

ANCIENT PEMAQUID.

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THE purchase by John Brown constitutes one of the most memorable epochs in New England history, and introduces to our attention one of the most beautiful and noble characters that adorn the annals of any people.

It is a glory to Pemaquid, that she can claim Samoset, or Sammerset, as her Lord, or Sagamore, and as such he is entitled to our special attention. It was he who welcomed the Pilgrims at

Plymouth, and seemed to them as God's messenger to prepare the way for them in the wilderness. Governor Bradford says that *Samaset* "came bouldly amongst them, and spoke to them in broken English, which they could well understand, but marvelled at it. At length they understood, by discourse with him, that he was not of these parts, [about Plymouth], but belonged to y^e eas-trene parts, wher some English ships came to fish, with whom he was acquainted, and could name sundrie of them by their names, amongst whom he had gott his language." He told the Pilgrims that he was Sagamore of *Morattiggon*, distant from Plymouth "a dayes sail with a great wind, and five dayes by land. He had a bow and 2 arrows," and though it was but the middle of March, his only clothing was "a leather about his waist with a fringe about a span long, or little more." He was a tall, straight man, beardless, with long black hair, cut only on his brow. By his agency and that of his friend Squanto, the Pilgrims made a treaty of peace with Massassoit, which continued uninterrupted down to Philip's war. He extended to Levett the hand of friendship in the visit to his dominions in the year 1623. This voyager says that he was "a Sagamore who hath been very faithful to the English and hath saved the lives of many of our nation, some from starving, others from killing." With the simplicity of Nature and a generosity peculiarly his own, he proposed to his "cousin" Levett that their sons should be brothers, and that there should be "*mouchicke legamatch*,"* that is, great friendship between them, until Tanto carried them to his wigwam,—till they died. In every view, Samoset appears in a most attractive and interesting light. He seems to have been unalloyed with the jealousy which is said to mark the Indian character. His manly confidence and sincerity are in humiliating contrast with the mercenary and sordid spirit of Levett. The savage, as we to our own shame call him, was an honor to humanity, for though untaught, he exemplified the virtues which our representative only professed. So steeped in selfishness was the traveller, that he was unconscious of the shame his own pen was leaving on his character. He writes: "The Sagamore told me that I should be very welcome to sit down on his lands, and that he, and his wife, would go along with me, in my boat to see them, which courtesy I had no reason to refuse, because I had set up my resolution before to settle my plantation there, and was glad of this opportunity, that I had obtained the consent of them, who as I conceive hath a natural right of inheritance, as they are sons of Noah, and therefore do think fit to carry things very

* Captain Smith, in his list of Indian words, folio 40 of the Gen. Hist.—"*Mauschick chammy*, The best of friends."

fairly without compulsion (if it be possible), for avoiding of treachery." Jocelyn wrote, in 1673, that "amongst the Eastern Indians, *Sommersan* formerly was a famous *Sachem*."

Governor Pownall, the ablest statesman in the provincial administrations, remarks that "the European land-workers, when they came to settle in America, began trading with Indians, and obtained leave of them to cultivate small tracts, as settlements or dwellings. The Indians, having no other idea of property than what was conformable to their transient, temporary dwelling-places, easily granted this. When they came to perceive the very different effect of settlements of land-workers creating a permanent property, always extending itself, they became very uneasy; but yet, in the true spirit of Justice and honour, abided by the effects of concessions which they had made, but which they would not have made, had they understood beforehand the force of them."

We behold Samoset once again, and then he is heard of no more.*—sadly prophetic of the fate of his people. His last act was true to every known deed and word of his life; he, who was the first to welcome the English, was now the first of his race to part with his hunting-grounds; to fix the irrevocable seal, significant of the doom of the red man, all of whose race, like Samoset, will soon have passed into history. In this view, a mystery and a sadness envelope the simple instrument, now laid before the reader; more potent in its meaning, for a whole race of men, peopling a continent, than all the bulls of Popedom or the royal acts of Christendom are to the poor Indian's successor.

In the summer of the year 1625, Brown, probably one of the planters sent to New England by Pierce or Jennings, had been so long here as to have ingratiated himself with the Indians, and to be commonly known as "John Brown of New Harbour." The story of their dealings is told in

SOMERSET'S DEED.

"To all people whom it may concern. [Ah, my friends, it concerns, fatally, your people on the whole continent.] Know ye, that I, Captain JOHN SOMERSET and UNONGOIT, Indian Sagamores, they being the proper heirs to all the lands on both sides of Muscongus river, have bargained and sold to John Brown, of New Harbour, this certain

*I have since found an original MS., bearing the mark made by Samoset's own hand; it is a bow and arrow. The MS. is as follows: "Thes presents Obelley geion . . . mee Captaine Sommarset of M . . . sc . n . s [Muscongus?] have sold unto William Parnall and Thomas Way and William England one thousand hakurs [acres] of land in Soggohannago being Quite [quietly] possessed by William Parnell and Thomas Way and William England the . . . day of July, 1653. The mark of Captaine ~~~ Sommarset."

