

A MAGNIFICENT PANORAMIC OF THE TUCKER'S TOWN SOUTH SHORE.

by LOUISA HUCHINGS SMITH

The following notes were prepared by Mrs. Smith for a paper which she read at a meeting held some months ago by the Bermuda Historical Society at the home of Mrs. James J. Storrow. They contain much interesting historical data pertaining to the now famous Mid-Ocean colony.

EDITOR

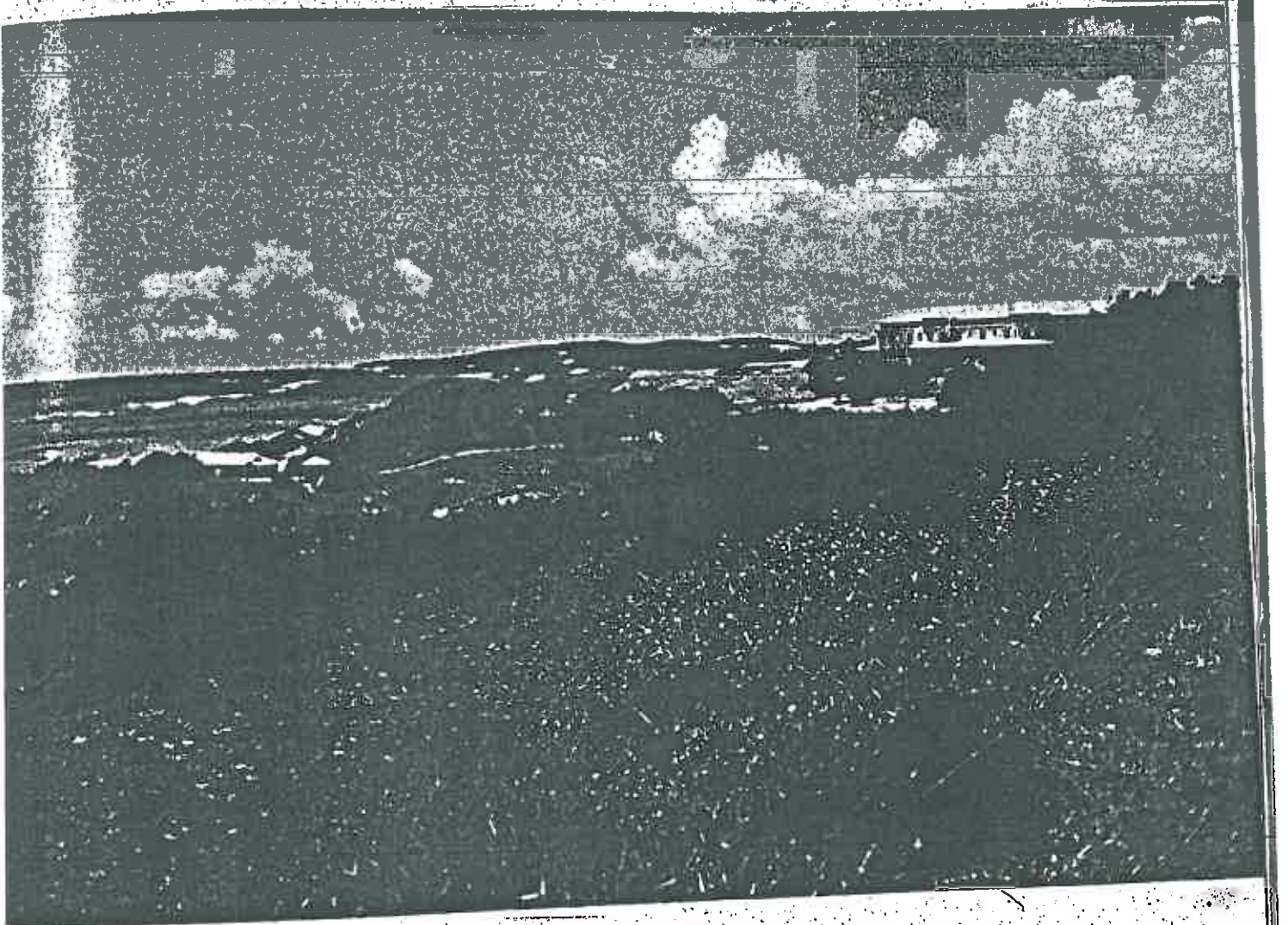
SOMETIME ago it was my pleasure to climb to the top of Mrs. Storrow's lookout tower. It was one of Bermuda's most beautiful days, and the scene which lay before me was one of the fairest—one which I doubt could be equalled elsewhere in Bermuda or, in fact, anywhere in the world.

