reading of the lines the alphabet must have been difficult for Whittier to learn.

> Thou didst teach the mysteries
> Of those weary A B C's -
> Where, to fill the every pause
> Of thy wise and learned saws,

In a note at the beginning of the poem Whittier states: "These lines were addressed to my worthy friend Joshua Coffin, teacher, historian, and antiquarian";[40] and in the following lines of the poem Whittier shows to the fullest extent that he appreciates Coffin as a friend, teacher, historian, and antiquarian, for he says:

> I, the man of middle years,
> In whose sable locks appears
> Many a warning fleck of gray, -
> Looking back to that far day,

---

[39] Complete Poetical Works, p. 523.

[40] Complete Poetical Works, p. 100.

And thy primal lessons, feel
Grateful smiles my lips unseal,
As, remembering thee, I blend
Olden teacher, present friend,
Wise with antiquarian search,
In the scrolls of State and Church:
Named on history's title page,
Parish-clerk and justice sage;
For the ferule's wholesome awe
Wielding now the sword of law.

Whittier in the following lines shows that Coffin is a scholar of the past and present.

Threshing Time's neglected sheaves,
Gathering up the scattered leaves
Twofold citizen art thou
Freeman of the past and now.
Of to-day the present ray
Flinging over yesterday!

Although Whittier knew the value of finding out secrets by searching past records that had been neglected, and appreciated the work of Coffin as an antiquarian, there were many who did not. Whittier says:

Let the busy ones deride
What I deem of right thy pride:

Let the fools their treadmills grind,
Look not forward or behind,
Shuffle in and wriggle out,
Veer with every breeze about,
Turning like a windmill sail,
Or a dog that seeks his tail;
Let them laugh to see the feat
Tabernacled in the Past,
Working out with eye and lip
Riddles of old penmanship,
Patient as Belzoni there
Sorting out, with loving care,
Rumpled of dead questions stripped
From their sevenfold manuscript!

Babbling, in their noisy way,
In the puddles of to-day,
Little know they of that vast
Solemn ocean of the past.[41]

Then Whittier goes further to show that Coffin was "questioning the stranded years", "walking with the dead", "waking smiles and tears as he called up shapes the dust had long o'erlain - fair-haired women, bearded men, Cavalier and Puritan"; and he was doing this "in an age whose eager view seeks but present things, and new." Nevertheless,

---

[41] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 190-191.

he was teaching reverence for the old.

Then after showing the various things that Coffin was doing Whittier asks the following questions:

> Who shall then with pious zeal,
> At our moss-grown thresholds kneel,
> From a stained and stony page
> Reading to a careless age,
> With a patient eye like thine,
> Prosing tale and limning line,
> Names and words the hoary rime
> Of the past has made sublime?
> Who shall work for us as well
> The antiquarian's miracle?
> Who to seeming life recall
> Teacher grave and pupil small?
> Who shall give, to thee and me
> Freeholds in futurity?

In the last line of the above stanza Whittier wonders who will or who can delve into the future and find out what it holds. Realizing that the question cannot be answered, he says:

> Well, whatever lot be mine,
> Long and happy days be thine.

He wishes his schoolmaster a long and joyous life, and in the following lines Whittier asks him to watch over him who

in his grown-up student.

> Squire for master, State for school,
> Firmly lenient, live and rule;
> Over grown-up knave and rogue
> Play the watchful pedagogue.[42]

Whittier refers to another one of his schoolmasters, George Haskell, in "Snow-Bound", the opening lines of which passage are as follow:

> Brisk wielder of the birch and rule,
> The master of the district school
> Held at the fire his favored place,
> Its warm glow lit a laughing face
> Fresh-hued and fair, where scarce appeared
> The uncertain prophecy of beard.

Haskell, like Coffin, was a frequent visitor at the Whittier fireside and was always welcome. The last two lines quoted above show that Haskell was a very young man. Indeed he was, for when he taught at Haverhill he was a student of Dartmouth College,[43] earning his way through school just as Whittier did when he later attended Haverhill Academy.

While visiting the Whittiers Haskell found much to do. He would tease the drowsy cat by the hearth; he would sing; he would tell of his college life at Dartmouth; he would play

---

[42] Complete Poetical Works, p. 151

[43] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

cross-pins on Uncle Moses' hat.

> He traced the mitten-blinded cat,
> Played cross-pins on my uncle's hat,
> Sang songs, and told us what befalls
> In classic Dartmouth's college halls.

Haskell was born of sturdy parents in Harvard, Massachusetts and from them he seems to have inherited the pluck of working his way through college.

> Born the wild Northern hills among,
> From whence his yeoman father sprung
> By patient toil subsistence scant,
> Not competence and yet not want,
> He early gained the power to pay
> His cheerful, self-reliant way;
> Could doff at ease his scholar's gown
> To peddle wares from town to town;
> Or through the long vacation's reach
> In lonely lowland districts teach,
> Where all the droll experience found
> At stranger's hearth in boarding round,
> The moonlit skaters' keen delight,
> The sleigh-drive through the frosty night,
> The rustic - party, with its rough
> Accompaniment of blind-man's-buff,
> And whirling - plate, and forfeits paid,
> His winter took a manlier grade.[14]

---

[14] Complete Poetical Works, p. 403.

Inside the snow-locked house Haskell tuned his merry violin, played the athlete in the barn, told the good dames' wind-yarn, or told mirth-provoking versions of rare, old classic legends of Greece and Rome in such a manner that there seemed to have been little difference between Yankee pedlers and old Greek gods. For instance, Pindus-born Arachthus took the guise of a grist-mill brook, and dredd Olympus became a huckleberry hill.

When Haskell was at the fireside of his pupils, he looked like a careless, care-free boy; but when he was at his desk, he looked like a cultured, dignified and scholarly professor.

> A careless boy that night he seemed,
> But at his desk he had the look
> And air of one who wisely schemed,
> And hostage from the future took
> In trained thought and lore of book.

In the remaining lines of the stanza concerning Haskell, Whittier pays homage to him and points to him as a model for youth to follow. He says:

> Large-brained, clear-eyed, of such as he
> Shall freedom's young apostles be,
> Shall every lingering wrong assail;
> All chains from limb and spirit strike,
> Uplift the black and white alike;
> Scatter before their swift advance
> The darkness and the ignorance,

The pride, the lust, the squalid sloth;

. . . . . .

The cruel lie of caste refute

. . . . . .

For slavery's lash the freeman's will,

A school-house plant on every hill.[45]

Thus in glancing over the chapter one sees something of the district school and the academy in New England, the school life of Whittier, his reference to school life in his poems, the ways and means of getting an education in New England as exemplified by Whittier, Coffin, and Haskell, and Whittier's bright outlook upon the future education in New England.

---

[45] Complete Poetical Works, p. 404.

CHAPTER III

RELIGION AND WHITTIER

Whittier was reared in a devoutly religious home, a Quaker home of the most earnest and sincere type. So sincere were his parents in their adherence to Quakerism that Whittier became attached to the doctrines and practices also. He became one of the most typical Quakers that New England ever produced. He was the very quintessence of Quakerism; he lived as a Quaker; he wrote as a Quaker. To understand Quakerism is to understand Whittier.

In view of these facts something should be said concerning American Quakerism, which is closely bound up in origin and history with the wider religious movement which had its rise in the English Commonwealth, under the leadership of George Fox[1] from whom the body and form of Quakerism came. The soul of the movement was not evolved from the thought of any one man. The religious portion of the people of England, excluding the adherents of Charles II, as well as the church which was basely subservient to such an impious head, had long been in a state of ferment in regard to doctrines and observances; and many, like Fox, had been seeking for a purely spiritual worship.[2]

The Quaker religion took root in the American colonies

---

[1] R. M. Jones, The Quakers in the American Colonies, p xiii.

[2] F. H. Underwood, John Greenleaf Whittier, p. 12.

in 1657 and grew to be a far-reaching and significant influence in at least ten colonies. For ten years it had been powerfully stirring the middle classes and had rapidly gathered numbers in the English counties.[3]

The Quakers were a mystical people, holding as a primary article of their faith that the Divine Spirit or Eternal Christ is an actual Presence in the human soul, at first appearing as a judging or condemning Principle, and later, through the conformity and obedience of the individual, as an illuminating, inspiring, and guiding inward Spirit.[4] The Inner Light in which the Quakers believed was identical with the doctrine of idealism or innate ideas held by Descartes, Fichte, Schelling, and Cousin. It means individualism, a return to the primal sanities of the soul. "I think, therefore I am." The thinking soul is the ultimate source of ideas and truth.[5]

There was a tendency to make conduct conform to rather stiff and rigid standards, for the Friends to a large degree shared the Puritan ideals in regard to "Christian manners in the world." Then, too, in addition to their scrupulous guardianship over morals, they were always zealous to maintain certain "testimonies" which were the badges of their

---

[3] R. M. Jones, op. cit., p. xiii.

[4] R. M. Jones, op. cit., p. 136.

[5] W. Sloane Kennedy, John Greenleaf Whittier, p. 182.

"peculiarity" as a people of the Lord. They were as keen and watchful for deviations from these "testimonies" as the Puritan elders were over deviations from sound theology, for that larger liberty which leaves the individual entirely with his own conscience - with his personal sense-had not yet come.[6]

The Puritans had rejected the stately service of the English Church, its gradations of priesthood, its organs and responses. They had banished the festivities of Christmas, the penitence of Lent, the rejoicings of Easter, and had put the whole zodiac of saints' days in lasting eclipse; but still they had forms. Their "Sabbath" - quite different from Sunday - was celebrated according to unalterable rules. Worshippers were assigned places according to social rank. A scholar or gentleman was "Mr."; the farmer or laborer was merely "Goodman." This, after the magistrates and other dignitaries were provided for, was the main criterion in "seating the meeting" Pastors were elevated in pulpits; and though at first the people were summoned to worship by blast of horn or beating of drum, yet, as soon as wealth increased, the primitive log house gave way to a more imposing edifice, provided with a steeple and bell. The one striking feature, however, was that the minister, or servant, upheld by the local magistrate, was as absolute as the pope himself through the limits of the town.[7]

---

[6] R. M. Jones, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

[7] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

Against all this the Quakers protested and declaimed as Paul might have done. They inveighed against all fetters of the free soul. The kingdom of heaven is within you. The spirit of God dwells in your hearts, and not in temples made with hands. The life of the Christian is inward. Nothing should come between the soul and the Divine Visitant. To pray, teach, or prophesy one needs only the promptings from within. There is no class of Levites to be fed by the brethren, for vicarious prayer and praise. Tithes and first-fruits were abolished, with bloody sacrifices. Give your cheek to the smiter, and when reviled revile not again. Cannon and gas came from the bottomless pit. Shed no blood even in defence of your life. Conform not to the changing fashions of the vain and ungodly. Ruffles, chains, beads, and rings are badges of servitude to the prince of this world. Neither shall you swear, whether in anger, or at the command of a judge. Hath not the Judge of all said, "Swear not at all"? Call no man master, or its mutilated diminutive, "Mr."[8]

One of the matters which most profoundly concerned the Friends was the guardianship of the marriage of their members. They refused to allow any of their members to be married by a priest, for this seemed to them to be the very essence of sacerdotalism. They adopted a simple ceremony by which the bride and groom plighted themselves in marriage

---

[8] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., pp. 27-29.

"before the Lord and in the presence of Friends"; and after enduring many hardships they won from the courts that this form of marriage was legal. As the idea developed that friends were "a peculiar people of the Lord", there naturally went with it a disapproval of the marriage of a Friend with "a person of the world". This soon became a fixed idea, and the monthly meeting records contain a host of minutes which report "dealings" with members who have deviated in this all-important matter of marriage.[9]

In regard to the prevailing "vices" of the times Friends appear generally to have taken an advanced position. When lotteries were looked upon by almost all Christian people as at least tolerable institutions, and were being used by churches and educational institutions as a beneficial provision for raising funds for the work of the Lord, New England Friends, "in the light of Truth", saw that they were pernicious, and refused to allow their members to profit by them.[10]

At a time when the use of spirituous liquors was an almost universal custom, Friends were nevertheless very sensitive on the subject. They began, from the first of their existence as a people, to insist on a clean, temperate life for their members.

Fidelity to one's word of promise was held to be a

---

[9] R. M. Jones, op. cit., p. 147.

[10] Ibid., pp. 147-148.

[11] R. M. Jones, op. cit., p. 148.

most sacred obligation, and every Friend was expected to make righteousness in trade and dealing "an affair of honor". Every book of Monthly Meeting Records has many minutes similar in spirit to the following:

> "The overseers informed that there is a bad report concerning two members salting up beef, and exposing it for sale, which was not merchantable; and they have made some inquiry, and do not find things clear, therefore this meeting appoints a committee to make inquiry."[12]

Friends felt that it was very important to keep the Society absolutely clear of everything that belonged to warfare, or which encouraged fighting with what were known as "carnal weapons", but Quakers had no objection to any warfare which they could properly call "spiritual"! This "concern" ran up against a deep-seated natural instinct, and it entailed many difficulties, particularly in the early days of the warfare. During the French and Indian War of Queen Anne's reign, Friends were subjected to very severe sufferings, and stringent measures were taken to force them at this time to do military service.[13]

One of the most stubborn fights in the spiritual warfare of New England Quakers was for freedom to worship God

---

[12] R. M. Jones, op. cit., p. 149.

[13] Ibid., p. 150.

as their own hearts dictated, and also freedom from supporting any system of worship which their consciences did not approve. The privilege to worship in their own way and in their own gatherings was won at terrific cost. It was discovered by an overwhelming demonstration that the denial of the privilege could be maintained only by the extermination of the sect, and thus there was no rational alternative but to yield. The other privilege, the privilege of exemption from tithes for the support of the established ministry, was won by a long, hard fight, but when it was won it was won for everybody.[14]

The mystical principles of the Quakers sounded like a dangerous leaven of wild disorder to their opponents, a seed of Ranterism, which, when grown, would topple down the pillars of Church and State. It seemed to mean that individual caprice and subjective whim were to be crowned and mitred, and that moral chaos was to come again.[15] Since the Quakers were objectionable, the Puritans began to torture them. Clerical chancellors were inaccessible and pitiless in their treatment to the Quakers. In no other way can we account for the inhumane action that drove Ann Hutchinson into the wilderness to die. Well or ill founded, the decisions of the clergy were both law and fate for Quakers. Logic might be at fault but the visible judge

---

[14] Ibid., pp. 152-153.

[15] R. M. Jones, op. cit., p. 136.

was a rock. Constables were "not to make reply", but lay on the lash when bid. A protest, or even a muttered complaint, might, as in the case of Lieutenant Robert Pike, be rewarded by a fine or the stocks.[16]

It is not easy to overestimate the influence upon the sufferers of proscription for opinion's sake - for Christ's sake, we should say - when it has extended over the lives of generations. Each firm and faithful Friend came under the same hard conditions. God, brotherhood, and duty were his joys; but the world swept by with something of pity and more of disdain. At the beginning, the public preaching of a known Quaker was a sure course to martyrdom. It sometimes comes up to us as a novel and startling fact that for preaching according to conscience men and women were flogged with knotted whips, chained in loathsome dungeons, half starved, and banished under pain of death, - nay more, that men of blameless lives and of the very spirit of Lord Jesus were actually hanged as malefactors on Boston Common.[17]

Through proclamation from the King of England the Quakers were given liberty. The penal statutes against heresy were permitted to slumber; but meanwhile the fiery zeal of the Quakers had cooled. Still, the old prejudice against them lingered. Time, however, softened the hearts

---

[16] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 31.

[17] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 31-32.

of bigots and wore off the sharp edges of dogmas; but this was not until Church and State had been divorced and not until the Quaker's memory of the days of bitterness had become as unchanging as his sad-colored garments.[18]

Whittier was born and brought up in the Society of Friends, of which he always remained a faithful member. In trying to solve the problem of how far he felt himself bound by the rules and customs of his Society, the following anecdote is often referred to:

"On the night before the burning of Pennsylvania Hall in 1838 in Philadelphia there occurred the marriage of Angelina Grimké to Theodore D. Weld, both being afterwards prominent Antislavery reformers. Miss Grimké was a South Carolina Quakeress, who had liberated her own slaves, and was thenceforward known far and wide as an Antislavery lecturer, but her proposed husband was not a Quaker. At the time of her wedding, Whittier, who then edited the Freeman, was invited to attend; but as she was marrying "out of society", he did not think it fitting that he should be present at the ceremony. He nevertheless reconciled it with his conscience to escort a young lady to the door, and to call on the wedded pair next day with a congratulatory poem." This incident fairly indicates the hold that his early religious training had upon him when the question was one of outward observances alone.[19]

---

[18] Ibid., pp. 32-33.