tract or parcel of land as followeth, that is to say, beginning at Pemaquid Falls and so running a direct course to the head of New Harbour,* from thence to the South End of Muscongus Island, taking in the island, and so running five and twenty miles into the Country north and by east, and thence eight miles northwest and by west, and then turning and running south and by west, to Pemaquid, where first begun—To all which lands above bounded, the said Captain JOHN SOMERSET and Unnongoit, Indian Sagamores, have granted and made over to the above said John Brown, of New Harbour, in and for consideration of fifty skins, to us in hand paid, to our full satisfaction, for the above mentioned lands and we the above said Indian Sagamores, do bind ourselves and our heirs forever, to defend the above said John Brown, and his heirs in the quiet and peaceable possession of the above said lands. In witness whereunto, I the said Captain JOHN SOMERSET and UNXONGOIT, have set our hands and seals this fifteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord God, one thousand six hundred and twenty-five.

his
"Captain JOHN SOMERSET, X [L. S.]
mark.

his
"UNXONGOIT, X [L. S.]
mark.

"Signed and sealed in presence of us:

"MATTHEW NEWMAN, }
"WILLIAM COX." }

The conveyance from Somerset, and acquisition by Brown, marks the distinct legal boundary between barbarism and civility; the hunter, all unconscious of the nature and consequences of the legal formulas of the stranger, alienated his forests and hunting-grounds, and relinquished the streams which had yielded their treasures every summer; he had admitted the tiller of the soil to a permanent abode on his ancestral domain, and now the earth, for the first time, consecrated by the hand of labor, will yield her increase; migratory life must disappear before the tenure of the fixed cultivator of the soil; and the ensuing struggle between these hostile conditions of life could end only in the destruction of the weaker. The savage state of vagrant liberty could not coexist with individual permanent domain in the soil.

Thus the life of the Pemaquid chief, Samoset or Somerset, must ever awaken the most tender and interesting reflections; and the generosity, the genuine nobility of soul, displayed by this son of the forest, must be allowed as a fairer index to the true character of the aborigines, than their

*New Harbour was a cove on the Eastern shore, about two miles from Pemaquid, much frequented by the fishermen.

deeds of resentment or cruelty in after days, when goaded to madness by the cupidity or the treachery of the European. Only the humanity of an Eliot, or the Christian zeal of a Mayhew, can be shown by us as a parallel to the truth and innocence of Sommerset. The worst portions of the Indian history must be charged, in truth, not to them, but to the French or English.

The precision and conciseness of this first deed of conveyance of American soil, written at Pemaquid, and the neat and compact formula of acknowledgment, drawn up by Abraham Shurt, and still adhered to in New England, word for word, are interesting to the jurist. There was no precedent for the acknowledgment, and Abraham is well entitled to be remembered as the father of American conveyancers.

There is no record of Brown's family at the time of his purchase; but it is certain he was not a hermit; for Pemaquid and Monhegan already presented the busy scenes of trade, the bustle and excitement of coming and departing ships, whose holds were well filled with the homeward cargoes of fish and peltry, and on whose decks were mingled throngs of fishermen, planters, and factors, of Indian traffickers, and Sagamores eager for the glittering baubles, the knives and hatchets of iron, and trinkets most inviting to savage tastes, — the English capital in trade. At this period, probably, Pemaquid was the busiest place on the coast, though Conant was then laying the foundation of Massachusetts at Cape Anne, and the Pilgrims at Plymouth were struggling for life. Weston, Thomson, and Gorges, were here. At the east and north, the French were diligent in their rival plantations, and each watched the other with a jealous eye.

It was not yet a quarter of a century since Robert Aldworth and his associates had commissioned Admiral Pring to survey the New England shores. Every haven, and river, and island had now become familiar to the fishermen, and, as we have seen, the old Bristol merchants again appeared and now became owners of New England soil.

Their agent, Shurt, possessed, or assumed, the authority of a civil magistrate, and Brown availed himself of the earliest opportunity after his arrival to complete the formality of Somerset's sale of two hundred square miles of his domain. The acknowledgment was made July 24, 1626, when the two Sagamores "personally appeared at Pemaquid," before Abraham Shurt. His magisterial power would often be called into use in the plantation, which, but for his presence, would have been lawless; though we are at a loss to know the source of his dignity.

For several years, the planters pursued a gainful trade with the Indians for their furs, and gave a practical demonstration to the sagacity and

foresight of Capt. John Smith's schemes for colonization; and it is a pleasant thing to know that he lived to witness its auspicious beginning.

The ships brought frequent tidings from home; and the incidents of border experience, and of rival plantations, broke the monotony of the planter's life. One source of uneasiness was lessened by the extinction of the French interests, which were surrendered by Champlain to David Kirk at Quebec, on the 19th of July, 1629, though they still hovered about the coast. At this time, Pemaquid was a larger and more important settlement than the capital of Canada. The weakness of authority invited lawlessness and crime, which, in the crude societies of primitive settlements, always hope for the impunity not to be found in older communities; and their cupidity was tempted by the prosperity which distinguished Pemaquid, since the purchase by Jennins, and especially under the judicious management of the agent of the new proprietors, Aldworth and Eldridge.