Over hill and valley the velvety green fairways of the beautiful Mid-Ocean golf course stretched before me, with the background of dark cedars surrounding some of the lovely homes which have been built in recent years. The blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean, with here and there glimpses of Harrington Sound, the peaceful shadowed lakes edged with mangroves which lay below me were contributory to a scene indescribably lovely. "Nature has lavished there her purest wave—her softest sky"—in fact the graces of the Bermuda islands are well exemplified in Tucker's Town.

Bermuda has seen many changes since the turn of the century, but none of them has been as dramatic as the metamorphosis which has taken place at Tucker's Town in the last eighteen years.

Tucker's Town, one may say, has been discovered twice: once,

OLD TUCKER'S TOWN



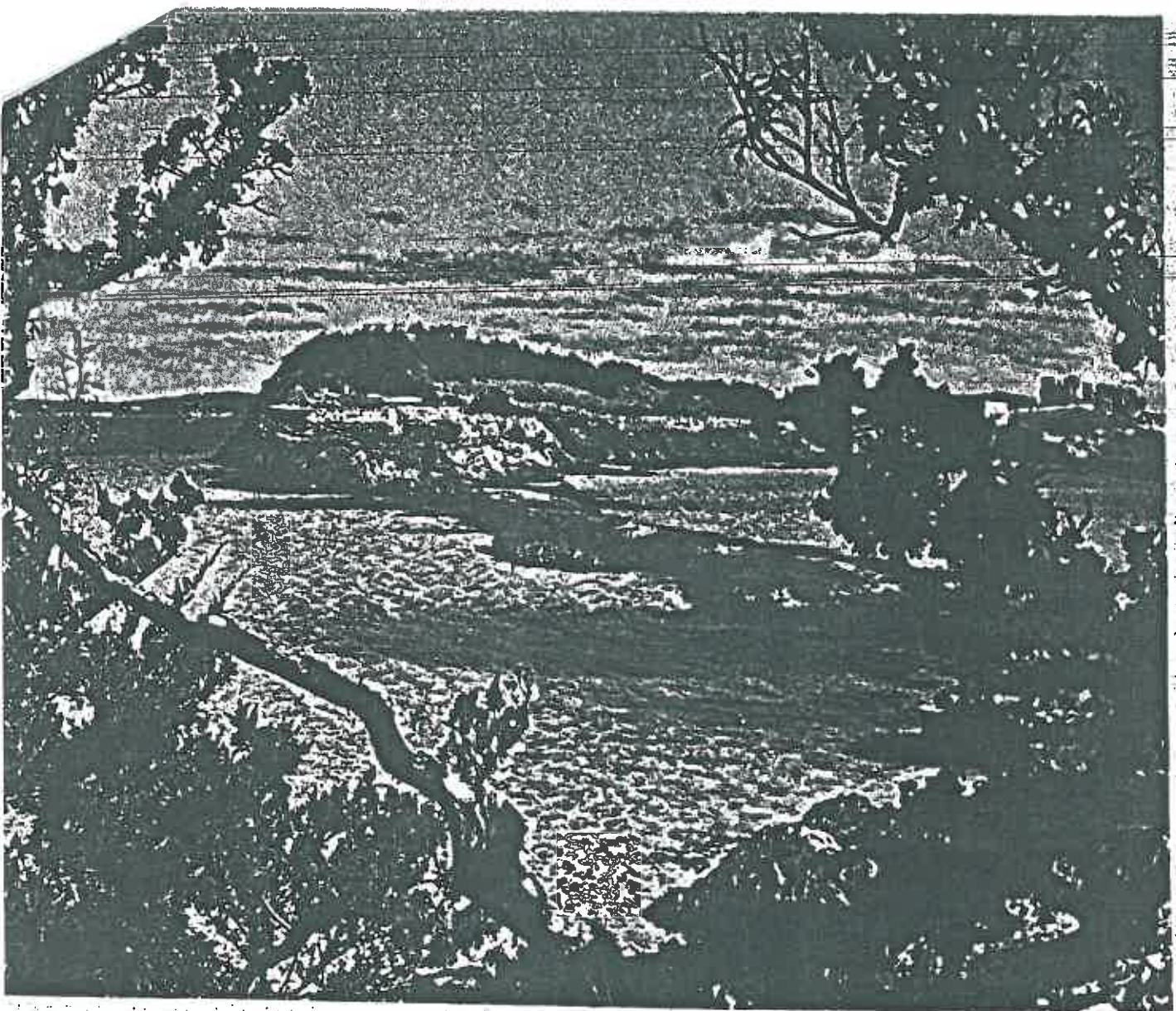
BY WALTER RUTHERFORD. AT THE RIGHT IS THE FAMED MID-OCEAN CLUB

...in 1616 when a governor ...
...with a few ...
...small frame houses of ...
...and powder mills. The ...
...Newport's map of 1639 ...
...Town in honor of ...
Though written large on the map the embryonic city never grew beyond five or six houses and a church. Governor Tucker was instructed to quarter a number of men on "the general lands" or King's Castle Point, and the men were to be employed in whaling, pearl-fishing, searching for ambergris, tilling the ground and serving as a garrison if necessary.

In recent years occasional picnickers ventured to Tucker's Town from time to time and extolled its beauties, growers of truck settled there and tilled the soil, a few fishermen made their living, a few well-to-do people had more sub-

stantial homes, and vessels which plied their trades and brought back cargoes to the "landing"; but the true possibilities of Tucker's Town were not recognized until they were rediscovered by Furness Withy and Company, Ltd. in 1920. In 1907, when the Hon. F. Goodwin Gosling bought property on "the Point" or "the Main" as it was called in the old days, and he and his family spent their summers there, Tucker's Town was sparsely inhabited, less than a third of the land was arable and had little economic value, sweet potatoes formed the principal crop, and fishing the chief occupation.