[19] T. W. Higginson, John Greenleaf Whittier, p. 115.

The best impression of Whittier's relation with the Society of Friends will be found in two letters addressed by him, in later life, to the editor of the Friends' Review in Philadelphia, in reference to the changes then beginning, and maturing later, and destined to transform so greatly the whole society. Those who were acquainted with that body in its earlier state and saw the steps by which it was, in the judgment of its reformers, modernized and invigorated, can well understand the point of view of Whittier, who certainly represented its most elevated, practical, and progressive side. Excerpts from the letters are as follows:

"Amesbury, 2nd mo., 1870.

"To the Editor of the Review.

"Esteemed Friend, ...The present age is one of sensation and excitement, of extreme measures and opinions, of impatience of all slow results. . . The title deeds of our opinions, the reason of our practices are demanded. Our very right to exist as a distinct society is questioned. Our old literature - the precious journals and biographies of early and later Friends - is comparatively neglected for sensational and dogmatic publications. We hear complaints of a want of educated ministers; the utility of silent meeting is denied, and praying and preaching regarded as matters of will and option. There is a growing desire for experimenting upon the dogmas and expedients and practices of other sects. . . . . .

"But for myself I prefer the old ways. My life has been nearly spent in labouring with those of other sects in behalf of the suffering and enslaved. . . . But after a kindly and candid survey of them all, I turn to my own Society, thankful to the Divine Providence which placed me where I am; and with an unbroken faith in the one distinctive doctrine of Quakerism, - the Light within - the immanence of the Divine Spirit in Christianity.

"I am not insensible to the need of spiritual renovation in our Society. . . .But the alleged evil lies not in going back to the 'beggarly elements' from which our worthy ancestors called the people of their generation; . . . but in heeding more closely the Inward Guide and Teacher; in faith in Christ, . . . in His living presence in the hearts open to receive Him; in love for Him manifested in denial of self, in charity and love to our neighbor."[20]

In the second letter Whittier acknowledges many expressions of sympathy, and adds:

"I believe that the world needs the Society of Friends as a testimony and a standard. I know that this is the opinion of some of the best and most thoughtful members of other Christian sects. I know that any serious departure from the original foundation of our

---

[20] T. W. Higginson, op. cit., pp. 122-124.

> Society would give pain to many who, outside of our communion, deeply realize the importance of our testimonies."[21]

By the testimony of all, Whittier's interpretation of "The Inward Light" included no vague recognition of high impulse, but something definite, firm, and extending into the details of conduct. It ruled his action; and when he had, for instance, decided to take a certain railway train, no storm could keep him back.[22]

In order to get a clear insight into the religious side of Whittier it is perhaps best to look at some of his meditative and spiritual poems. After reading these poems one feels the immense advantage enjoyed by those brought up in the Society of Friends, as to a simpler and therefore more sacred use of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures than was possible to those trained in the more rigorous and severe methods which prevailed so largely in his youth among the evangelical sects. His citations of passages are superb in their discrimination; the words of Ezekiel and Hedges seem greater and profounder than those of his verses that follow; and yet this is no truer of them than of the prefatory prelude taken from St. Augustine, or George Fox, or the "Hymns of the Brahmo-Somaj". This is as it should be; that the poet's gift should show itself even in the

---

[21] Ibid., p. 124.

[22] Ibid., pp. 124-125.

texts of his sermons.[23]

In studying the poems of Whittier one discovers that there were two epochs in his religious or philosophical development. The first epoch - that of simple piety unclouded by doubt, the epoch of unhesitating acceptance of the popular mythology - seems to have lasted until about 1850, or the period of early Darwinism and Spencerianism, the most momentous years of religious history, not only of New England, but of the world.[24] The poem "All's Well" is so exemplary of Whittier's conscience during the first period of his development that no other poem need to be cited.

> The clouds, which rise with thunder, slake
> Our thirsty souls with rain;
> The blow most dreadful falls to break
> From off our limbs a chain;
> And wrongs of man to man but make
> The love of God more plain.[25]

The pivotal point of the second epoch is very well marked by the publications of "The Chapel of the Hermits" and the "Questions of Life", in 1853. It was at this time that harrowing doubt began, and also a restless striving

---

[23] T. W. Higginson, on. cit., pp. 115-116.

[24] W. Sloane Kennedy, on. cit., pp. 193-194.

[25] John Greenleaf Whittier, Complete Poetical Works, p. 431.

to retain the faith amid new conditions and a vastly widened mental horizon. Transcendentalism, too, had just passed the noon meridian of its splendor. Emerson had written many of his exquisite philosophical poems, and Parker had blown his clear bugle call to a higher religious life. It is evident that Whittier was - as, indeed, he could not help being - profoundly moved by the new spirit of the times.[26]

It is in "The Chapel of the Hermits" that Whittier first gave free and full utterance to the doubt and struggle of the soul. He was not the only one who was affected by the new movement for many people in New England had the same experience, but he was one of the few that held to the faith of his religion and to trustful theism. There is not any evidence that he ever sanctioned the principles of the development - science, - the evolution of man, the development of the universe through its own divine potency, and the correlation of forces; or, in fine, any of the unteleological, unanthropological explanations of things which are necessitated by science, and admitted by advanced thinkers, both in and out of the churches.[27] To show Whittier's trustful attitude, the following stanzas have been selected from "The Chapel of the Hermit."

"Yet, sometimes glimpses on my sight,
Through present wrong, the eternal right;

---

[26] W. Sloane Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 193-194.

[27] Ibid., p. 197.

And, step by step, since time began,
I see the steady gain of man.

That all of good the past hath had
Remains to make our own time glad, -
Our common daily life divine
And every land a Palestine.

. . . . . .

Through the harsh voices of our day
A low, sweet prelude finds its way;
Through clouds of doubts, and creeds of fear,
A light is breaking calm and clear."[28]

In "Questions of Life":

"I am: how little more I know!
Whence came I? Whither do I go?
A centered self, which feels and is;
A cry between the silences;

. . . . . .

This conscious life, - is it the same
Which thrills the universal frame?

. . . . . .

Do bird and blossom feel, like me,
Life's many-folded mystery, -
The wonder which it is to be?
Or stand I severed and distinct,
From Nature's chain of life unlinked?"[29]

---

[28] John Greenleaf Whittier, op. cit., pp. 40-41.
[29] Ibid., p. 432.

Whittier confesses himself unable to answer. He shrinks back terrified from the task. He will not dare to trifle with their bitter logic. He will take refuge in faith; he will trust the Unseen. Let us cease foolish questioning and live wisely and well our present lives. He comes out of the struggle purified and chastened, still holding by faith in God and virtue.

Whittier's faith is also triumphant over his expression of religious doubt in the poem entitled "My Soul and I", which is remarkable for its searching objective analysis. Owing to the similar notions of Transcendentalism and Quakerism, Whittier must have had a great amount of sympathy for the former. Nevertheless, as has been pointed out, he was deeply agitated by the revelations of science.

A poem similar to "My Soul and I" is "Follen", which should be mentioned in connection with Whittier's view of religion and its effect in New England. The poem is in memory of Charles Follen, an eminent theologian, and for a time professor at Harvard College. The predominant interest of the poem is more in the subtle and firm view of his own immortal existence than in the portrait of his friend. The lines bring us face to face with the last and deepest problem of life, so that we seem to look into

> "The sphere that keeps
> The disembodied spirits of the dead."

The words are earnest and solemn, poured out from a full

heart, and with the simplicity that befits the theme. Justly, this must be regarded as among Whittier's noblest poems, - an evidence of his spiritual convictions and his generous sympathy, and of his art of making readers think themselves sharers of his creative power.[30]

For a general confession of Whittier's faith the poem, "My Namesake", is typical. The poet addresses the lines to his namesake, Francis Greenleaf Allinson of Burlington, New Jersey. The poem is a curious, truthful, quaint expression of impressions, feelings, and fancies, and may be taken as a piece of faithful spiritual self-delineation. Two of the verses that show his attitude towards the religion of his ancestors are as follows:

"He worshipped as his fathers did,
And kept the faith of childish days,
And, howsoe'er he strayed or slid,
He loved the good old ways.

The simple tastes, the kindly traits
The tranquil air, and gentle speech,
The silence of the soul that waits
For more than man to teach."[31]

Whittier loved the good old religion of his parents. He felt that no deviations from their particular customs

---

[30] F. W. Underwood, op. cit., p. 172.

[31] John Greenleaf Whittier, op. cit., p. 394.

should be observed.

Firmly believing in Quakerism Whittier gave us a defense of his religious habits in "The Meeting". He said that he was accustomed to meet with the Friends twice a week in the little meeting at Amesbury, chiefly for two reasons: first, because in the silent, unadorned house, with "fine-laid floor", his communications were not distracted by the outside world as they probably would be if he worshipped always amid the solitudes of nature; and secondly, he found in the Meeting a heart-solace in remembrance of his dear ones who once sat by his side, but have now gone on to glory.[32] In referring to the Quaker service, he says:

> "I ask no organ's soulless breath
> To drone the themes of life and death,
> No altar candle - lit by day,
> No ornate wordsman's rhetoric-play,
> No cool philosophy to teach
> . . . . . .
> No pulpit hammered by the fist
> Of loud-asserting dogmatist."[33]

Although the Quakers did not have music in their churches and were bitterly opposed to music in any form, Whittier has given us some of the hymns that are found in nearly

---

[32] W. Sloane Kennedy, op. cit., p. 193.

[33] John Greenleaf Whittier, op. cit., p. 336.

every hymnal. He contributed in the collection "Our Master" such well-known poems as those beginning "We May Not Climb the Heavenly Steeps" and "Our Lord and Master of Us All". These poems are free from dogmatism of a particular faith and have the passion of true devotion. They are humble, trustful, and sincere. Such qualities have surely not been overlooked, for the hymn-book makers have included many of Whittier's sacred lyrics in their hymnals. Dr. Martineau's Hymns of Praise (1874) contains seven of Whittier's religious songs; the Unitarian Hymn and Tune Book (1868) also has seven; the Plymouth Collection (1859) has eleven, and Longfellow and Johnson's Hymns of the Spirit (1864) has twenty-two.[34]

The Quakers did not believe in using a hymn book, but they did believe in the Bible. In every New England home the Bible towered above all other books. Whittier read the Bible very conscientiously and was well-versed in it. He was therefore able to put his knowledge of the Bible into many of his poems, as has been so thoroughly shown in "Whittier's Use of the Bible by James Stacy Stevens, who has listed a total of 816 examples from various books of the Old and New Testaments.

Another group of religious poems that should be mentioned are those in which Whittier commemorates and denounces the persecution of his forefathers by the Puritans. One of his

---

[34] W. Sloane Kennedy, op. cit., p. 288.

longest and most effective poems that has as its theme the denunciation of such persecutions is "Cassandra Southwick", which is a story of a young Quaker girl sentenced in Boston in 1658 for her religion. She was to be transported to Virginia and sold there as a slave. Before she was placed on the ship sailing for Virginia the ship-man wanted to know who would take charge of her.[35]

"But grey heads shook and young brows knit the
while the sheriff read
That law the wicked rulers against the poor have made."[36]

Then the girl felt a hard hand press her own and heard kind words in her ears:

"God bless thee and preserve thee, my gentle girl
and dear!"[36]

The judge, or rather the sheriff asked to be released from farther work, and the girl was set free.

Other poems showing the attitude of other sects toward the Quakers in New England are "The Old South", "The Exiles", and "The King's Missives". In one of these poems Whittier has given us what preachers might call "a realizing sense" of what was meant by a Quaker woman's "bearing her testimony". Those who have read the accounts of the preaching

---

[35] T. W. Higginson, op. cit., p. 157.

[36] John Greenleaf Whittier, op. cit., p. 20.

by the first disciples of Fox, and especially the letters and diaries of those earnest and single-minded people, will not need to be told that there were no improprieties in their dress or behavior, and that their speech, though bold and unsparing, was no more so than the common utterances of Puritans in regard to Episcopalians and others from whom they differed. The few remains of the intellectual and spiritual life of those self-devoted missionaries show them to have been possessed of the very spirit of Christ. It was after they had been forbidden to hold meetings or exhort, - after they had been scourged from town to town, and flung in jail without so much care as would have been bestowed upon a wounded dog, or banished into the wilderness, or disfigured by loss of ears, - after modest women had been stripped to be examined for witch marks, and after the menace of the gallows was forever present in the consciousness of them all, - it was then that the minds of some were shaken and a religious delusion but little removed from insanity took possession of them; and then ensued the spectacles which have so variously affected mankind. The Puritans paraded these isolated cases of apparent modesty as an excuse for persecution. Others have reflected upon these strange cases with an overwhelming pity for the sufferings and mental strain which led the victims to such deplorable conduct. The poem referred to is entitled "In the Old South, 1677", which gives a vivid picture of the enthusiast

who was called upon, as she believed, to denounce the unchristian conduct of the oppressors of the Friends. Her words of warning are solemn; and the reader can sense the poet's natural exultation in view of the fact that the principle of religious freedom was finally acknowledged.[37]

Turning to "The King's Missive" one finds a poem based on the message sent from the king of England in 1661 to release the Quakers that were in jail. The publication of the poem renewed the discussion between the friends of the Puritans and those of the Quakers. The Rev. Dr. Ellis attempted to show that the poem had no historical foundation, and Mr. Whittier replied in an earnest defence of the position he had taken. The main point made by Dr. Ellis is that no record exists in the books showing that an order of release was passed by the council. In reply it might be urged that if the council had desired to retire silently from an untenable position, it would have been an easy and natural way to release the prisoners by verbal order. Thus much is certain: the royal missive came, and the imprisoned Quakers were set at liberty. Whether, according to the old maxim, it was _post hoc_ or _propter hoc_ is not very important - in the case of a poem.[38]

The Massachusetts Historical Society of which Rev. Ellis was the president afterward put, in a manner, its seal of

---

[37] F. W. Underwood, _op. cit._, pp. 331-342.

[38] F. W. Underwood, _op. cit._, p. 334.

acceptance on the historical basis of the poem, when it chose Whittier as a member; and it was generally admitted among its members that Dr. Ellis went too far in his attempt to vindicate the character of the Puritans for justice or moderation. Whittier himself, in reprinting the poem in his collected works, adds tranquilly:

> "The publication of the ballad led to some discussion as to the historical truthfulness of the picture, but I have seen no reason to rub out any of the figures, or alter the lines and colours."[39]

Whittier does not belong to the extreme "bards of doubt". Like many other religious poets he recognized the divine presence as existent and operative in all things. His verses are full of hope and courage. In "The Reformer" he says:

> "But life shall on and upward go."[40]

It was this faith that sustained him in the midst of detraction, violence, and loss. In "Eternity of Cry" he exclaims:

> "Happy he whose inward ear
> Angel comforting can hear,
> O'er the rabble's laughter.

---

[39] John Greenleaf Whittier, op. cit., p. 124.

[40] Ibid., p. 365.

And while Hatred's forots burn,
Glimpses through the smoke discern
Of the good hereafter."[41]

Those who in later years read the fine dramatic delineations in "Barclay of Ury" do not quite appreciate the school in which Whittier learned what life meant to Barclay. The first time that actual violence came near, though it missed him, was after there had been established on April 3, 1834, an antislavery society of which he was secretary. A year or so later in August, 1835, the Rev. Samuel J. May of Syracuse, New York preached in the Unitarian pulpit at Haverhill and announced that he should give an antislavery address in the evening.[42]

The result was that the meeting was entirely dispersed by a mob. As the mob was throwing stones and breaking out windows, a loaded cannon was being drawn to the spot to add to the horror that the disgraceful tumult was causing on a quiet and peaceful Sabbath evening.

Yet, some of these New Englanders, who were bitterly opposed to Quakerism and its doctrines, were members of other denominations and professed to believe and abide by the Bible; but they could not keep the Sabbath day holy. It is strange that theocratic New England regarded with

---

[41] Ibid., p. 34.

