

THE story of the Captain who came home after spending most of his life on the China Coast is rather quaint. Our older Cape Codders were and still are more cosmopolitan than most visitors realize — that's why they loathe being patronized — so beware! Anyway, the Captain arrived in Provincetown with two Chinese women. He walked up Front Street, and after him trailed these two elderly Oriental ladies, two wives, mind you, dressed in their beautiful Chinese native costumes of scarlet and jade.

That night, the slightly worried Captain, dropped in at the tavern on Back Street, and flipped a coin. After the flip of the coin one woman became his housekeeper, and the other moved into the best bed-room and the front parlor. We are told that nobody on the Cape raised an eyebrow, and Cape Codders are pretty famous for minding their own business. But, we can't help wondering what a few old wives, and a fewer old maids, and one or two damsels might have said, very softly over their tea cups, in someone's sitting-room.

### Hi Jinks On Cape's Tip

THE days of the sailing ships brought men of many places and races together in various ports. There to better their lot, sailors deserted one ship for another, spent all their small wages almost before they were ashore an hour or two, drank heavily, caroused, and raised Cain in general. "Cape Cod," as Provincetown was known in its early colonial days, was such a rendezvous. Among the sailors who gathered there, were its own fishermen. The hard, tedious, and perilous life of the men made certain that relaxation ashore should take the form of noise, rough-housing, and devilment in general. The heavy drinking and devil-may-care rumpuses continued until one's money was gone — sometimes a matter one himself knew little of — or until his ship sailed and he was lugged aboard if he were unable to navigate to it under his own power.

### A Rich Haul

PROVINCETOWN — Angus McKay, captain of the schooner, Willie A. McKay, in 1882 went to the Grand Banks for three months and returned with the largest cargo of codfish ever brought to Provincetown. When the fish were shipped to the market, they sold for more than \$22,000.

### Twenty-Five Years Ago

From the Files of The Register

The beautiful sight of the five-masted sailing ship Edna Hoyt coming into Provincetown harbor under full canvas and in the red glow of a spectacular sunset, caused much comment about town.



UNLOADING FISH FROM A CAPE COD FISHING BOAT  
- 1955 -

### Yarmouth Register June 7, 1890

A vessel owned by Wm. H. Rich of Provincetown, was capsized off Nauset during a squall Saturday night. The captain and George Brown, an 18-year-old Portuguese boy of Provincetown, succeeded in getting into a dory which the vessel was towing. The dory was capsized and young Brown was drowned. Capt. Rich reached shore after a struggle of two hours. The boat sank in six fathoms of water.

### Yarmouth Register July 20, 1889

As soon as the necessary timbers arrives Kelley & Spear, Bath, Me., will begin the construction of a sch. for Capt. Rich, Provincetown.

The bark Mary S. Ames, Capt. Elijah Crocker, from Port Natal, South Africa, arrived at Barbados on the 11th inst. She will proceed to Turk's Island to load salt for New York.

### More Cod Fish Facts

CHAMPLAIN related that the Indians fished for cod with lines made of bark. To these lines a bone hook was attached, the bone being fashioned like a harpoon and fastened to a piece of wood, with what he believed to be hemp.

The Puritan-Pilgrim Bradford received a Jesuit at his own table, and regaled him with a fish dinner (probably of codfish; because the day was a Friday — "a piece of old-time courtesy," says a historian, some would have us think the Pilgrims incapable of, "especially since somewhat later they had a law in Massachusetts banishing Jesuits or any other Roman-Catholic ecclesiastics out of their jurisdiction on pain of death.

When the fishing season was at its height in Provincetown, the sight of the town must have been amazing—the entire length and breadth of the place being over-spread with cod, even in the front yards and spaces between the dwellings. Mrs. Cape Codder of Provincetown, instead of going to the garden for lettuce or beets or berries, went to the flakes to fetch her family a codfish. It has well been said that "A Yankee can fatten on codfish where an Englishman would starve."

A writer in 1875 remarked of Provincetown: "On the summit of Town Hill you are almost astride the Cape, having the Atlantic on one side, and Massachusetts Bay in full view on the other. The port is not (now) what it was when some storm-tossed bark, in accepting its shelter, was the town talk for months. Ships come and go by scores and hundreds, folding their wings and settling down on the water like weary seagulls.

"With an outward appearance of prosperity, I found the people bemoaning the hard times. Taxes, they said, were twenty dollars in the thousand, and only ten at Wareham; fish were scarce, and prices low, too, though as to the last item consumers think otherwise. The fishermen I saw were burly, athletic fellows, apparently not more thrifty than their class everywhere. They are averse to doing anything else than fish, and, if the times are bad, are content to potter about their boats and fishing-gear till better days, much as they would wait for wind and tide. If they can not go fishing, they had as lief do nothing, though want threatens."