At that time, about thirty years ago, men still lived by barter, fish were purchased with potatoes and vice versa, for there was no money. The inhabitants went to bed at sunset. It appears that while there were decent folk among them, in general they were a degenerate lot. The communal life left much to be desired, intermarriage for generations had undermined both health and morals. They were a law among



CASTLE ISLAND WITH THE RUINS OF THE KING'S CASTLE—ONE OF THE FORTRESSES BUILT EARLY IN THE 17th CENTURY BY GOVERNOR MOORE RUTHERFORD

themselves and the arm of authority seemed to lack power to control them. Most of the white people had died and after many years those who were left moved away. The Misses Fannie and Gertrude Trott and the Walkers were the last to leave, their house being the one on No. 3 green of the Mid-Ocean golf course.

The last big property owner was Mr. Seth Harvey. On his death his coloured butler, B. D. Talbot, bought all the property for little more than a song. Talbot grew onions and potatoes and kept a store, and was virtually lord of Tucker's Town for many years.

Mr. Gosling remembers an old white woman who lived in a small house where Mr. Ford Johnson's house now stands. She had been married four times, wore all four wedding rings, and called herself Mrs. George after her second and favourite husband. George had been a soldier and she had many tales to tell of the time when she was stationed at Stirling Castle in Scotland, and her husband had gone to the Crimean War. When he was killed she came back to Bermuda and married again.

She was born in 1810 at "the Point" and was eighty-six years old when Mr. Gosling first knew her. Active even at that advanced age, Mrs. George still climbed on the roof of

her house to whitewash it. Among most of the coloured people she was dreaded as a witch. Her grandfather was one William Howard, a sailor retired from the Navy, who settled at Tucker's Town in 1791. The story goes that there he encountered an admiral who, on learning his origin, secured for him a grant of a parcel of land from the Howards in England. When Howard discovered that the Haywards were aristocratic people in St. George's he coolly adopted the name of Hayward.