[42] T. W. Higginson, op. cit., p. 56.

hostility the ideals of Quakers as in direct opposition to the week-day and Sabbath day services. It seems that they could have represented such sincere and unclouded faith, such a wonderful guide as the Inner Light, and such a "humane" life as that of the Quakers.

Whittier's verse, however, continued in the spirit of trust in the beneficent order of things and the loving superintendence of the universe as it shows itself. He was ever hopeful, ever cheerful, and always looking forward to a happier, brighter era when the Kingdom of Heaven should be established. He reached the hearts of his sober and best thinking countrymen, especially those New Englanders who had been partially paralyzed by the teachings of Edwards.

Again and again Whittier asserts the humanity of Christ and the coequal divinity of all men. He, like all New Englanders of his sect, advocated the principles that members of the Christian fellowship are equals in the sight of God and in each other's eyes, that on earth there is neither high nor low but a common brotherhood in Christ. "I regard Christianity as life rather than a creed,"[43] wrote Whittier. This simple fact is emphasized throughout his poems, but its greatest expression is in "My Birthday" (in 1877) and "The Eternal Goodness".

"My Birthday" gives the reader very intimate contact with Whittier's soul. Every verse is deeply meditative.

---

[43] John Macy, American Writers on American Literature, p. 131.

Whittier has painted his own career with absolute truthfulness and delicately weighed himself in a balance. Three of the stanzas are as follows:

"Methinks the spirit's temper grows
Too soft in this still air;
Somewhat the restful heart foregoes
Of needed watch and prayer.

. . . . . .

Rest for the weary hands is good,
And love for hearts that pine,
But let the manly habitude
Of upright souls be mine.

. . . . . .

And if the eye must fail of light
The ear forget to hear
Make clearer still the spirit's sight
More fine the inward ear!"[44]

Another poem of the same calibre is "The Eternal Goodness", which is worth a collection of sermons and which was spoken from the pulpits of various sects and churches in New England. Such a poem was a great gift to the New Englander who needed so very much the principles of mercy, justice, and freedom.

This poem, coming in an age of doubt and intellectual

---

[44] John Greenleaf Whittier, op. cit., p. 406.

pride on one hand, and formality and bigotry on the other, seemed to come as a new hope, a new confession of sublime faith, and a new aspiration for the union of all created souls in the Divine. The thought and feeling of the sweet and holy utterances of this poem seem to be one. Follow the thought in each of the following stanzas:

"I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care."[45]

Another poem showing some of the phases of religion in New England is "Miriam", which appeared in 1870 and was dedicated to Frederick A. P. Barnard, President of Columbia College, a gentleman who was distinguished in the cause of education, and who in his youth wrote for the New England Review of Hartford, Connecticut, at the time when Whittier was editor.

Miriam was the name of a Christian slave, a favorite wife of an Oriental monarch, the Shah Akbar, and one who

---

[45] John Greenleaf Whittier, op. cit., p. 442.

kept alive, as best she could, something of the pure faith in which she had been reared. At the command of her lord she told him what she knew of Christ. Afterwards, his wrath was turned to mercy by the persuasion of Miriam.

The poem is full of weighty thoughts concerning the dealings of God with men born outside the sphere of Christianity and of those who thought they were in the sphere--and many New Englanders did. The measures of the spiritual faith and truth attained by the seers and prophets of older races is also brought out.

During Whittier's time, just as there are now, there were many persons in New England who had different opinions about hell. In the poem "The Minister's Daughter", is embodied Whittier's notion about hell. The just and compassionate nature of Whittier had been moved by the consideration of the theory of predestination; but instead of resorting to argument, he touches the mind through natural feelings. The dear, little innocent daughter of the grave Calvinist did not know anything about proof-texts and logic; but she found the way to her father's heart. By the wonderful force of love the father's theory of predestination gives away to a fuller and truer vision of life.

Thereafter his hearers noted
In his prayers a tender strain,
And never the gospel of hatred
Burned on his lips again.

And the scoffing tongue was prayerful,
And the blinded eyes found sight,
And hearts, as flint aforetime,
Grew soft in his warmth and light.[46]

Concerning this poem Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote to Whittier on March 6, 1861:

"If you happen to have seen an article in the March - or was it February? -'North American', you will have noticed, it may be, my reference to "The Minister's Daughter," and to yourself as preaching the Gospel of Love to a larger congregation than any minister addresses. I never rise from any of your poems without feeling the refreshment of their free and sweet atmosphere. Again that sweetest "Minister's Daughter" brought the tears into my eyes - and out of them."[47]

Thus in looking at Whittier and some of his religious writings we see his place in New England religion and that of the sect to which he belonged. We also see the reactions of the other religious groups in New England to the doctrines and ideals of Whittier's religion.

Then in accounting for such high ideals and moral codes as were exemplified by Quakerism, and Puritanism to some extent, we might consider the fact that Whittier, like many

---

[46] John Greenleaf Whittier, op. cit., p. 460.

[47] Samuel Pickard, Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier, Vol. II, p. 665.

other New Englanders, was a son of generations of God-fearing ancestors. The sympathy of a noble household had sustained and animated him. Every part of his being was endowed with the desire to place himself in the service of God in the affairs of his day. This devotion and oneness of purpose characterized Whittier as a typical son of New England throughout his long and fruitful life.

Then, taking other things into consideration in accounting for Whittier's influence on New England religion it must be remembered that he made the best of the scanty opportunities offered him by his own section of the country. He knew how to deal with his fellowmen who could be dealt with. His religious training had led to more than a conformity to moral rules; it had developed in him the sublime sense of duty as something to be followed at any cost. Ideas, institutions, and laws, as well as social usages, were to be tried by the standard of right. Literature was useful as it elevated mankind or as it tended to lessen human suffering, and Whittier's writings were surely devoted to these purposes.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS AND THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT IN NEW ENGLAND

New England during Whittier's day was indeed a battle-ground of various political leaders and parties. There were Whigs, Free Soilers, Republicans, Democrats, Liberals, and several other parties. All had certain platforms which they thought would be best for the United States.

Whittier saw much and heard much of politics during his boyhood, for those were the days when small rural communities which today number scarce two-hundred persons had a population of twelve to fifteen hundred and sent often two representatives each to the General Court of the State.

During Whittier's early life a "town-meeting" day was the big event of the year. The whole town was there - hoary-headed old grandsires of the second generation, who, bent and feeble, chattered of the strength of their youth and told tales of their childhood in the forests; the third generation in its prime talking of cattle and corn and the coming spring's work; and lastly, flocking by themselves the center of it all, young men under twenty-one, one hundred of them with massive shoulders and mighty limbs, clad in coarse and strong garments, and heavy cow-hide boots with tops that reached almost to their knees. What a magazine of stored-up energy! They are not still a moment, crowding and pushing each other, boasting, fighting, wrestling,

laughing boisterously at rough jokes, jumping, lifting each other by the heels with their strength, massing together to crash down the inner partition of the town hall; a "rough lot", a band of young Titans with energy enough and self-confidence enough to shake the very foundations of the republic.[1]

Whittier, perhaps, was never seen in such crowds, for when he was a boy he did not care to be seen in crowds; he was somewhat shy. But as he grew older, received a district schooling and one year of academy education, and became affiliated with various newspapers and magazines, he began to pay attention to politics.

In 1830, however, he had to return to the farm to make a living for his aunt, mother, and sisters; but he did not lose complete sight of the political activities in New England. He did have a hard time doing so, however, because the best information never reached the farm regularly. In 1832 he wrote to Mr. Harrison, editor of the Haverhill Iris:

> "I am starving for newspapers; I now and then get one from Boston and Washington, but not until they are grey-headed with age. Could you send me a lot of papers of any kind?
>
> Have you Mr. Choate's speech on the tariff, made last session? I have never seen it. You mention a

---

[1] F. L. Pattee, Sidelights on American Literature, p. 167.

> rumor about Clay and Webster. I trust that Mr. Webster will beware how he lends himself to Jacksonism, and that Mr. Clay will hold aloof from Nullification."[2]

Again he writes:

> "I hate Jackson, or rather Jackson's measures, most cordially. I admire Clay, and shall do all I can to promote his success."[3]

In 1832 Whittier would have had the chance of being elected to Congress, but he was too young. There were seventeen Congressional elections in the North Essex district between 1831 and 1833; and the seat in Congress which this district should have filled was vacant.

Congressional elections had at that time to be determined in Massachusetts, by a majority over all other candidates, not as now by a mere plurality. In the district where he dwelt, Caleb Cushing was the candidate, and Whittier supported him; but seventeen attempts at election had been successively made, without securing a majority, so that Cushing himself was probably willing that Whittier, a far more popular candidate, should be tried. Whittier was not twenty-five and could not take the seat. Cushing, however, in 1834, succeeded in being elected.[4]

---

[2] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 164.

[3] Ibid., p. 166.

[4] Thomas Higginson, op. cit., p. 41.

Cushing was practically elected through Whittier three times in succession; but the latter gradually lost all faith in him, and when Cushing at last tried to suppress his own antislavery record, that he might get an office when the Whigs came into power in 1841, Whittier was too strong for him. He reprinted the letter which under his own management had carried Cushing through his last election to Congress and prefaced it with such skill as absolutely to defeat Cushing's ambition.[5]

Whittier, despite his illness and work on the farm, gave more and more attention to politics. Even his friends saw in him the qualities of a great politician and were eager to give him all the encouragement they could. With all these factors pressing upon him Whittier now saw the future as being full of doubt; but he seems to have set his mind on politics for he wrote to Mrs. Gurney in 1832:

> "There is something inconsistent in the character of a poet and a modern politician. I love poetry, with a love as warm, as fervent, as sincere, as any of the more gifted worshippers at the temple of the Muses. I consider its gift as something holy and above the fashion of the world . . . . . Politics is the only field now open to me."[6]

Again in 1833, he writes:

---

[5] Ibid., p. 43.

[6] F. L. Pattee, The First Century of American Literature, p. 556.

> "I have been compelled again to plunge into the political whirlpool, for I have found that my political reputation is more influential than my poetical: so I try to make myself a man of the world and the public is deceived, but I am not. They do not see that I have thrown the rough armor of rude and turbulent controversy over the keenly sensitive bosom, - a heart of softer and gentler emotions than I dare express."[7]

It was during this same year that Garrison wrote to Whittier saying:

> "My brother, there are upwards of two million of our countrymen who are doomed to the most horrible servitude which ever cursed our race and blackened the page of history . . ."[8]

There was nothing mild or uncertain about William Lloyd Garrison. After writing Whittier, he went to Haverhill and assured himself of Whittier's deepest and sincerest support. This support was first put into reality when Whittier, a short time afterwards, brought forth the noble "Justice and Expediency: or, Slavery Considered with a View to Its Rightful and Effectual Remedy, Abolition." From this time on he was a staunch and unfearing Abolitionist.

---

[7] Ibid., p. 557.

[8] Ibid., p. 557.

Before writing the treatise Whittier went in seclusion at his home and meditated quite a while upon slavery. He considered the relation of slavery to social life, political affairs, religion, morals, and life in general. Then he brought forth a twenty-three page octavo pamphlet printed at Haverhill in 1833. The concluding paragraph is as follows:

> "And when the stain on our own escutcheon shall be seen no more; when the Declaration of Independence and the practice of our people shall agree, when Truth shall be exalted among us; when Love shall take the place of Hate; when all the baneful pride and prejudice of caste and color shall fall forever; when under one sun of political Liberty the slaveholding portions of our Republics shall no longer sit like Egyptians of old, themselves mantled in thick darkness while all around them is glowing with the blessed light of freedom and equality, - then, and not till the, shall it go well for America."[9]

By the time "Justice and Expediency" had been published, New England, after a gradual process, had become clearly divided into political factions for or against the abolishment of slavery. The best New England writers of the time set their pens forth to the task of eliminating such a

---

[9] F. W. Underwood, op. cit., p. 111.

dreadful situation in a nation that was supposed to be civilized and that had come itself to this land for no other reason than that of freedom. Many of the truly intelligent and cultured sons of New England proved their Christianity and value of ideals by seeking to erase such a blot from America. Such figures as Longfellow, Holmes, Lowell, Sumner, Garrison, Phillips, Lovejoy, Child, Howe, and Whittier might be mentioned. Of these Whittier, in regard to anti-slavery writing in New England, was the most prolific.

This period in New England was a characteristic one indeed. The literary supremacy had passed from New York to New England or more specifically to Boston and its environs. The period was one of vigorous mental activity and moral questioning, and it was fitting that the descendants of the most virile of Puritans should take the lead. The literary ascendancy of Massachusetts was not geographical but racial. The leaders could almost without exception trace their ancestry back to the emigrants of the early seventeenth century.

The two great movements that stirred New England during the days of Whittier were Transcendentalism and Abolitionism. Of these Whittier was closely connected with Abolitionism, which in turn was closely connected with politics.

Notwithstanding his unpopular anti-slavery views, Whittier was elected to the State Legislature in 1835 and in

1836 by the citizens of Haverhill; but he declined a re-election in 1837. The poet said, "I early saw the necessity of separate political action, and was one of the founders of the Liberty Party - the germ of the present Republican Party."[10] Whittier was an advocate of woman suffrage; he wished to enforce moral suasion with the ballot; he did not believe in the divine right of any class to "lord it" over their fellow-men; he believed in equal rights to everyone; he bitterly opposed slavery.

His local community and state appreciated his character and ability. This fact is shown by their reelecting him; but Whittier refused on account of ill health.

Feelings of the two factions concerning the abolition of slavery grew intense. Anti-slavery meetings were held; mobs broke up the meetings. Abolitionist papers were published; advocates of slavery burned the publishing houses; poems and pamphlets were written against slavery; treatises and articles were written for it in New England as well as in the South; Whittier and other Abolitionists went from town to town lecturing on the question of slavery; fiery, half-crazed mobs threatened their lives. The year of 1835 was a year of mobs but the Abolitionists continued their good work. The following incident is related, concerning Mr. Whittier and Mr. George Thomas who had stopped at an inn in a small New England village after they had escaped a mob near Concord. After they were seated at a table the

---

[10] S. K. Bolton, Famous American Authors, p. 428.

landlord said to them:

"They've been having a h--l of a time down at Haverhill."

"How is that?"

"Oh, one of them d--d Abolitionists was lecturin' there; he had been invited to the town by a young fellow named Whittier; but they made it pretty hot for him and I guess neither he nor Whittier will be in a hurry to repeat the thing."

"What kind of a fellow is this Whittier?"

"Oh he's an ignorant sort of fellow; He don't know much."

"And who is this Thompson they're talking about?"

"Why, he's a man sent over here by the British to make trouble for our government."[11]

As the two friends were stepping into the buggy, Mr. Whittier, with one foot on the step, turned and said to the host, who was standing by with several tavern loafers:

"You've been talking about Thompson and Whittier. This is Mr. Thompson, and I am Whittier. Good morning."

"And jumping into the buggy," said the poet, with a twinkle in his eye, "we whipped up, and stood not on the order of our going." As for the host he stood with open mouth, being absolutely tongue-tied with astonishment. "And for all I know," said the narrator, "He's standing there still with his mouth open."

---

[11] T. Gloene Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 128-129.

Mr. Thompson was secreted at the Whittier farmhouse in Haverhill for two weeks after this affair.

In spite of the ridicule, attempts to murder, and the ostracism that the Abolitionists received, they pressed on because they knew they were working for a good cause; and their numbers increased day by day. In 1837 Whittier wrote:

> "Just look at old Massachusetts! The legislature is abolitionized, the whole State is coming. For the last four weeks I have been in Boston, aiding and abetting in the plan of tumbling our six hundred representatives off in the fence upon the abolition side. We have coaxed in season and out of season, threatened and cajoled, plead and scolded until we've got the day . . . We shall get a bill through, moreover, granting a jury trial for fugitive slaves."[12]

Mr. Whittier continued to set forth every effort through politics, poetry, lectures, and actual persuasion for the cause of Abolition. The poems written by him during the first years of his anti-slavery work from 1833-1837 were mostly pertaining to the elimination of slavery. Most of the poems appeared at first in New England newspapers. Whittier was always exclaiming and shouting through his verse for the freedom of the slave.