Next to his own ruin, the chief result of Weston's treachery to the Pilgrims, in attempting a rival plantation, was to scatter along the shore the idle and profligate men whom he had gathered, at hap-hazard, in England.*

There seems to have been no discord between the various interests at Pemaquid, and they were united for general safety and peace.

Within about three years from Shurt's arrival his plantation extended to Pemaquid, and in the year 1630, no less than eighty-four families, besides the fishermen, were settled at this place and in its vicinity, constituting in the aggregate, probably, a population of between five hundred and six hundred English. The legal services rendered by Shurt to Brown, in perfecting his Indian title to a portion of the soil, indicates a friendship between them; and it may have been under cover of this claim, that Shurt now occupied Pemaquid, some three years before he received formal possession under the patent to Aldworth and Eldridge. The increasing value and population of the colony required a stronger defence, and a fort was erected at the entrance of the harbor. This was four years before the building of the sea fort at Boston. That was at first of mud walls, rebuilt with pine trees and earth, and then "a small castle built with brick." The Pemaquid "castle" was probably about as formidable.

Shurt extended his business to the bottom of Massachusetts bay on the west, and far along on the eastern shore; yet, amid the competitions of trade by the various colonies, there is not left on

* John Pierce thought "them so base in condition (for y^e most part) as in all appearance not fit for an honest inan's company."

record against him even one complaint: this indicates a high character for fairness and prudence.

It was the policy of the Pilgrims to observe perfect faith with the Indians, as the best security for their fidelity; and this seems to have been the principle adopted by Shurt.

The Tarratines, whose territory included Pemaquid, were hostile to the western tribes, and for this reason sought the friendship of the English. In the summer of 1631, a war party of about a hundred of the Tarratines made a murderous assault at midnight upon the wigwam of the Ipswich Sagamore, and carried his wife a captive to Pemaquid. Not long after, Shurt, who had long dealt with those at the west, and was well known to them, was about to dispatch an agent on a trading voyage thither, and to him they committed the captive, for whom a ransom was demanded. The confidence reposed in him by both parties, reflects the highest credit on his integrity.

Every year now added to the number of settlements, and Pemaquid was already looked upon as an old colony. There were Mason at Piscataqua, Cammock at Black Point, Bonython at Saco, and the Kennebec Patent. The conflicting titles to lands about the Kennebec, and at Pemaquid, were not set at rest till a late period. They served to collect and perpetuate much historical matter, which would otherwise have been lost.

It was in connection with this patent and the Plymouth trade, that Allerton visited Pemaquid in 1630. Sailing along the shore, eastward, in his shallop, not venturing in a direct course across the sea, but hugging the coast, as the colonists were wont to do for safety, the Plymouth factor had reached Cape Anne; it was just at sunrise, about the middle of June, that he went on board the *Arbella*, which had not yet let go her anchor in the waters of New England; and so it pleasantly happened that a pilgrim of the Mayflower was the first to welcome Johnson, and Winthrop, and Dudley, and Bradstreet, and Saltonstall, to New England.

Winthrop came to supersede Endicott, governor of the colony, as he had succeeded Conant, the first governor thereof. Thus, amid the various fortunes of the different settlements, Shurt at Pemaquid now saw the plantation that struggled for existence at Cape Anne in 1626, suddenly expanded into the most important colony on the whole coast.

The futile and unhappy attempts to monopolize the trade and fisheries on our seas were a prolific source of discord and petty quarrels, highly injurious to the interests of the colony, and detrimental to the adventurers in England, because it embroiled them in the angry political strifes of the times. Their misery was the price of our liberty. The exclusive grant of the fisheries in

the American seas was prominent in the catalogue of royal offences,—the abuses of prerogative, and violations of the constitution. The last of these patents was that given to Aldworth and Eldridge. They had extended their settlement from Monhegan to the Maine, and had fortified Pemaquid. Their expenditures were unsafe without a better territorial title than occupation afforded; besides, their holding from the Plymouth council, which was but one move from the crown, gave them a national prestige, no slight safeguard against foreign adventurers. The grant bears date not long after the treaty of St. Germain, when “baby Charles,” with that recklessness of national interests and honor which made the Stuarts detestable, conveyed to France the whole of Canada, and Acadia. This folly was the greater, because the limits of Acadia were left undefined. Pemaquid was within this doubtful jurisdiction, and from this time became one of the most important points in the colonial struggles of the two nations, and its fate depended, chiefly on interests external to itself. It ranked as a military post, and its history is to be found in the State archives at Paris and London, at Boston and Albany, and at Toronto. From this, it will be seen that Pemaquid has a twofold interest,—one as illustrating the influence of European politics on the American colonies, and the other the no less exciting story of its own romantic fortunes, akin to the age of Froissart, and worthy the genius of a Scott.