Mrs. George had tales to tell of the terrible sandstorm of 1815. The storm or whirlwind of sand raged throughout one night and one day. When it was over a sand hill 120 feet high had been formed in one place, and this hill is now the site of Mr. E. T. Weir's house. Several houses were entirely submerged by the sand, and Mrs. George's father and mother were buried in one of them. Mr. Gosling discovered several of the buried houses in 1907, and used the stone in building his own house. Some of the houses had probably belonged to men who worked at King's Castle.

Mrs. George said that she could place the date of the sandstorm in 1815 because that same afternoon she saw Rodney's fleet of eighty sail pass along the south shore of the islands, coming from the West (Continued on page 37)

son, Mr. and Mrs. Elliot Putnam also of Boston, who were on their honeymoon, and Mr. and Mrs. Douglas G. Sistreron and their son, Mr. Robert Sistreron, of Pittsburgh.

Recent guests at Scarrington, Paget, were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Chalfant of Seaside, Pa., Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Bissell of Exeter, N. H., Miss Margaret Lukis of Montreal, Mrs. Louis P. Forster of Germantown, Pa., Mr. Frederic P. Wood of Pelham, N. Y., and from New York, Mr. Thomas J. Murphy, Mrs. Earl Biscoe and Mr. Earl Biscoe, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. William Gage Austin and Miss Janet Austin, and Mr. and Mrs. Walter C. Blum.

On their wedding trip were Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Compton of New Haven, Conn., who were at the Quarries in Pembroke. Mrs. Compton is the former

Miss Janet W. Malley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Malley of New Haven, Conn. Another honeymoon couple here recently were Mr. and Mrs. James F. McRae, Jr. of New York, who are occupying a cottage in Paget. Mrs. McRae is the former Miss Muriel Vivien Eckhoff of New York.

Mrs. Grover Warner and her daughter, Miss Kathleen Warner, of Greenwich, Conn., are at the Hamilton Hotel for a six weeks' holiday.

Mr. Philip Worcester Richard of New York flew down to be the house guest of Mrs. Richards Follett at Leccote in Paget. Mrs. Lewis J. Ehret of New York arrived to visit Mrs. E. Ellston Pearce of New York at Winterhaven, Smith's Parish, where she is spending the season. Mrs. Pearce's son, H. Duval Pearce, had as a house guest Mr. D. T. O'Brien of Meriden, Conn.

Tales of Old Tucker's Town

(Continued from page 12)

Indies and bound for historic Trafalgar. Plainly her dates were a little confused but she always insisted on Trafalgar. The old lady also remembered a fleet anchored in Castle Harbour, probably during the War of 1812 when seventy-four British warships entered reef-infested Castle Harbour, formerly called Southampton Harbour, and sailed again without a mishap. Castle Harbour, which for years was used for warships and other vessels, is no longer a desirable anchorage for large vessels because of the constant growth of coral shoals through the years. One of the last vessels to anchor there was the steamer *Tweed* on July 8th, 1842.

On the original survey of the Company of Adventurers in 1663, "the general landes" at Tucker's Town, as they were then called, comprised 345 acres. They were not allocated to any parish at that time but were held as public lands, or common property to pay the administrative charges of the Colony, e.g., the support of various officials, the minister, and the captain of the castle who held nearly the whole of "the Point" as his perquisite.

The names mentioned in Norwood's survey as holding or renting land from the "honourable company" are Mr. Abercrombie, the glebe land and house, Mr. William Moore and Mr. Joseph Moore, his son, two tenements and two shares of land, 50 acres in all. Samuel Atkinson, Daniel Marrow, Nathaniel

North, Parnell Wilkinson, widow, each held a tenement and 25 acres. William Jones, lieutenant at the castle, held as belonging to his place 50 acres, and sublet to his mother, Mary Jones, and James Grazebury. Thomas Clinch, William Newman, and John Brown rented 95 acres extending from Tucker's Town Bay almost to "the Point." Among these names it is interesting to note two, Wilkinson and North, whose families or descendants are still in Bermuda to-day.

The former was the widow of William Wilkinson who was captain of King's Castle, and she lived on her shares of land at "the Point." William Wilkinson, the first of his name in Bermuda, came here in the very early days of the Colony and is a forebear of the present Wilkinson family.