In referring to Whittier's poems that reflect the development of the anti-slavery sentiment in New England,

---

[12] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 214.

three poems concerning personal cases in Massachusetts will be discussed. The first one of these is "Moloch in State Street", which concerns the arrest and return to bondage of the fugitive slave Thomas Sims. In a foot-note of the Report of the Senate of Massachusetts the following is said concerning the case:

> "It would have been impossible for the U.S. Marshal thus successfully to have resisted the law of the State, without the municipal authorities of Boston, and the countenance and support of a numerous, wealthy, and powerful body of citizens. It was in evidence that 1500 of the most wealthy and respectable citizens - merchants, bankers, and others - volunteered their services to aid the marshall on this occasion. . . . . No watch was kept upon the marshal and while the State officers slept, after the moon had gone down, in the darkest hour before day-break, the accused was taken out of our jurisdiction by the armed police of the city of Boston."[13]

The first stanza of the poem describes the time when the marshal and city police took the accused from the jail house.

> "The moon has set: while yet the dawn
> Breaks cold and grey

---

13 Complete Poetical Works, p. 314.

Between the midnight and the morn
Bear off your prey![14]

The State of Massachusetts did not favor the return of fugitive slaves, for in 1780 she embodied into her state constitution the words, "All men are born free and equal," and the courts ruled that these words in the state constitution had the effect of liberating the slaves and of giving to them the same rights as other citizens.[15] During the great discussion of the Fugitive Slave Act, Massachusetts was the only state that had a senator brave enough to speak against the Act. (The senator referred to is Charles Sumner.)[16] There were citizens in Massachusetts who were supporters of the Fugitive Slave Act. Whittier in the following stanza shows that the State was free from such scandal:

"Thank God! our mother state can yet
Her fame retrieve;
To you and to your children let
The scandal cleave.

He knew that the few citizens who were aiding in returning human beings to bondage would reap what they were sowing.

---

[14] Ibid.,

[15] Jesse Macy, The Anti-Slavery Crusade, p. 6.

[16] Ibid., p. 171.

He says in a later stanza:

"What! know ye not the gains of Crime
Are dust and dross;
Its ventures on the waves of time
Foredoomed to loss!"

Massachusetts would continue to advocate freedom just as her fathers had done in seeking liberty from England.

"That brave old blood, quick-flowing yet,
Shall know no check,
Till a free people's foot is set
On Slavery's neck."[17]

Perhaps the most widely read poem concerning the anti-slavery sentiment in New England is the one which refers to the Latimer case. George Latimer, an alleged fugitive slave, was seized in Boston without warrant at the request of James B. Grey of Norfolk, Virginia, who claimed to be his master. The case was brought before the Massachusetts court and caused much excitement throughout the South and North, especially in Massachusetts. More than fifty thousand citizens of Massachusetts signed a petition and presented it to Congress. The petition called for such laws and proposed amendments to the Constitution as should relieve the Commonwealth from all further partici-

---

[17] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 314-315.

pation in the crime of oppression. All the friends of liberty arranged to have meetings in each county on January 2, 1843. The one in Essex County was held at Ipswich, and the occasion was made memorable by the reading of Whittier's poem, "Massachusetts to Virginia," which was printed in the Liberator of January 27, 1843. Latimer himself was finally given free papers for the sum of four hundred dollars.[18]

Whittier at the beginning of the poem frankly lets Virginia know that Massachusetts does not intend to engage in any combat with her in spite of the threats the Bay State had received from Virginia. In spite of Virginia's man-hunts in Massachusetts, the greeting shows that Massachusetts is courteous and humane enough to try to remain on friendly terms. The poem begins as follows:

> "The blast from Freedom's Northern hills,
> upon its Southern way,
> Bears greeting to Virginia from Massachu-
> setts Bay:
> No word of haughty challenging, nor battle
> bugle's peal,
> Nor steady tread of marching files, nor
> clang of horsemen's steel.
>
> No train of deep-mouthed cannon along
> our highways go;

---

[18] Complete Poetical Works, p. 286.

. . . . . .

And to the land-breeze of our ports, upon
their errands far,
A thousand sails of commerce swell, but
none are spread for war.

In the next stanza Whittier shows that the threats and harsh words from Virginia had not frightened Massachusetts at all.

We hear thy threats, Virginia! thy stormy
words and high
Swell harshly on the Southern winds which
melt along our sky;
Yet, not one brown, hard hand foregoes its
honest labor here,
No hewer of our mountain oaks suspends
his axe in fear.

Even the winds and waves, sun and rain, and Massachusetts in its entirety laughed in ridicule at Virginia's threats.

The cold north light and wintry sun glare
on their icy forms,
Bent grimly o'er their straining lines or
wrestling with the storms;

Free as the winds they drive before, rough
as the waves they roam,

They laugh to scorn the slaver's threat
against their rocky home.

Whittier reminds Virginia that it was Massachusetts that swept the Britons' swords away, that it was the sons of Massachusetts, along with those of Virginia, that encountered Tarleton's charge of fire and the strength of Cornwallis, and that it was Massachusetts that answered from Faneuil Hall the call of the House of Burgesses.

"Forgets she how the Bay State, in answer
to the call
Of her old House of Burgesses, spoke out
from Faneuil Hall?
When echoing back her Henry's cry,
came pulsing on each breath
Of Northern winds the thrilling sounds of
"Liberty or Death!"

If other states of New England had forgotten how their fathers cherished liberty and fought it, Massachusetts does not have to turn from the paths of freedom also. Massachusetts did not have to hunt the men from the hateful hell of slavery because other states did so. Whittier is thankful that his state had not strayed from the teachings of its ancestors.

Thank God! not yet so vilely can Massa-
chusetts bow;

The spirit of her early time is with her even
now;
Dream not because her Pilgrim blood moves
slow and calm and cool,
She thus can stoop her chainless neck, a sis-
ter's slave and tool.

Whittier has Virginia to understand that, even though Massachusetts is her sister state, it will not uphold her in such a horrible crime.

All that a sister State should do, all that a
free State may,
Heart, hand, and purse we proffer, as in our
early day;
But that one dark loathsome burden ye must
stagger with alone,
And reap the bitter harvest which ye your-
selves have sown!

By holding struggling slaves, whose shrieks with wild despair were heard beneath the lash, Virginia was only writing a curse of shame upon its plains, invoking the Almighty's wrath, shaming her Virginia's ancestry, and blotting her own character.

Lower than plummet soundeth, sink the
Virginia name;

Plant, if ye will, your father's graves with
rankest weeds of shame;
Be, if ye will, the scandal of God's fair uni-
verse;
We wash our hands forever of your sin and
shame and curse.

In the following lines Whittier described the excitement that began "when the prowling man-thief came hunting for his prey beneath the very shadow of Bunker's shaft of gray" where the sons of Massachusetts, Virginia, and all the other colonies had advocated, and fought for peace not more than three-quarters of a century ago.

"A hundred thousand right arms were lifted
up on high,
A hundred thousand voices sent back their
loud reply,
Through the thronged towns of Essex the
startling summons rang,
And up from bench and loom and wheel her
young mechanics sprang!

Every county, town, and village was alarmed over the outrage.

The voice of free, broad Middlesex, of thou-
sands as of one,
The shaft of Bunker calling to that of Lexington;

From Norfolk's ancient villages, from Plymouth's rocky bound
To where Nantucket feels the arms of ocean close her round;

From rich and rural Worcester, where through the calm repose
Of cultures vales and fringing woods the gentle Nashua flows,
To where Wachusets wintry blasts the mountain larches stir,
Swelled up to Heaven the thrilling cry of "God save Latimer!"

The streams and rivers throughout New England took up the cry.

And sandy Barnstable rose up, wet with the salt sea spray;
And Bristol sent her answering shout down Narragansett Bay!
Along the broad Connecticut old Hampden felt the thrill,
And the cheer of Hampshire's woodmen swept down from Holyoke Hill.

The voices of Massachusett's sons and daughters called from deep unto deep, reminding Virginia that they had stood her insults long enough.

Look to it well, Virginians! In calmness
we have borne,
In answer to our faith and trust, your insult
and your scorn;
You've spurned our kindest counsels;
you've hunted for our lives;
And shaken round our hearths and homes
your manacles and gyves!

In the closing of the poem, as at the outset, Virginia is reminded that Massachusetts intends to wage no war or speak rudely but it does intend to keep freedom and do away with slave-hunts in its borders.

For us and for our children, the vow
which we have given
For freedom and humanity is registered in heaven;
No slave-hunt in our borders, - no pirate
on our strand!
No fetters in the Bay State, - no slave
upon our land![19]

Another poem that concerns a specific case in Massachusetts is "The Rendition". On the second of June, 1854, Anthony Burns, a fugitive slave from Virginia, after being under arrest for ten days in the Boston Court House, was remanded to slavery under the Fugitive Slave Act and taken

---

[19] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 286-288.

down State Street to a steamer chartered by the United States Government under guard of United States troops and artillery, Massachusetts militia, and Boston police. Public excitement ran high, a futile attempt to rescue Burns having been made during his confinement, and the streets were crowded with tens of thousands of people, of whom many came from other towns and cities of the state to witness the humiliating spectacle.[20]

In the poem Whittier describes the feeling that crept over him when he saw the wretched sight. He says:

"The solid earth beneath my feet
Reeled fluid as the sea.

I felt a sense of bitter loss, -
Shame, tearless grief, and stifling wrath,
And loathing fear, as if my path
A serpent stretched across.

All lone of home, and pride of place
All generous confidence and trust,
Sank smothering in that deep disgust
And anguish of disgrace."

In the following lines he describes the cowardice of the law of the nation, state, and town on this particular occasion. Massachusetts, his own state, was failing to cherish

---

[20] Complete Poetical Works, p. 315.

freedom, its professed goal.

"And Law, an unleosed maniac, strong,
Blood-drunken, through the blackness trod,
Hoarse-shouting in the ear of God
The blasphemy of wrong.

Seeing all of these things Whittier calls upon the old spirit of freedom to return.

"O mother, from thy memories proud,
Thy old renown, dear Commonwealth,
Lend this dead air a breeze of health,
And write with stars this cloud.

"Mother of Freedom, wise and brave,
Rise awful in thy strength," I said;

Whittier called upon Freedom, but he realized that his call was in vain. It seemed as if Freedom had gone forever. He says in the last lines:

Ah me! I spake but to the dead;
I stood upon her grave!"[21]

Nevertheless, Whittier continued to shout for freedom. All of his poems of this period, the period immediately preceding the Civil War usually dealt with the slavery

---

[21] Complete Poetical Works, p. 316.

question. Whittier especially reproached his own state for the part she played in conforming to the requests of the South. He had always thought of Massachusetts as being the leading state in the cause of freedom and he wanted her to be true to his ideals.

Especially did Whittier remind the clergy of Massachusetts about their atrocious activities in returning slaves to bondage and preaching the gospel of freedom. Not only in Massachusetts was there a ministers' crusade against liberty but throughout the North as well as the South. The churches proved more pliable than the states. The authority of nearly all the leading denominations was directed against the Abolitionists. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church passed in 1830 a resolution censuring two of their members who had lectured in favor of modern abolitionism.[22] Perhaps the most brilliant and most aggressive of the poems addressed to the clergy is the one entitled "The Pastoral Letter," first printed in the Liberator, October, 1837, after the General Association of Congregational ministers in Massachusetts met at Brookfield, June 27, 1837, and issued a Pastoral Letter to the churches under its care, discouraging the agitation of the question of slavery, and censuring especially the employment of female Anti-slavery speakers, - quoting Paul, after the old fashion. The letter was directed mainly against the accomplished

---

[22] Jesse Macy, The Anti-Slavery Crusade, p. 74.

sisters, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, two noble women of South Carolina, who were former slave-owners but who became advocates of freedom, addressing the public in Massachusetts and producing profound sensation.[23] Mob violence which involved the post-office began when printed copies of Miss Grimke's Appeal to the Christian Women of the South were seized and burned in Charleston.[24]

The letter sent out by the ministers at the meeting in Brookfield demanded that "the perplexed and agitating subjects which are now common among us . . . should not be forced upon any church as matters for debate, at the hazard of alienation and division," and called attention to the dangers now seeming "to threaten the female character with widespread and permanent injury."[25]

Whittier's reply, "The Pastoral Letter", is filled with grim sarcasm and indignant invective. The blood of his Quaker ancestors was in a ferment. The lines bit like rapier thrusts. The memory of clerical oppression and of the wrongs inflicted upon his people in Puritanic times would not be restrained:[26]

"Now shame upon ye, parish Popes!
Was it thus with those, your predecessors,

---

[23] Complete Poetical Works, p. 276.

[24] Jesse Macy, op. cit., p. 75.

[25] Complete Poetical Works, p. 276.

[26] F. H. Underwood, John Greenleaf Whittier, p. 152.

Who sealed with racks, and fire, and ropes
Their loving kindness to transgressors.

. . . . . .

Then, wholesome laws relieved the Church
Of heretics and mischief-maker,
And priest and bailiff joined in search,
By turns, of Papist, witch, and Quaker!
The stocks were at each church's door,
The gallows stood on Boston Common,

. . . . . .

Your fathers dealt not as ye deal
With 'non-professing' frantic teachers;
They bored the tongue with red-hot steel,
And flayed the backs of 'female preachers'

. . . . . .

Of fainting women dragged along,
Gashed by the whip, accursed and glory!

The following stanza clearly shows that the ministers could not bear the truth that 'Carolina's high-souled daughters', the Misses Grimkes, was teaching. The clergy knew that they, who were supposed to be the disciples of Christ who died that all might have life and freedom, should have been doing just what the Grimke sisters were doing. Whittier says to them:

"But ye, who scorn the thrilling tale
Of Carolina's high-souled daughters,

Which echoes here the mournful wail
Of sorrow from Edisto's waters,
Close while ye may the public ear,
With malice vex, with slander wound them,
The pure good shall throng to hear,
And tried and manly hearts surround them."[27]

In reading the poem one sees that as it progresses the strains grow tender, as after a time sorrow takes up the burden of wrath; but throughout the poem there is the same resistless movement, in which argument and expostulation are blended, while the apt rhymes give a series of epigrammatic as well as sonorous blows.[28]

Another poem in which Whittier rails the clergy is "Clerical Oppressors", which was written after the report of the pro-slavery meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, September 4, 1835, was published in the Courier of that city. The report stated that the clergy of all denominations attended in a body, lending their sanction to the proceedings, and adding by their presence to the impressive character of the scene!"[29] Whittier does not halt one time telling the ministers just how ridiculous they have made themselves by trying to repress freedom.

---

[27] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 276-277.

[28] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

[29] Complete Poetical Works, p. 272.

What preach and kidnap men?
Give thanks and rob thy own afflicted poor?
Talk of thy glorious liberty, and then
Bolt hard the captive's door?

Their very acts show just what hypocrites they are.

Paid hypocrites, who turn
Judgment aside, and rob the Holy Book
Of those high words of truth which scorch and burn
In warning and rebuke.

Whittier warns them of their sins and the bitter fruits that they shall reap.

Woe to the priesthood! woe
To those whose hire is with the price of blood.

. . . . . .

Woe, then, to all who grind
Their brethren of a common Father down!

. . . . . .

Their glory and their might
Shall perish; and their very name shall be
Vile before all the people in the light
Of a world's liberty.[30]

To his poem, "A Sabbath Scene", Whittier has prefixed the following note:

---

[30] Ibid.,

"This poem finds its justification in the readiness with which, even in the North, clergymen urged the prompt execution of the Fugitive Slave Law as a Christian duty, and defended the system of slavery as a Bible institution."[31]

The following lines from the poem show the ministers' use of the Bible in defending slavery:

"I've law and gospel on my side,
And who shall dare refuse me?
. . . . . .
As Paul sent back Onesimus,
My Christian friends, we send her!"

After seeing the young slave girl dragged along the aisle in shackles tied by the parson and after hearing the parson's voice, over all, devoutly thanking the Lord, Whittier's brain took fire:

"Is this," I cried, "The end of prayer
and teaching?
Then down with pulpit, down with priest,
And give us Nature's teaching!"[32]

Whittier constantly reminded Massachusetts to wake up

---

[31] Complete Poetical Works, p. 312.

[32] Ibid., pp. 312-313.

to her sense of duty and rally to the cause of freedom which she professed to cherish. In "To Massachusetts", he asks:

"What though around the blazes
No fiery rallying sign?
. . . . . .
What though unthrilled, unmoving,
The statesman stand apart,
And comes no warm approving
From Mammon's crowded mart?

He urges Massachusetts to arouse the entire country to the cause of freedom by advocating it herself.

Still let the land be shaken
By a summons of thine own!

When this is done others that are already joining the lines of freedom will respond more readily.

And across the Western mountains
Rolls back thy rallying word:
Shall thy line of battle falter
With its allies just in view?"[33]

Some of his poems of appeal to the people of Massachusetts were written immediately after meetings concerning slavery were held in Faneuil Hall. Three of these poems

---

[33] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 292-293.

are "To Faneuil Hall", "Stanza for the Times", and "The Pine Tree".

The appeal, "To Faneuil Hall", like "To Massachusetts", was written upon the near approach of the war with Mexico, which was waged solely to extend the area of slavery, and thereby perpetuate its ascendency in the government. To Whittier, an opponent of both war and slavery, this was an unspeakable outrage, a crime against a nation which had only too much reason for its jealousy of the United States, - a crime against all humanity.[34] The note prefixed to the poem is as follows:

> "Written in 1844, on reading a call by "a Massachusetts Freeman" for a meeting in Faneuil Hall of the citizens of Massachusetts, without distinction of party opposed to the annexation of Texas and the aggressions of South Carolina, and in favor of decisive action against slavery."[35]

Again Whittier calls upon the Bay State to hold up the standard of freedom. The poem begins thus:

> "Men! if manhood still ye claim,
> If the Northern pulse can thrill,
> Roused by wrong and stung by shame,
> Freely, strongly still.

---

[34] Complete Poetical Works, p. 292.

[35] Complete Poetical Works, p. 292.

He asks everyone to lay aside their work and go to Faneuil Hall because similar dangers that confronted their fathers are arising again.

> Let the sound of traffic die:
> Shut the mill-gate, leave the stall,
> Fling the axe and hammer by;
> Throng to Faneuil Hall!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Ho, to Faneuil Hall!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Once again, for freedom's sake,
> Rock your father's hall!
>
> . . . . . .

Let the banks, tariffs, trade, and the stock market rise or fall; everyone should stop work and go to the meeting because

> Freedom asks your common aid, -
> Up, to Faneuil Hall![36]
> Up, and let each voice that speaks
> Ring from thence to Southern plains,
> Sharply as the blow which breaks
> Prison-bolts and chains!

He lets the people of Massachusetts know that as long as anyone anywhere in the country was in slavery the noble

---

[36] Ibid., p. 292.

work which their fathers began was incomplete and should be finished.

"Liberty for all!"
Finish what your sires began!
Up, to Faneuil Hall![37]

Another poem, "The Pine Tree", was written on hearing that the Anti-Slavery Resolves of Stephen C. Phillips had been rejected by the Whig Convention in Faneuil Hall, in 1846.[38] As in the poem, "To Faneuil Hall", so it is in "The Pine-Tree"; Whittier appeals to the Bay State to hold firmly to their ideal-freedom. He asks his fellowmen to:

Lift again the stately emblem on the Bay
State's rusted shield,
Give to Northern winds the Pine-Tree on
our banner's tattered field.

The poem in many respects is the same as "To Faneuil Hall". He again mentions the spirit of their fathers, the free spirit of old, and the value of liberty as compared to tariffs.

Rise again for hope and freedom! set the
battle in array!

---

[37] Complete Poetical Works, p. 292.

[38] Ibid., p. 293.

What the fathers did of old time we their sons
must do to-day.
O my God! for that free spirit, which of
old in Boston town
Smote the Province House with terror,
struck the crest of Andros down!

. . . . . .

Tells us not of banks and tariffs, cease your
paltry pedler cries;
Shall the good State sink her honor that
your gambling stocks may rise?
Would ye barter man for cotton? That
your gains may sum up higher.

Then Whittier, in the last lines of the poem, states that he would feel somewhat better if he could get just one man of Massachusetts to stand up bravely for freedom.

O my God! for one right worthy to lift up
her rusted shield,
And to plant again the Pine-Tree in her
banner's tattered field!"[39]

"Stanzas for the Times" is another poem written after a meeting concerning slavery was held in Faneuil Hall. The "Times" referred to were those evil times of the pro-slavery meetings in Faneuil Hall, August 21, 1835, in

---

39 Complete Poetical Works, pp. 293-294.

which a demand was made for the suppression of free speech, lest it should endanger the foundation of commercial society.[40] Whittier asks:

> "Shall tongue be mute, when deeds are
> wrought
> Which well might shame extremest hell?
> Shall freemen look the indignant thought?
> Shall Pity's bosom cease to swell?

The answer is :

> No; guided by our country's laws,
> For truth, and right, and suffering man,
> Be ours to strive in Freedom's cause,
> As Christians may, as freemen can!

In the last stanza Whittier lets the South know that the land of the Yankee is free and that its inhabitants were not barred from advocating the abolishment of slavery or any other wrong that existed anywhere.

> Rail on, then, brethren of the South,
> Ye shall not hear the truth the less;
> No seal is on the Yankee's mouth,
> No fetter on the Yankee's press!
> From our Green Mountains to the sea,
> One voice shall thunder, We are free!"[41]

---

[40] Ibid., p. 271.

[41] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 271-272.

Considering other poems that reflect the effect that slavery had on New England, one could hardly refrain from mentioning "Expostulation", "A Summons", "Texas", "Massachusetts", and "New Hampshire".

The poem, "Expostulation", was written after an address to the people of New England was delivered by Dr. Charles Follen, a German patriot, who had come to America for the freedom which was denied him in his native land. He allied himself with the abolitionists; and at a convention of delegates from all the Anti-Slavery organizations in New England, held at Boston in May, 1834, was chairman of a committee to prepare an address to the people of New England.[42]

Whittier at the beginning and throughout the poem acquaints the reader with some of the horrible conditions existing in a country that is supposed to be intelligent and abounding in liberty. The opening of the poem is very striking.

> Our fellow-countrymen in chains!
> Slaves in a land of light and law!
> Slaves, crouching on the very plains
> Where rolled the storm of Freedom's war!

Farther on in the poem Whittier depicts some of the horrors that were actually existing in "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

---

[42] Complete Poetical Works, p. 267.

What ho! our countrymen in chains!
The whip on woman's shrinking flesh!
Our soil yet reddening with the stains
Caught from her scourging, warm and fresh!
What! mothers from their children riven!
What! God's own image bought and sold!
Americans to market driven,
And bartered as the brute for gold!

Every country on the globe was laughing at the United States, the country that is supposed to be endowed with Christianity and foremost in shedding light to other nations. In view of these things, Whittier asks:

Just God! and shall we calmly rest,
The Christians scorn, the heathen's mirth,
Content to live the lingering jest
And by-word of a mocking Earth?
Shall our own glorious land retain
That curse which Europe scorns to bear?
Shall our own brethren drag the chain
Which not even Russia's menials wear?[43]

Whittier in "A Summons" asks again:

Shall our New England stand erect no longer
But stoop in chains upon her downward way,

---

[43] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 267-268.

Thicker to gather on her limbs and stronger
Day after day?[44]

The answer is "No", for Whittier thinks that a 'People's voice' from every place in New England shall be borne by the Northern winds over the Potomac's to St. Mary's wave and on to the cane-brakes of Mississippi, and shall arouse a feeling of hope in the bosom of the sighing bondman.

Another call for the citizens of Massachusetts is made in the poem, "Texas", which was written during the time of intense feeling of the friends of freedom in view of the annexation of Texas, with its vast territory sufficient, as was boasted, for six new slave states.[45] The poem opens in a manner similar to a bugle call.

"Up the hills, down the glen,
Rouse the sleeping citizen;
Summon out the might of men!

The South was only making the Union weak by depriving a part of the population of its freedom, a fact that Whittier states in the following stanzas:

"Make our Union-bond a chain,
Weak as tow in Freedom's strain
Link by link shall snap in twain.

---

[44] Ibid., p. 273.

[45] Ibid., p. 291.

"Boldly, or with treacherous art,
Strike the blood-wrought chain apart;
Break the Union's mighty heart;
. . . . . .
Which shall grow and deepen still."[46]

When Whittier heard that the Resolutions of the Legislature of Massachusetts on the subject of Slavery, presented by Honorable Caleb Cushing to the House of Representatives of the United States in 1837 had been laid on the table unread and unreferred under the infamous rule of "Patton's Resolution",[47] he wrote the poem entitled "Massachusetts", in which the first stanza clearly shows that Whittier considered much an act by Congress as an insult to Massachusetts.

And have they spurned thy word,
Thou of the old Thirteen!
Whose soil, where Freedom's blood first poured,
Hath yet a darker green?
To outworn patience suffering long
In insult added to the wrong.

Faneuil Hall is also mentioned in one of the stanzas. In speaking of it Whittier says:

---

[46] Complete Poetical Works, p. 292.

[47] Ibid., p. 508.

So let thy Faneuil Hall
By freeman's feet be trod,
And give the echoes of its wall
Once more to Freedom's God!

Whittier realizes that Massachusetts will have to carry on the campaign for freedom in its own borders, for he says:

"Not on Potomac's side,
With treason in thy rear,
Can freedom's holy cause be tried:
Not there my State, but here.
Here must thy needed work be done,
The battle at thy hearth-stone won."[48]

The campaign for freedom did go on. New Hampshire seems to have been one of the first states to take a whole-hearted stand with Massachusetts. Whittier praises New Hampshire in the poem entitled "New Hampshire", the opening lines of which are as follows:

"God bless New Hampshire! from her
granite peaks
Once more the voice of Stark and Langdon
speaks.
The long-bound vassal of the exulting South
For very shame her self-forged chain
has broken.
. . . . . .

---

[48] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 508-509.

Whittier asks the other states to take courage and do what New Hampshire has done.

> "Courage, then, Northern hearts! Be firm,
> be true!
> What one brave state hath done, can ye
> not also do?"[49]

Whittier's verses were the bugles of war. Every word he wrote had force and clearly showed that he was indeed an opponent of every image of oppression, a believer in a true democracy, and an advocate of the innate worth and natural rights of man. The more Whittier wrote, the more the feeling of the conflict was felt. The ranks of the Abolitionists in New England swelled. The North in general seemed to have turned against slavery. Letters, poems, and comments appeared in papers and magazines. Day by day the South wrote; and day by day New England, led by Whittier, replied.

The life of New England was indeed interwoven to a great extent with the anti-slavery sentiment and to some extent with the pro-slavery sentiment. Many New Englanders could relate, step by step, such events as: Thomas W. Higginson's participation in the attack upon the Boston Courthouse to rescue a fugitive slave, Anthony Burns; the part played by Wendell Phillips in demanding force to

---

[49] Ibid., p. 293.

free America from slavery; Theodore Parker's challenge to all Americans to rise and save their fellow man; the part played by New England writers, such as Whittier, Lowell, Longfellow, and Thoreau, who declared that if there was any place more unprincipled than our country he would like to see it; Garrison's vigorous attack upon the "so-called" Christian churches for aiding the cause of slavery; and the surprise and disgust of New Englanders after Daniel Webster delivered his Seventh of March Speech, which prompted Whittier to write "Ichabod", a poem denouncing Webster as a dishonest actor upon the stage of oratory.

In the note to the poem Whittier says:

> "This poem was the outcome of the surprise and grief and forecast of evil consequences which I felt on reading the seventh of March speech of Daniel Webster in support of the 'compromise', and the Fugitive Slave Law. No partisan or personal enmity dictated it. On the contrary my admiration of the splendid personality and intellectual power of the great Senator was never stronger than when I laid down his speech, and, in one of the saddest moments of my life, penned my protest. I saw, as I wrote, with painful clearness its sure results, - the Slave Power arrogant and defiant, strengthened and encouraged to carry out its scheme for the extension of its baleful system, or the dissolution of the Union, the guaranties of personal liberty in the free States broken down, and the whole country made the

hunting ground of slave-catchers."[50]

To the Conservatives Webster's speech was greatly conciliatory; to the Abolitionists it was a sign of apostasy. Whittier expressed the almost unutterable regret of Northern men in stanzas of painful significance. They are burned into the memory of the admirers of Webster as he stood in his early days:[51]

"O, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

. . . . . .

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled:
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead."[52]

The poem contains more storage of electric energy than anything we remember in our time. Although Whittier's judgment of the senator was irrevocable, yet his feelings afterwards softened towards the man, a fact which is seen in one of his later poems," The Lost Occasion."[53]

---

[50] Complete Poetical Works, p. 186.

[51] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 199.

[52] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 186-187.

[53] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 200.

Finally the war came. Whittier, because of his Quaker belief, was not in favor of war; but when it did come, he did not try to drive it away. He rather encouraged it by writing the poems included under the title, "In War Times", which seem to have a sad yet trustful spirit.

At the end of the war Whittier was pleased to know that the cause for which he worked had been won. What a proud soul he was when the bells rang out the freedom of the slaves. Then came the poem "Laus Deo!", a gratitude and exultation at the passage of the amendment abolishing slavery. Whittier says that the suggestioncame to him as he sat in the Friends' Meeting-house in Amesbury, where he was present at the regular Fifth-day meeting. All sat in silence, but on his return to his home, he recited a portion of the poem, not then committed to paper, to his housemates in the garden room. In writing to Lucy Larcom the poet said, "It wrote itself, or rather sang itself, while the bells rang."[54]

It is done!
Clang of bell and roar of gun
Send the tidings up and down.

. . . .

Ring, O bells!
Every stroke exulting tells
Of the buried hour of crime.

. . . .

---

[54] Complete Poetical Works, p. 345.

Let us kneel
God's own voice is in that peal,
And this spot is holy ground.

. . . . .

Ring and swing,
Bells of joy! On morning's wing
Send the song of praise abroad!
With a sound of broken chains
Tell the nations that He reigns
Who alone is Lord and God!"[55]

Whittier could now rest peacefully, because he had fought bravely and had at last won.

In looking at Whittier and New England life one can see how closely connected the Anti-Slavery movement was with New England. Thus in referring to Whittier one refers to one of the greatest exponents of the Anti-Slavery movement; and in referring to the Anti-Slavery movement, one, without a doubt, refers to New England, because it is the section of our country in which the movement originated and blossomed forth.

---

[55] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 345-346.

CHAPTER V

THE SOCIAL SIDE OF NEW ENGLAND LIFE

One of the most important phases of New England life, the social phase, will be touched upon in this chapter. This part of New England life has received much attention by various writers on American literature and especially is this fact true in regard to Whittier.

In looking at the social side of New England life as seen through the life and writings of Whittier, one gets a glimpse of the social life of New England in general, the working class and the Brahmin class, for Whittier was associated with both. He was of the working class by birth and became affiliated with the Brahmin class through his distinction and achievements.

From his earliest boyhood Whittier found himself in a family that was continually receiving guests, strangers, and travellers, as well as intimate friends, and giving them a place to sleep and food to eat. They listened to their stories of adventure, chatted with them, and always let them know that strangers were welcome. Of course hospitality was one characteristic of all the Friends. They knew how to entertain anyone, no matter to what class he belonged. Beggars, travellers, and nearby Indians knew the Whittier home to be a place of cordial entertainment.

Although the Indians made inoursions upon the small New England towns, they never bothered John Whittier and his family; they considered the Whittiers as their friends. The Whittiers did not look their doors at night, despite the fact that Mr. Whittier was appointed by the town committee to provide fortified houses for places of refuge in case of danger. It was a tradition handed down by the Whittiers' ancestors not to look doors.

The Whittiers were Quakers, but they enjoyed the respect and recognition of all their neighbors. Usually the Quakers were ostracized socially because of their religious beliefs. They were willing to entertain and be courteous to anyone, but other New Englanders were not willing to be courteous to them. The Quakers were always given the rôle of the "outcast" in New England life. Of course there were exceptions as in the case of the Whittiers, who always knew how to carry out social niceties.

Whenever anyone visited the Whittier family each member was ready to greet him. Thomas W. Higginson, who was pastor for a while in Newburyport, Massachusetts, visited Mr. Whittier quite often and referred to Mrs. Whittier, Aunt Mercy, and Elizabeth as being the most "typical Quaker women". He says that Mrs. Whittier was one of the most placid and equable women he had ever met, elevating almost into religion the whiteness of her table linen; that Aunt Mercy, her sister, was

"The sweetest woman ever Fate
Perverse denied a household mate."