The first Nathaniel North, who held land at Tucker's Town, was one of the indentured servants who had good connections and who also came to Bermuda in the early days. He was related to the Earl of Warwick. His grandson, Captain Nathaniel North, went to sea when seventeen years old, and had a swashbuckling career as a daring master mariner and pirate, his life full of adventure and romance. He ended his days in Madagascar, where he accumulated property, influence, and a family. His extraordinary life is described in the book, "Under the Black Flag," by Don C. Seitz.



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WALKER ARCADE

When the Bermuda Company was taken over by the Crown in 1684, the land at Tucker's Town was let out on quit-rent and on fee-simple conditional. In 1756 it was put up for auction and the Crown appointed three commissioners to sell the land in fee simple conditional on payment of an annual sum of 3% on the offered purchase price. Quite a little land in Bermuda is still held in this way.

During the early years of Bermuda the colonists lived in constant fear of attack from Spanish vessels and pirates from the West Indies. Governor Richard Moore came to the Colony in 1612 with full instructions to fortify the islands. His selection of sites for his forts plainly indicates the judgment and ability of Moore. Eight of the nine forts on which he began construction did their duty well through the first half-century of colonization. Now most of them lie in ruins.

CASTLE ISLAND was chosen as the site for the first fort, and the grey ruins of what was known as King's Castle still stand against the skyline, clearly seen if one looks south across Castle Harbour. These fortifications were most formidable in their day. Their walls were strongly built of Bermuda stone, at a time when cement was unknown; lime was mixed with turtle oil and the blood of whales was used for mortar. The captain of the castle and many of his garrison had homes on "the Point" and used a boat to cross to the island.

It was in 1618 that a public order was passed requiring Captain Thomas Stokes, commander of King's Castle, to lay out a highway twelve feet wide from Tucker's Town to Castle Point for military purposes in reaching the fort. This is the first example of a military road in Bermuda. Captain Thomas Stokes was required to plant on each side of this road figs and pomegranates and was to be paid 300 lbs of tobacco for doing so. The winding path he built is today the road which begins at "Stokes his bay" (Tucker's Town Bay). The old road ended at a point opposite the Castle Fort, in steps cut in the rock, where the date 1808 is carved near the water's edge.

Though Captain Stokes was in charge of the King's Castle he lived at Castle Point. No evidence has ever been found that he planted the figs and pomegranates as ordered, and it has been recorded that he was reprimanded for failing to keep the path clear and neglecting his

other duties. He was also accused of wasting powder on festival days in "waine heathes in greate guns and small shot." He had set soldiers to build a house for himself, and to ferry his associate "Mr. Felgate from porte to porte." It was charged that "they [the soldiers] had to do so many daily and nightlie drudgeries that the men had no tyme to fish for their own provisions."

Stokes was tried and convicted of evil practises in 1627, and he and Felgate, the "two moths" as they were called, were declared by the Assembly to be forever unworthy of office in Bermuda. Perhaps this is the reason why "Stokes his bay" is now known as Tucker's Town Bay.

Stokes and Felgate were succeeded at King's Castle by Daniel Elfrith and Henry Hawley. Capt. Daniel Elfrith, one of the most colourful figures in the early days of the Colony, sailed into the harbour one fine day commanding a Spanish-built caravel, laden with meal. He came, providentially, when the young Colony was facing a serious famine. Elfrith was an Englishman, and of him Dr. Henry Wilkinson in his excellent history, "The Adventurers of Bermuda," writes: "He had sailed for the Amazon with a friend, and as he went, this Spanish frigate 'comeinge in their waye, their catchinge fingers layd fast hold on her.'" This friend entrusted the prize-ship to Elfrith, who requited him by promptly giving him the ship and shaping his course for Bermuda. While Elfrith's appearance brought sustenance to the famished colonists, his stolen frigate also brought rats, which multiplied so rapidly that they were likened to Pharaoh's plagues.

CAPT. ELFRITH'S piratical career was most vivid even for those robust days. He set sail a month later to get fruits and plants, goats and young cattle from the West Indies. Missing the Indies, he reached the Canaries, where he captured a Portuguese prize-ship. Later he commanded the well-known trouble-maker, the *Treasurer*. In 1621 he was made commander of King's Castle. With his wife and daughter, he lived at "the Point," and here it was that the Governor of the Islands, Capt. Philip Bell, came a-wooing Miss Elfrith.