And above all there was the gifted sister Lizzie, the pet and pride of the whole household, one of the rarest of women, who possessed all the radiance of speech and ease of conversation, while Whittier sat rubbing his hands and laughing at her.[1]

"Snowbound" brings out the hospitality of the Whittiers in picturing the village school master who was a constant guest at their home, spending many enjoyable evenings by reading and telling stories around the fireside. New Englanders enjoyed such things then just as we enjoy our bridge games now. The schoolmasters seemed to have taken a liking for the Whittier home and to have become intimate friends with Greenleaf. It was Joshua Coffin, one of Whittier's schoolmasters, who was partly responsible for Whittier's becoming interested in Burns and verse-making. Let it be remembered, however, that the schoolmaster referred to in "Snowbound" was not Coffin but George Haskell, who also "held at the fire his favored place". Coffin's praise is sung in "To My School-Master". Coffin, too, spent many of his evenings at the Whittier homestead and was a most welcome guest.

Although the Friends enjoyed company to a certain extent, they would sometimes go for days without having the oppor-

---

[1] Samuel Pickard, Life and Letters of Whittier, pp. 30-31, 36.

tunity to meet and converse with persons other than those of their own circle. On the first and fourth days there was a joyous time when they held service at their meeting-house. The Whittiers attended these services at the Friends' meeting-house in Amesbury about eight miles east of Haverhill. The father, mother, and sometimes, one of the children, were accustomed to ride in the chaise.[2] It is said that Mr. Whittier was the only person in the neighborhood who owned a chaise. A receipt for an internal revenue tax of one dollar on this chaise for the year 1817 has been found.

Concerning the social standing of the Whittier family, particularly, Pickard says:

> "The Whittier family had from the first held a leading social position in the East Parish. Their religious views were respected, although none of their immediate neighbors were of the same faith, and the pastor of the Congregational church in the same vicinity never passed them by, when making his pastoral calls . . .
>
> While the home life was thus pure and elevating in its influence, the social privileges of the family were among the best in their vicinity. The father, holding offices of trust in the town, was associated with many of its notable citizens, and the proverbial hospitality and refinement of the mother and aunt drew

---

[2] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., pp. 36-38.

around them a circle of more than usual cultivation.

Before the days of steam and electricity, the Eastern members of the Society, attending their Yearly Meeting at Newport, R. I., generally performed the journey in their own carriages, depending largely upon their friends for entertainment by the way, in which pleasant service the Whittiers had their full share, sometimes receiving under their roof from ten to fifteen guests."[3]

Mr. Whittier, unlike his sister, was very shy from childhood; but as he grew older, some of his shyness vanished. He probably became less conscious of himself as he came in contact with more people and began to enter journalism and politics, which enrichened his social life. Whittier, however, never did overcome fully his shyness; but it seems that he was quite at ease with the loiterers about the stores, for he would often sit down and talk with them, much to their delight.

Although Whittier did not visit the coffee-houses - it was against the Quakers' rule to do so - , he was loved and honored by the people who frequented such places. One of the proprietors of a Cedar Street coffee-house placed on the wall of his coffee-house an Atlantic Monthly portrait of Whittier, which proved to be a boost to his business.

---

[3] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

The proprietor sent an open letter to Whittier through the Literary World, which reads in part:

> "From seventy-five to a hundred boys and young men are now resorting to these rooms every evening in the week, and the coffee counter does pouring business at two cents a cup. I wish you could see the crowd."[4]

Concerning the unveiling of the portrait, he says:

> "Silence being secured, I gave in three minutes, as well as I could, just an outline of the "Quaker Poet's" life and work. (Cheer.) Then a helping hand at my left tearing away the veiling newspapers, his portrait stood forth to view. (Craned necks and more cheers.) Then from a copy of J. R. Osgood and Co.'s edition of Whittier's poems (1875) I read two extracts from the "Barefoot Boy" (sensation), and the whole of Barbara Frietchie," (cheers enthusiastic and prolonged, notwithstanding the infelicities of a first appearance as public reader!) And then, to top off the ceremonial with a relieving outburst of superabundant vitality, I called for three "cheers for Mr. Whittier", which were given with right good will."[5]

Mr. Whittier replies to the proprietor's letter very cour-

---

[4] The Literary World, XIX, 72.

[5] The Literary World, XIX, 72.

teously:

> "I heartily thank thee for thy kind letter, and for disposing of my portrait so entirely to my satisfaction. In the Discipline of the Society of Friends we are cautioned against 'frequenting taverns and places of public resort,' but I am willing to overlook by proxy your Cambridge Coffee-House, whose amusements are justified and seasoned by the practical righteousness of temperance. I prefer it to St. Pierre's Coffee-House of Surat," where warring theologians held their symposium and discoursed like Milton's fallen angels on foreknowledge, will, and fate, with no possible benefit to themselves or others."[6]

During Whittier's day in New England there were given many social fêtes, such as parties, receptions, unveiling of statues, and the like. Of course such affairs did not occur usually among the class of New Englanders in which Whittier was born, but through his fame as a poet, editor, and politician, he received the recognition of the "so-called" upper classes of society. It must be remembered that Whittier was not reared among the Brahmin group as Longfellow, Lowell, and most of the other New England writers were.

Even when he went to Boston for his first brief

---

6 Ibid., p. 88.

editorial experience, it was not to the charmed Boston circle. It was not until he had won independent fame that he became their honored friend. By birth he represented an old and stalwart element in New England life - the comparatively unlettered pioneers who made up the silent majority of the population.[7]

One of the greatest social affairs in New England during Whittier's time was the birthday dinner in honor of Whittier's seventieth birthday given by the Atlantic Monthly, with which Whittier was closely associated and to which he had contributed many poems. Of course the Atlantic Monthly, whose leading writers were social, was accustomed to giving a monthly affair at which all the writers would dine; but Whittier seldom attended because necessity and habit of being absent.[8] He had accustomed himself to delicate fare on account of ill health, and he never tasted wine or used tobacco; so that the meetings, so attractive to others, had few charms for him beyond social converse.

Whittier attended the dinner in honor of his seventieth birthday, however. This affair was at the Hotel Brunswick, in Boston, December 17, 1877, and was attended by fifty or sixty leading American writers and other prominent figures of New England. This occasion brought forth many glowing tributes in prose and verse to Whittier. Longfellow

---

[7] P. H. Boynton, Literature and American Life, pp. 252-253.

[8] Francis Underwood, John Greenleaf Whittier, pp. 217-218.

headed the list with his charming sonnet, "The Three Silences"; Stedman gave his "Ad Vatem", and Bayard Taylor sent "A Friends Greeting". The occasion was a gala one.

The same anniversary was observed at Whittier's home in Amesbury, at Danvers, and in other places. The ladies of Amesbury sent him a portfolio of water-color sketches of places immortalized in his verse. The newspapers of every part of the country made the occasion the theme of extended comment, giving the record of his useful life, extolling his unselfish patriotism, his devotion of the cause of the oppressed, and the character and purity of his verse. The pulpit discoursed upon his songs of charity and piety.[9]

For such occasions Whittier manifested his genius of writing, not in the mere passing phrases of compliment or a display of graceful rhetoric, but in works that possess a durable value of sentiment and language and remain significant memorials. Notable among such writings are the affectionate letters to his old schoolmates of Haverhill and the beautiful tributes to Longfellow and Holmes.

The tribute to Holmes, "Oliver Wendell Holmes, on His Eightieth Birthday", appeared in the Literary World for September 14, 1889. Some of the lines are as follows:

"Climbing the path that leads back nevermore,
We heard behind his footsteps and his cheer;

. . . . . .

---

[9] Samuel Pickard, op. cit., p. 636.

Long be it ere the table shall be set
For the last breakfast of the Autocrat.

. . . . . .

Waiting with him the call to come up higher,
Life is not less, the heavens are only higher.[10]

8th Mo. 26, 1889

John G. Whittier

Often receptions and similar affairs were given, but Whittier could not or would not go. Mr. and Mrs. D. Lothrop gave a reception to Mrs. John A. Logan, the General's widow, at Wayside, Concord, Massachusetts. Whittier could not be present but sent a letter with a poem, "Our Country."[11]

Mr. Whittier was also unavoidably absent from the reception given to Mr. Lowell by his classmates and a few others in Boston, Saturday, June 20, 1885; but the following letter from him was read to the company:

"John G. Whittier presents his thanks for the invitation to join the friends of James Russell Lowell to welcome him on his return. He loves and honors his old friend so heartily that nothing but illness prevents him from being one of the first to welcome him. As it is, he can only express the joy that he comes back to us bearing from the Old World such honors as were

---

[10] The Literary World, XX, 304.

[11] The Critic, XVII, 99.

never bestowed upon a representative of our country. Hail and welcome."[12]

New England during Whittier's time had celebrations in honor of English poets also, such as the celebration of Burns, by the Caledonian Club in Boston, to which Whittier wrote a letter expressing his thought of and admiration for Burns; and the unveiling of the replica of the Westminster bust of Longfellow at Portland, Maine. Both of these events took place in 1885, and to both Whittier lent his pen.[13]

In social life Mr. Whittier had a kindly humor that rarely found a place in his earnest verse. His genius was not self-centered. He chose a life of steady struggling rather than one of noble ease - a sentiment to which he gave expression in the beautiful autographic poem, "My Birthday":

"Better than self-indulgent years
The outflung heart of youth,
Than pleasant songs in idle ears
The tumult of the truth."[14]

After the marriage of Whittier's niece, Elizabeth, in 1876, he continued his residence at Amesbury; but he spent most of his time in long visits to various friends and

---

[12] Ibid., VI, 311.

[13] Ibid., VI, 59, 133.

[14] Complete Poetical Works, p. 408.

relatives in New Hampshire, Maine, and eastern Massachusetts.

Whittier made many visits to the Claffin home. Of these visits the Literary World of September, 23, 1893, says:

> 'At the house of the Claffins Mr. Whittier was a frequent and honored guest; he felt himself at home there and threw off the reserve with which he clothed himself in unfamiliar society. There his rich and quaint vein of humor came out sparkling; there he was heartily interested in matters, or recalled the tremendous times of the anti-slavery movement.
>
> There were several homes in which Mr. Whittier was seen in this way, not only as a faithful prophet and heavenly-minded poet, but also as a genial and not seldom mirthful friend and practical and tender counselor. At his Amesbury house where the chief part of his literary work was done, with his cousin, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cartland of Newburyport, or at the Portland home of his niece, wife of Mr. S. T. Pickard, Mr. Whittier's social gifts were delightfully displayed.'[15]

During his life-time, Whittier, like most New Englanders of his standing, had many friends of note, some of whom were Garrison, Sumner, Lovejoy, Phillips, Thayer, Barnard, Clay, Webster, Law, Ratout, Thompson, Cushing, Sturge, Hale,

---

[15] Literary World, XXIV, 310.

Mr. and Mrs. Fields, Mrs. Child, Mrs. Stowe, Henry Ward Beecher, Holmes, Longfellow, Miss Sigourney, Lucy Hooper, Elizabeth Stuart Phelp Ward, Harriet Minot, Anne E. Wendell, Emerson, and Grace Greenwood.

Colonel Higginson says: 'Whittier during his whole life rarely lost a friend. The character of him who loved Beauty and followed the behest of Goodness attracted all who came in contact with it in the flesh, and has a perfect charm for those who can know it only in the written record. While recognizing that the language of his anti-slavery poems'at times seems severe and harsh', he was proud to say that he was one of the first to recognize the merit of Henry Timrod, and was an intimate friend of Paul H. Hayne, though both wrote fiery lyrics against the North.'[16]

Whittier often paid tribute to his closest friends by writing a poem. One such poem is 'The Tent on the Beach', which appeared in the Atlantic Monthly during the year 1867. The poem shows Whittier and two of his friends, Bayard Taylor and James T. Fields, enjoying themselves as they are encamped on Salisbury beach in sight of the wide bay, with the Merrimac on one side and the Isles of Shoals and Boar's Head on the other. While on the beach they tell tales of olden times, all of the themes being strictly New England except two, as they watch the sails and the faint horizon giving way to the rocky isles.

---

[16] Roy B. Pace, American Literature, pp. 242-243.

Whittier skillfully draws the portraits of his two friends. We see Fields "with his beard scarce silvered "a lettered magnate"

"In whom brain-currents, near and far,
Converged as in a Leyden jar;

. . . . .

Pleasant it was to roam about
The lettered world as he had done."

Taylor is pictured as one

"Whose Arab face was tanned
By tropic sun and boreal frost."

. . . . . .

Yet loved the while, that free cosmopolite,
Old friends, old ways, and kept his boyhood's
dreams in sight."

Then Whittier gives a glimpse of himself:

"And one there was a dreamer born,
Who, with a mission to fulfil,
Had left the Muses' haunts to turn
The crank of an opinion - mill,
Making his rustic reed of song
A weapon in the war with wrong."[17]

Whittier had so many friends that space cannot be given to even a few of them. Most of them, however, especially

---

[17] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 243-245.

the Abolitionists and writers of New England, are fairly well known.

Looking farther at Whittier's relation to his friends one notes that Whittier wrote many letters, a large number of which have been published. It seems as if letter writing, especially among the literary group, was very, very important during Whittier's time. This was perhaps due to the absence of present day travelling facilities. Among his letters, some of which have been quoted, we find one concerning his helping a young actress, or rather, authoress, who had planned to go to her father in England. The letter addressed to Mr. Higginson reads in part:

"I quite agree with thee as regards our friend - and wd. be glad to help her. I have reserved the sum of $50 for her. . . . I shall be happy to forward it at once, either to her or to thee, in which case thee can say that thee has rec'd that sum of me for her benefit, which will leave her but $50 to repay. . . . "[18]

Another letter concerning the marriage of a young lady reads:

"My Dear Higginson, - Thanks for thy letter. I have mislaid ———'s address. . . Will thee drop me a postal to tell me? I will send her $50 as a wedding gift, as thee suggest. I am glad she is soon to escape

---

[18] T. W. Higginson, John Greenleaf Whittier, pp. 96-97.

from her desk drudgery."[19]

The above letters show that in New England society John Greenleaf Whittier was somewhat of a philanthropist. he was always willing to help those in need, and he was especially able to do so in later life when the sales from his poems and other writings grew larger. Then, too, Whittier's personal expenses were not very large, because he was not extravagant. All of his friends, especially those of New England, knew that he was very generous in his giving.

Thus after considering Whittier's active life in society, his contact with many of the outstanding figures of the day, and his broad and useful career which is reflected in his poems, one can get some understanding of New England society in general, whether it be the middle class entertaining friends by the fireside or the Brahmin class dining at Hotel Brunswick in Boston.

---

[19] Ibid., p. 97.

CHAPTER VI

LABOR IN NEW ENGLAND

In looking at New England life we have seen something of the home, the school, the church, the trends in politics, and social affairs; but very little has been said about the various kinds of labor.

Labor in New England life during the nineteenth century held a very important place, for most of the people belonged to the laboring class. In referring to labor, especially as it is depicted by Whittier, one can speak of it as having the highest of dignity in New England, a dignity that is sung in liveliest strains by our great reformer, Whittier, in harmony with his broad view of democracy.

Whittier, who was well acquainted with the various occupations of Essex County, Massachusetts, early saw the happiness expressed by many workers as they performed their daily tasks; and in the year 1850 he brought forth his collection of poems known as Songs of Labor, six of which will be referred to, namely: "The Shoemakers", "The Fishermen", "The Lumbermen", "The Ship-Builders", "The Drovers", and "The Huskers".

Turning attention first to "The Shoemakers", one may recall that Whittier himself was once an apprentice to a shoemaker. The occupation of shoemaking, it is said, was experienced by every New England man at some time or another during his life. Usually such an experience occurred during

boyhood or early manhood, as Whittier says in the first stanza of the poem:

> Young brothers of the ancient guild,
> Stand forth once more together![1]

The tapping of the cobbler on the well-worn stone was a familiar sound in nineteenth-century New England, as the sole of the shoe was shaped by the strokes of the hammer. Such tapping not only signified that a shoe was being made, but that a burgher of New England was laboring under his own free will and not the will of a stern master. Whittier emphasizes the fact that the shoes being made in New England would go on free feet, and that from making the brogan, which was worn in Whittier's day, and other shoes wealth could be procured. It seems as if some people during the nineteenth century must have looked upon shoemaking with scorn, for Whittier says:

> Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,
> Ye heed no idle scorner;
> Free hands and hearts are still your pride,
> And duty none your honor
> Ye dare to trust, for honest fame,
> The jury Time empanels,
> And leave to truth each noble name
> Which glorifies your annals.[2]

---

[1] Complete Poetical Works, p. 357.

[2] Ibid., 358.

In "The Shoemakers" Whittier emphasizes the dignity of labor and the freedom of the laborer, two qualities which most New Englanders valued.

Another important occupation in New England was fishing. One could go along the Atlantic coast, especially about the region of Cape Cod, and see small fleets of sailboats with fishermen plowing the waters for food. The sea-food industry was a thriving one and New England became known for its fisheries.

Whittier often enjoyed watching the fishermen go about their task; and after becoming observant of the ways of the "sea-food gatherers", he composed a poem, one of his "Songs of Labor", known as "The Fishermen", in which he stresses the bravery of the fishermen in taking chances on their lives by sailing during inclement weather. Just as the earth is the field of Harvest for the farmer, so is the sea the field of harvest for the fishermen, and the fish, the grain.

> The sea's our field of harvest,
> Its scaly tribes our grain;
> We'll reap the teeming waters
> As at home they reach the plain![3]

Although the wind blows hard, the snow falls, and the fog often blinds, the fishermen continue to whistle and laugh. This shows that the average New England fisherman found joy

---

[3] Complete Poetical Works, p. 359.

in his labor from the fact that he was free and making a living without the dictation of an overseer.

Whittier endourages the fishermen by telling them that

"God's eye is looking on us,
And beneath us is His hand!"[4]

He also brings to our notice the courage of the fisherman and his superiority over the land laborer by saying,

"Leave the coward landsman clinging
To the dull earth, like a weed."[5]

Lumbering held an important place in the work-a-day world of New England despite the fact that some of the inhabitants of the rural villages would go to the woods and cut down trees in order to have fuel. It may be recalled that Whittier's Uncle Moses met his death by a falling tree.

Whittier, knowing something of the lumbering industry wrote a poem entitled "The Lumbermen", in which he describes the sounds of the falling lumber and the song of the saw-mill wheel. Small saw-mills in New England during Whittier's day were very common. Many of the small New England towns owed their existence to lumbering.

During Whittier's day there were regular lumber camps at which the lumbermen would sleep, do their own cooking,

---

[4] Complete Poetical Works, p. 359.

[5] Ibid.

and eat. They seemed to be happy on the whole, but there was lacking something that could have lightened their duty:

> "Woman's smile and girlhood's beauty,
> Childhood's lisping tone."[6]

But the toil of the lumbermen was making life brighter for the women and children at home.

Whittier shows that the lumber the laborers were shaping in the cold would be used for making ships that would go to the warmer regions and bring back delicious fruits and sweets for New Englanders to enjoy.

As the lumbermen worked they enjoyed freedom in their labor. No man was a slave in Essex County, Massachusetts.

After the lumbermen finished hewing the material into different sizes, much of it was sent near the seashore where another industry throve - ship-building. New England was noted for the ships it produced. Ship-building was considered as one of the most noble and highest skilled of crafts.

Often, as the ships were being built, various persons would come to the seashore and watch the ribs and beams as they were made into a strong and stately vessel. Ship-building was indeed quite interesting to watch and it was certainly watched. The completion of the vessel was a grand event, but the launching was grander. The launching was

---

[6] Complete Poetical Works, p. 360.

usually accompanied by a ceremony which was witnessed by a large gathering that saw the bars and blocks struck away and the ship move along the grooves in graceful beauty until it glided into the sea.

Whittier expresses his hope that the ship will bear

No merchandise of sin,
No groaning cargo of despair,
. . . . .
No Lethean drug for Eastern lands,
Not poison draught for ours;
But honest fruits of toiling hands
And nature's sun and showers.[7]

In Whittier's day cattle were not shipped by rail or hauled by trucks to the market but were driven along the road by herdsmen who were called drovers. In referring to this class of laborers, Whittier has written a poem entitled "The Drovers".

Whittier pictures the drovers performing their work in rain or snow. He mentions the rocky hillsides and spongy mosses, the lakes and streams, and the farmers' field that often had to be crossed in driving the cattle to market. Whittier was proud that New England had sleek, fair, fat cattle that were a contrast to some

Lank oxen, rough as Indian dogs,
And cows too lean for shadows,

---

[7] Complete Poetical Works, p. 361.

Disputing feebly with the frogs
The crops of saw-grass meadows.[6]

that he had seen.

In the last part of the poem Whittier implies that the drovers of the nineteenth century were rapidly disappearing and that the drovers' occupation would soon be only a memory of the past because New England was beginning to employ new methods in labor as it was in other phases of life. Whittier does show, however, that the drovers had spent a worth-while life in that they did their duty and that they could be able to rest after striving.

The importance of striving was highly recognized by New Englanders of Whittier's day. In striving they knew that they could obtain something that would make life fuller, richer, and sweeter.

Another important task that must be included among the labors of New England is that of the huskers. Perhaps with this form of labor Whittier was most familiar, because he was reared on a farm and worked on it during boyhood and part of manhood.

To him it was a familiar sight to see the boys and girls husking corn in the barnyard, or rather, the barn, and watch the pile of husks grow higher and higher. Such work was often accompanied by such gaiety as singing and throw-

---

[6] Ibid., p. 362.

ing a grain or two at the head of some husker who was off guard.

To show the importance of the huskers Whittier ends the poem with "The Corn-Song", the last verse of which is as follows:

"But let the good old crop adorn
The hills our fathers trod;
Still let us, for his golden corn,
Send up our thanks to God."[9]

In looking at these poems, which are bright and cheerful, one sees the energetic and hopeful character of the laboring classes in a free section of the country. There was very seldom any need for depressing sympathy and pity in reference to the labor of the skillful and intelligent artisans of New England during Whittier's time. They commanded living wages at least, and for every man the future had a bright prospect. Meanwhile they had their own homes, sufficient food and clothing, fairly good schools, newspapers, magazines, and libraries that could be used by all.

Whittier wrote the poems of labor with particular reference to his home county, Essex County, Massachusetts, where labor was not exploited by a few oligarchs. The ploughmen and mowers were as cheery as the thrushes and

---

[9] Complete Poetical Works, p. 364.

bobolinks in the meadows; the fishermen could troll with stout hearts of the "wet sheet and flowing sea" and all the glories of the blue water; and the hearts and voices of smiths and ship-builders kept time to the rhythmic hammers and mallets.[10]

Whittier's poems of labor show much about the New England laborer, the most important being his respect for the dignity of free labor. These poems are considered as the best proletarian poems ever produced in America. They are sociologically important and are eulogies of the working class and its activities in New England during the nineteenth century.

---

[10] F. H. Underwood, John Greenleaf Whittier, p. 156.

CHAPTER VII

NATURE IN NEW ENGLAND

In Whittier, as in several other American writers, the love of the New England country was very great. Although Whittier visited many urban centers of New England and stayed there for long stretches at a time, he never lost sight and memory of beautiful Essex county, where he was born. He could always find something of interest about nature in the Merrimac with its familiar meadows near the sea.

In early boyhood Whittier had a chance to get to nature; he had the opportunity to get familiar and friendly with the brooks, woods, rocky hills, and all other details of New England landscape. These facts are brought out in "The Barefoot Boy" in which he says:

"I was once a barefoot boy!
. . . . . .
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted nose his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
. . . . . .
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,

Mine, on bending orchard trees,
. . . . . .
Still as my horizon green
. . . . . .
All the world I saw or knew."[1]

Spending his boyhood and youth on a farm and in the woods, Whittier came to nature very early in his life and later described the scene of his rural locality more faithfully than any other writer up to his time. To prove this let us look at some of Whittier's poems.

First, the poems, or rather, some of the poems dealing with nature during the winter time in New England may be noted. It is a known fact that New England had some very cold winters as has been brought out by Whittier in "Snow-Bound" when he says:

"The white drift piled the window-frame,
. . . . . .
So all night long the storm roared on:
. . . . . .
And, when the second morning shone,
We looked upon a world unknown."[2]

Snow storms occurred quite frequently in New England and Whittier was very observant of their "geometric signs".

New England also had its terrific winds, some of the worst in the country. Such winds often accompanied the

---

[1] Complete Poetical Works, pp. 396-397.

[2] Ibid., p. 399.

the falling snow. Concerning this Whittier says:

"All day long the gusty north-wind bore
The loosening drift its breath before."[3]

Though cold and barely unrecognizable New England was beautiful. The sun shone through the dazzling snow-mist; the icicles received the rays and returned a sparkle within itself; the bridle post resembled human beings arrayed in garments.

After the cold and wintry blasts had gone, signs of spring were seen. One of these signs was the appearance of flowers:

These tassels in their tawny bloom,
And willowy studs of down silver,
Have prophesied of Spring to come.[4]

Whittier was well acquainted with flowers just as he was with birds and animals. About forty flowers blossom in his poetry, and certain of them so often that they had plainly won his esteem. Thus the "trembling harebells" recur, five times as often as the hardhack and the thistle, both characteristic of the Whittier country; the fragrance of the clover and the luxuriant yellow of goldenrod are found frequently; the laurel and asters of the Merrimac

---

[3] Ibid., p. 400.

[4] Complete Poetical Works, p. 153.

banks and the lilies of the quiet ponds are singled out for particular praise; the violet is mentioned four times as often as the daisy, the wild rose eight times as often; and the mayflower, partly on account of its historic association, is the subject of two poems, which will be referred to later in this chapter.[5]

Of course all of the flowers mentioned in Whittier's poem did not necessarily bloom during the spring in New England, but one flower that did was the trailing arbutus, which appears among the dry leaves and mosses during April before the chill breezes have gone. Concerning this flower Whittier has written 'The Trailing Arbutus.' In this poem Whittier compares the lives of the lowly to the trailing arbutus by saying in the last stanza:

. . . . . .

I thought of lives thus lowly, clogged and pent,
Which yet find room,
Through care and cumber, coldness and decay,
To lend a sweetness to the ungenial day,
And make the sad earth happier for their bloom.[6]

Besides the advent of flowers as a prophesy of spring, Whittier also refers to the robin and the bluebird as being

---

[5] Norman Foerster, Nature in American Literature, p. 25.

[6] Complete Poetical Works, p. 164.

two of the birds to make the earliest appearance in New England after winter has passed. It might be noted that Whittier mentions nearly thirty birds in his works, and many of them occur several times - the wild goose floating on Kenoza Lake, the blue jay with his foolish scream, the blithe song sparrow by the river's edge. But he apparently had no favorite among the birds, nothing analagous to Lowell's bobolinks and orioles or Gilbert White's swallows, and, we may add, did not observe the ways of birds more attentively than do most country men. General names, such as thrush and woodpecker, usually sufficed when he wished to vary his customary bird: beach-bird, sea-fowl, wood-pecker; and the like. The possibility that he was unromantic is, I think, removed by the evident accuracy in reference to flowers and trees.[7]

Another sign of the coming of spring mentioned by Whittier in "The First Flowers" is the budding of trees. Trees, however, are still commoner in Whittier's poetry - in all well-nigh thirty species, a number of which recur again and again. Although he was not given to mentioning the precise species - poplar, willow, and the like usually sufficed - he did so occasionally; witness his scarlet-oak and staghorn. Whittier was apparently very fond of certain trees - the elm, the maple, the birch, and the pine. He referred frequently to the elms of the village, wet with

---

[7] Norman Foerster, Nature in American Literature, pp. 25-26.

rain or gleaming with snow and ice - "a jewelled elm-tree avenue" - and to the fringe of elms along the Merrimac. The maple attracted him in all seasons, but especially in spring, when the little flower tassels quiver with life in the soft rain. Still oftener did Whittier paint the flowers white of stem, dainty of foliage, a token of the purity of nature; in one of his sea-coast pictures not a birch-spray is "trembling in the still moonshine".

In speaking of Whittier's favorite trees in New England the pine held first place. One of his poems is entitled "The Pine Tree." Compared with the pine, the birch, maple, and elm occur almost rarely. In something like sixty-five poems the pine is mentioned or described, while the birch, the nearest rival, occurs only fifteen times, the maple a dozen times, the willow three or four times. Now the ancient pine laments with him the death of a friend with wordless moan, now he stops to admire "the storm-torn plumes of old forest kings," or the subtle fire of the sunshine among the delicate sprays, or the seacoast headland bristling with dark green, or the last sun of summer shining "through yon columnar pines"; the mountains stretch away with their massy covering of "eternal pines".[8] The characteristics of the pine that Whittier returned to again and again are its tenuous music when the wind touches its strings; its sturdy, steady growth, rarely tainted by decay; and its evergreen

---

[8] Norman Foerster, Nature in American Literature, pp. 26-27.

quality. The first of these brought an infinity of somberly romantic suggestions, the last two the sense of eternity. The pine retains its foliage and melancholy music when other trees are bared by autumn blasts, and it naturally became for him a symbol of sadness, and he, too, mourned when, year after year, friends left him for the land of fronded palms. There is something evanescent and light-hearted, even trivial, in the airy willows and aspens; and there is something "hoary wise" and permanent in the dark and fragrant pine.

Turning from the majestic pine to another one of the New England trees about which Whittier wrote one might note "The Sycamore", a poem in honor of Hugh Tallant who was the first Irish settler of Haverhill, Massachusetts, and who planted the buttonwood (sycamore) trees on the bank of the river below the village in the early part of the seventeenth century; but unfortunately this noble avenue of trees is now nearly destroyed.[9] Whittier, however, says of the few that do stand:

> But, still green, and tall and stately,
> On the river's winding shores,
> Stand the Occidental plane-trees,
> Stand Hugh Tallant's sycamores.[10]

Another poem about, not a particular tree, but several

---

9 Complete Poetical Works, pp. 56-57.

10 Ibid., p. 58.

trees is "The Wood Giant", which Whittier wrote at Sturtenvant's Farm, about a mile from Centre Harbor, New Hampshire. Among the trees mentioned-the pine, the oak, and the birch - most attention is given to the pine.[11]

Looking at the characteristics of nature during the springtime in New England we see from the poem, "April" that spring in New England comes slowly:

> "'Tis the noon of spring-time yet never a bird
> In the wind-shaken elm or the maple is heard."[12]

Indeed, spring in New England approaches slowly, but when it does arrive it is like Lazarus rising of old. It stays its time and soon turns into the summer that Whittier has pictures in "A Dream of Summer". The southwest breezes begin to play; the mossy earth looks forth; the streams gush clear; the fox forsakes his hillside nook; the muskrat leaves his cell; the bluebird sings with the brook.

At last summer arrives, and the villagers bathe in the river; the summer burns; people long for the hills; the vale of the Merrimac is warm; the lake lies golden in the sun; the skies are crimson; the distance soft-voiced friends are heard; the girls' light laugh harmonizes with the low song of the pine-tree. Such are some of the occurrences

---

[11] Norman Foerster, op. cit., p. 26.

[12] Complete Poetical Works, p. 145.

during the summer in New England as pictured in the poem, "A Summer Pilgrimage".

Such activities or occurrences, however, do not last long in New England, for the warm summer days soon give way to the frosty morns of autumn and the characteristics of autumn - the falling leaves, the dying grass, the diminishing number of birds, the ever-increasing chill, the gathering of the harvest, the chilly rains, and the harvest-songs and shouts. Indeed the autumn in New England was a season of much joy and Thanksgiving. The farmers and other people of New England had not forgotten that behind nature there is God. As Whittier says:

> "Thank Heaven instead, that Freedom's arm
> Can change a rocky soil to gold, -
> That brave and generous lives can warm
> A northern clime with northern ice's cold."[13]

While autumn is being referred to it might be interesting to note that one of New England's most cherished flowers blooms in autumn after the summer suns have left the sky and the summer songs have died away. This flower is the witch-hazel, which is renowned not only for its medicinal uses, but also for its magic power (as New Englanders believed) in pointing out water in underground springs.

The two uses of the witch-hazel may be referred to,

---

[13] Complete Poetical Works, p. 161.

the first being the use of a lotion for the cure of certain diseases. The other is the notion of superstitious New Englanders in employing the twigs, which are shaped like a fork, for finding wells and springs for the supply of aqueducts.