Capt. Elfrith, a born rover, could not tolerate a sedentary life for long, and soon he was off again in his ship *Robert*, roaming the Caribbean waters trying to pick up something of value. He

participated in the settlement of Catalina, later renamed the island of Providence. Elfrith was made admiral and second-in-command of that island. During these adventures Mrs. Elfrith must have remained at "the Point," for there is a footnote in Dr. Wilkinson's book saying that during the absence of her husband she maintained that the captaincy of the castle was hers to bestow. The command, however, was given to William Sayle.

The Sayles were listed in the early records with the "gentlemen," who came to the Colony. In a Governor's letter some of these "gentlemen" are described as "men of fashion very unfit for what they undertook." William Sayle, however, would appear to have been a man of energy and initiative. Besides the captaincy of King's Castle, he held the office of sheriff and was a member of the Council. Later he became Governor for some years. Sayle played a considerable part in obtaining a charter from London for the colonizing of the Bahamas, and participated in the settlement of the island once called Segatto and re-christened Eleuthera, where several Bermudian families remained after Sayle's connection with it in Commonwealth days.

This early association of Bermuda, and incidentally Tucker's Town, with Eleuthera and with the Eleutherian donation to Harvard College in 1650 was recognized recently by Mr. James J. Storrow, who generously endowed a Harvard scholarship for a Bermuda student.

To return to William Sayle, it is interesting to note that the island of New Providence (Nassau) was once known as "Sayle's". Probably through his activities in the Bahamas, Sayle was appointed leader of an expedition to establish a settlement in South Carolina, of which Dr. Wilkinson writes: "The expedition sailed in February 1669/1670 and reached its destination. Sayle became a colonel, took over the territory south and west of Cape Romain, and thus started the English colonization of South Carolina. The impression of so many Bermudian names in the early records of the Carolinas, and the introduction of several of their customs and industries are a proof that this sloop was but the first of many. The Carolinas, in fact, provided some of the principal ports for the shipping which Bermudians were now developing. Grain, beef and hides could be obtained there in exchange for manufactured articles and West Indian products. Among the lat-

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ter, rum came quickly to the fore and such was its hold that many Carolinians would part with the dearest thing they had to purchase it.

In a footnote, Dr. Wilkinson continues: "Bermudians who went to Carolina soon after this were Gibbs, Dill, Duncombe, Robinson, Sears, Trott, Wilkinson, etc. Carolina had Bermuda regulations about glebe lands, Bermuda currants, palmetto-thatched houses, palmetto hats and baskets."

William Sayle, who had resigned the Governorship of Bermuda in 1662, died shortly after the expedition to the Carolinas.

(This is the first of two articles on old Tucker's Town by Mrs. Smith. The second, which will appear next month, will tell of the whaling and cotton-growing industries which once flourished there. Editor.)

DRINK OF THE MONTH

WITH the warm days, I can think of no potion more delicious and appropriate than the famous "gimlet." The "gimlet" is a drink introduced to me many years ago in Singapore by a group of British naval officers, and why its wide adoption in thirsty circles here has not occurred has always puzzled me. In the first place it is one of the simplest of drinks to mix, is smooth and refreshing, is swift to "lift." One variation is mixed as follows: Take a champagne glass and half-fill it with shaved ice; add a jigger of Coates' Plymouth gin (available at Gosling Brothers), about half a jigger of Lime Juice Cordial, which is already sweetened (get the best available), and shake a few drops of Angostura bitters into the glass; to this you can add a touch of soda water if you wish to soften the blow a bit.

It's a swell set-up for a lazy lawn party, a felicitous inspiration for gentle summertime.

—BACCHUS

With the Singing Reel

(Continued from page 24)

fishing incident of recent months was the capture of a big devil-fish some sixteen miles off the South Shore. Mr. "Gunny" Astwood of Southampton sighted it from his motor boat, gave chase and successfully harpooned the monster and towed it back to shore. The devil-fish weighed around 1,000 lbs., measured twelve feet across, and seven feet from snout to tail. It has been several years since the last devil-fish or giant ray was taken off Bermuda.

—GAMFISH