The flowers of the witch-hazel, developed from buds formed in summer, open in October or November just as all the forest leaves are falling. They are bright yellow, - "twisted gold" - and are therefore conspicuous among the bare shrubbery. Brilliant as they are, they are not joyous emblems:[14]

> Small beauty hath my unsung flower,
> For spring to own or summer hail;
> But, in the season's saddest hour,
> To skies that weep and winds that wail
> Its glad surprisals never fail.[15]

They remind us that the session of flowers has passed - that the hectic bloom of the doomed forest leaves has been succeeded by eager frosts and brisk north winds, and that in the woodland paths and openings we must trample the faded glories of summer. Nevertheless, the hazel blossoms belong to New England's most beautiful and exhilarating season - autumn.

---

[14] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 296.

[15] Complete Poetical Works, p. 161.

In noting some of the characteristics of a New England autumn one may refer to the opening of "The Unquiet Sleeper", which is as follows:

> The hunter went forth with his dog and gun,
> In the earliest glow of the golden sun; -
> The trees of the forest bent over his way,
> In the changeful colors of Autumn gay;
> For a frost had fallen the night before,
> On the quiet greenness that Nature wore.[16]

This kind of detail continues in the next stanza, and the whole poem gives a native background of the season that New Englanders prized most.

One particular line that may receive comment in "The Unquiet Sleeper" is the first one, because hunting was a favorite sport - also a means of getting food - with New Englanders, especially during the autumn. It may be recalled that Whittier's father and uncle were great hunters; and Whittier himself liked squirrels and birds. After successful hunting trips New Englanders would often give big feasts at which they would have the best products of their harvest. Such an occasion is referred to in "For An Autumn Festival":

> "And we, to-day, amidst our flowers
> And fruits, have come to own again
> . . . . . .
> To see our Father's hand once more

---

[16] F. M. Pray, op. cit., p. 78.

Reverse for us the plenteous horn
Of autumn, filled and running o'er
With fruit, and flower, and golden corn!
Once more the liberal year laughs out."[17]

Then after the pleasures of autumn have been engaged in and the days of such a wonderful season draw to a close, one taking a walk in the woods could say as Whittier says in "The Last Walk in Autumn" and "Autumn Thoughts":

"I see, beyond the valley lands,
The sea's long level dim with rain.
Around me all things stark and dumb,
Seem praying for the snows to come.[18]

"And autumn, in his leafless bowers,
Is waiting for the Winter's snow."[19]

After looking at the portrayal of nature during the seasons in New England as pictured by Whittier, one may also note that nature in New England as portrayed by Whittier manifested itself most beautifully in certain places such as the sea shore, the mountains, or the hillsides.

Although Whittier is not an American poet of the sea, he wrote about lakes, rivers, beaches, and the like,

---

[17] Complete Poetical Works, p. 220.

[18] Ibid., p. 150.

[19] Ibid., p. 144.

as is evidenced by the poems: "Hampton Beach","The Merrimac", "The Red River", "The Lakeside", "Summer by the Lakeside", "The River Path", "Storm on Lake Asquam","June on the Merrimac", "The Tent on the Beach", "R. S. S., at Deer Island on the Merrimac".

From looking at the above list of poems dealing with nature as manifested in the sea, lake, river, and the like, one sees the Merrimac three times, and might infer that the Merrimac was admired by Whittier and other New Englanders. Such an inference is very correct. Whittier himself made it a worthy subject for his poems: "The Merrimac", "June on the Merrimac", and "R. S. S., Deer Island in the Merrimac".

The Merrimac is one of New England's chief rivers. Connecting mountains and sea, the Merrimac River flows through the middle district of southern New Hampshire, receiving the flow of springs and the melting of mountain snows, including the overflow from its chief lake, Winnepesaukee, and from the streams of the Pemigewasset valley.[20] It crosses the deep grassy meadows near Concord, studded with native elms that stand like slender, flaring Etruscan vases; it is perplexed for a time in the rapids of Suncook and Hookset, until it comes in view of the rounded loveliness of the twin Unacanoonucs, - "woman's breasts", in the Indian tongue, - and then dashes down the wild

---

[20] Norman Foerster, op. cit., p. 21.

rocky cascades of Amoskeag, where now are the enormous factory piles of Manchester. From this point its course is through scenes of tranquil beauty, always in green meadows and under green trees, until it successively falls at Nashua, Lowell, and Lawrence, turning laborious wheels, and thence flows without hindrance, except for an occasional island, past Haverhill and Amesbury with all their tranquility and pines, separates Newburyport and Salisbury as it reaches Ipswich Bay, and glides into the open ocean.[21]

Geologists term the Merrimac as a mountain trough; and at the outset, before the current becomes polluted by the dyes and refuse of mills, the water is pure crystal. Above Lowell the water-bed is comparatively narrow, and the immediate banks are but little raised; although elevations (often of sand and gravel) on either side testify to the force of the waters in remote periods.[22]

About the Merrimac Whittier knew much. He waded in it, swam in it, went boat-riding on it, watched its singing waves from the banks, fished in it, and plucked the flowers along its grassy sides. Thus he was able to write about it.

Other poems concerning rivers are "The Red River Voyager" and "The River Path" both of which show Whittier's ability of observing closely and recording his observations very minutely and picturesquely.

---

[21] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., pp. 169-170.

[22] Ibid., p. 170.

Leaving New England's rivers let us turn to its lakes and beaches, places to which Whittier liked to go, as he brings this fact out in "The Tent on the Beach", "Summer by the Lakeside", "The Lakeside", and "Hampton Beach".

"The Tent on the Beach" will be taken up first. This poem, which appeared in 1867, pictures Whittier with two of his friends, Bayard Taylor and James T. Fields, encamped on Salisbury beach of the broad bay, the Merrimac, and the Isles of Shoals. As they watch the sail boats and the faint horizon, each tells tales of old New England. In this poem Whittier vividly portrays the beauty of nature as seen from the beach.[23]

"The Tent on the Beach" is illustrative of one of New England's resorts abounding in nature. From the beach Whittier and his friends can see the sea-gulls flying over the waters; they can hear the waves of water lashing against the rocks and pebbles on the shore; they can smell the salt sea water as the breezes blow; and above all, they can forget about the cares and troubles of life.

Turning to "Summer by the Lakeside" we find, perhaps, the most beautiful and most widely read poem by Whittier picturing lake scenery in New England. The lake referred to is Winnipiseogee, or, as it is now more commonly spelled, Winnepesaukee, situated in Central New Hampshire, where it receives the brooks and melted snows of the White Mountains.

---

[23] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 246.

Tourists well know it, as it lies in the usual route of summer travel to the mountain region. It is irregular in form, and, as it has numerous islands as well as projecting headlands, there is seldom any distant prospect on the water level; but at every turn new vistas are disclosed with new groupings of form and color, and behind every northward view the pale blue masses of hills form a background.[25]

The poem has many beautiful details of nature as seen from the lakeside at noon and in the evening. Some scenes observed at noon are the white clouds, the sunshine, the still sea, the green land, the lotus-flowers of the lake, and the blue beyond. The noon-day scenes give way to the mountain side black with night, the gleaming moon, the shadows of the rocky piles on the island, the reflection of the tree-tops on the waves, and the silence save for the cricket's wail.

Looking at other poems we see a similar picture in "The Lakeside". In fact Whittier is describing the scenery during the summer in "The Lakeside" just as he is in "Summer by the Lakeside", for in "The Lakeside" he says:

"He saw these mountains in the light
Which now across them shines;
This lake in summer sunset bright,
Walled round with sombering pines."[26]

---

[25] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 209.

[26] Complete Poetical Works, p. 144.

Another favorite resort in New England was, and is, Hampton beach, which Whittier has so beautifully pictured in his poem, "Hampton Beach", two verses of which are as follows:

"In listless quietude of mind,
I yield to all
The change of cloud and wave and wind;
And passive on the flood reclined,
I wander with the waves, and with them
Rise and fall.

. . . . .

So then, beach, bluff, and wave, farewell!
I bear with me
No token stone nor glittering shell,
But long and oft shall Memory tell
Of this brief thoughtful hour of
musing by the Sea."[27]

Leaving the sea shore and beaches and facing the northwest direction from Lake Winnepesaukee, one sees the Red Hills of New England, and the Ossipee Mountains towards the east, or rather, northeast. The hillsides and mountains of New England have their gifts from Nature as well as the lakes and sea shores. It is near Job's Hill, where Whittier lived, that the quiet, pastoral section of the south-lying

---

[27] Ibid., p. 143.

section is so picturesquely portrayed in "Among the Hills". Whittier preferred the Red Hills to the White Mountains of New Hampshire. The Red Hills he knew more about; they were the haunts of his boyhood days; they were his places of retreat from the scorching sun of the short New England summer. Then, being acquainted with them, he could write about them.

"Among the Hills", which was published in 1868, has a romantic and pictorial setting of rural life. As the hills look upward, so should human beings aspire for a higher and nobler life, - for "home loves and the beatitudes", "all the old virtues", and for a perception of the beauty in nature, as an outward type:

> "Of the eternal beauty which fulfils
> The one great purpose of creation, Love,
> The sole necessity of Earth and Heaven!"[28]

The specific scene of the poem is near Bearcamp River, close under the shadow of Mount Ossippee, but after a magnificent view of the Chocorua range. The region is rich in nature; the river fringed with elms and maples; the broad, quiet, reflecting sky; the pleasant breezes from the sea, and the occasional overflow of the ponds.[29]

Among other poems dealing with mountain or hillside scenery is "Mountain Pictures", in which Whittier gives

---

[29] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 265.

two views, one from the Pemigewasset looking at Franconia and the other from Wachuset looking at Monadnock. Both views are very clearly given by Whittier.[30]

Whittier is indeed to be considered an artist of New England landscape above all other phases of nature. The forms and colors of nature made a vivid and lasting impression upon Whittier's mind; and the scenery, or background, of his compositions is always faithful, strong, and impressive. There could be a select gallery of his pictures of mountains, lakes, rivers, and the sea that would be remarkable among the best ever drawn. The limits are coequal with his personal experience, and they embrace all the phases to be met with in the White Mountain region, the Merrimac valley, the northern lakes, and the sea-coast from Newburyport to Casco Bay.

Whittier has dealt not only with the grander features; the smaller valleys and streams, the rounded hills, the various wild flowers, the green masses of summer foliage, and the gay colors of autumn have likewise employed his pencil so that the reader who is familiar with the subjects has a perpetual pleasure in his delineations.[31]

---

[30] Ibid., pp. 358-359.

[31] F. H. Underwood, op. cit., p. 359.

CONCLUSION

By looking over what has been written in the foregoing chapters one finds that one of the most important institutions in New England during the nineteenth century was the home. This great factor of development in Whittier's life was not overlooked, because it was a highly organized, respectful, and peaceful abode where each member of the family worked for the good and betterment of all. Such are the facts that are brought out in "Snow-Bound", which should be read by all who wish to get a view of New England home life.

Leaving the home and looking at the school of Whittier's day the reader readily finds out that school-life of the early nineteenth century was not very important, or was not uppermost in the minds of the working class - the class to which Whittier belonged. Whittier himself received only a district school education supplemented by one year of academy work, the idea of the latter being introduced by a friend, William Lloyd Garrison. It has been seen that the schools of Whittier's boyhood days were not given the attention by the state, county, and city that they are now. Education was left to the discretion of the child's parents; and in this case, many parents were like Whittier's father, who thought children could not be spared from the farm because they could help with the work that furnished a means of livelihood. Nevertheless, Whittier, by taking

advantage of all the opportunities of education outside the school, became educated and left his name upon the pages of American literature.

One of these means of becoming educated was his participation in politics, which later gave way to his participation in the anti-slavery movement. Politics during Whittier's time was of great import in Massachusetts and other New England states just as it is now. Nearly everything was related to politics. Even Whittier's career as a journalist was linked with politics, because each paper or magazine for which he wrote favored some particular party and advocated its principles. Of course it is known that the anti-slavery sentiment in New England was first opposed almost wholly in New England just as in other sections of the country; but this opposition did not stop Whittier and the other Abolitionists from going about their work. They wrote, they preached, and they used all means possible to blot out the evil of our country, despite the fact that at times they almost met death at the hands of blood-thirsty New England mobs, which were similar to the southern mobs of to-day.

Perhaps the religious impulse of the day was closely related to other stimulating conditions. Indeed it was, and it had behind it the momentum of generations and the stir of the nineteenth century - a lingering dislike for Quakers, the fading doctrine of Calvinism, the magnetic influence of Unitarianism, and the growing consideration of

freedom of thought in religion as in everything else. The religious side of New England life was old like the country and new like the period. It was dedicated to a high purpose but its purpose was more than the personal salvation of the communicant; it was the salvation of the church and the state, the bringing of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Whittier was a firm but liberal Quaker. He would conform wholly to the original standards, but regarded as useless the dispute between Orthodox and Hicksite Friends.[1] Every faculty of his being was pervaded by the desire to put himself at the service of God in the affairs of his day. This devotion and singleness of aim were to characterize him and his works throughout his long and fruitful life.[2]

Turning to the occupational side one may recall that the working class of people in New England as a whole seem to have been rather happy because they were free in their labor and could thus appreciate the dignity of it as Whittier brings out in the six best poems picturing labor in New England - "The Huskers", "The Shoemakers", "The Drovers", "The Ship-Builders", "The Fishermen", and "The Lumbermen".

With labor goes the social side of life, which was not overlooked in New England during Whittier's time. Looking at the social life as delineated by Whittier, one sees the

---

[1] T. W. Higginson, John Greenleaf Whittier, p. 116.

[2] F. H. Underwood, John Greenleaf Whittier, p. 83.

the situation from both the middle class and the Brahmin points of view because Whittier was of the middle class and later became affiliated with the Brahmin class through his literary achievements. It may be noted that social life among the middle class then was very simple and that among the Brahmin class various kinds of activities were enjoyed, such as dinners, banquets, clubs, visits to outstanding resorts, and personal friendships with the outstanding leaders of the day.

Whittier was thoroughly acquainted with nature in New England. He became an embodiment of local tradition, especially in Essex County. He felt a strong attachment to his small part of the world that developed in a group whose memories and interests are almost wholly local. As a consequence he described homely beauties that surrounded him. He glorified the scenes of common life, and hallowed the landscapes of his New England. He admired nature as he saw it in the landscapes, trees, flowers, and streams; and with his pen he stamped upon them immortality. The truth is, no other poet has had so intimate knowledge of the subtle lines and softer shades of nature.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bolton, Sarah K. Famous American Authors, Thomas Y. Crowell and Co., New York, 1887.

Boynton, Percy H. A History of American Literature, Ginn and Co., Chicago, 1919.

Boynton, Percy H. Literature and American Life, Ginn and Co., Chicago, 1936.

Burton, Richard, John Greenleaf Whittier, Small, Maynard and Co., Boston, 1901.

Century Magazine, The (Volume LXIV).

Critic, The (Volumes VI, XVII).

Fields, Mrs. James T. Whittier, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1893.

Higginson, Thomas Wentworth, John Greenleaf Whittier, The Macmillan Co., New York.

Jones, Rufus M. The Quakers in the American Colonies, Macmillan and Co., London, 1923.

Kennedy, W. Sloane, John Greenleaf Whittier, D. Lothrop Co., Boston, 1892.

Macy, Jesse, The Anti-Slavery Crusade, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1921.

Martin, George, H. The Evolution of the Massachusetts Public School System, D. Appleton and Co., New York, 1897.

Pattee, Fred Lewis, The First Century of American Literature, D. Appleton-Century Co., New York 1935.

Pattee, Fred Lewis, Side-Lights on American Literature, The Century Co., New York, 1922.

Pickard, Samuel T. Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier, (2 volumes), Houghton, Mifflin and Co., New York, 1894.

Pray, Frances Mary, A Study of Whittier's Apprenticeship as a Poet, 1825-1835 (Thesis), Pennsylvania State College, 1930.

Stevens, John Stacy, Whittier's Use of the Bible.

Trent, William Peterfield and others, The Cambridge History of American Literature (volume II), Macmillan Co., New York, 1936.

Underwood, Francis H. John Greenleaf Whittier, Houghton, Mifflin and Co., New York, 1893.

Whittier, John Greenleaf, Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier, Houghton, Mifflin and Co., New York, 1894.

Wingate, Charles E. L. "A Boston Letter", The Century Magazine (Volume LXIV).

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES
31293018413371