

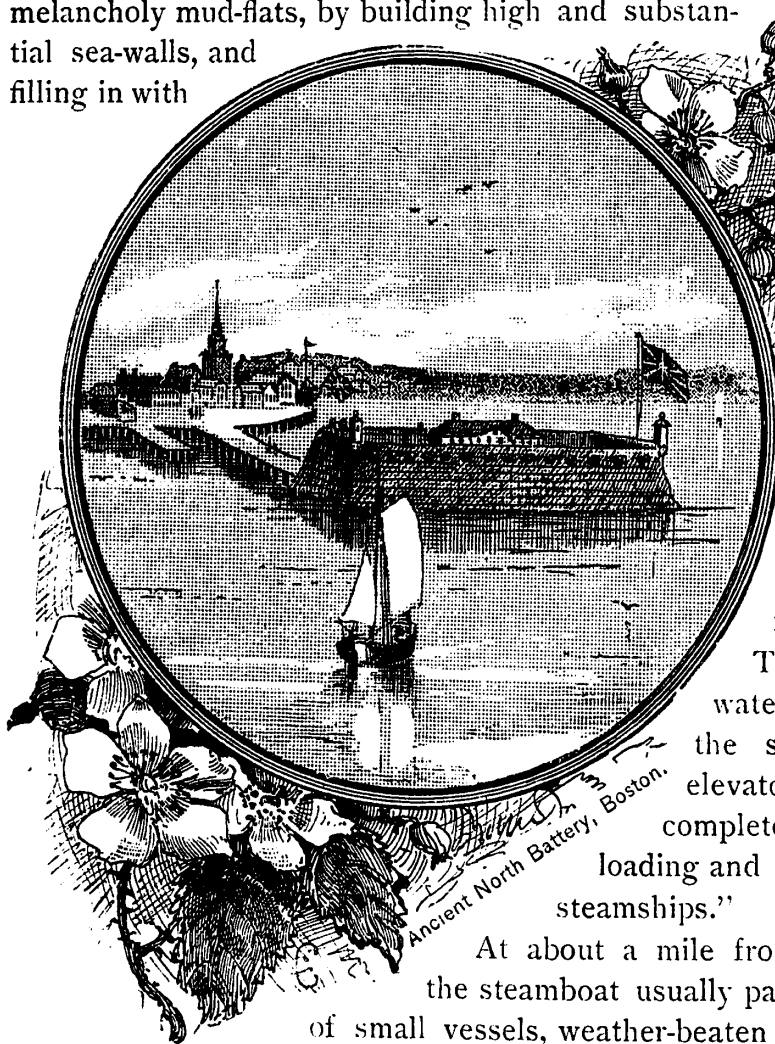


The Sail Down the Harbor.

THE perfection of physical comfort is enjoyed, when, on a warm day of summer, one leaves the hot and crowded streets and many cares of the city, and passes down Boston Harbor on one of its luxurious excursion-steamboats. Here, without the distressing motion of the deep-sea swells, or the blank monotony of a level horizon, the bracing and invigorating air of the ocean is enjoyed to the fullest; while on either side are scores of picturesque and historic localities to attract the attention and give high zest to the journey. And if this delicious iodated atmosphere, smelling of sea-weed and surf-beaten rocks, arouses a formidable hunger, there is every variety of means for gratifying that also, from the improvident pop-corn which is sold on the deck, and the frugal but appetizing chowders of the beach-restaurants, to the rich and varied *ménus* of the great hotels at Hull and Nantasket. It is safe enough to say, that no other Atlantic city excels Boston in summer comfort. Its clean, well-swept, and sprinkled streets are frequently visited by delightful sea-breezes, whose refreshing coolness and salty savor are perceptible for a full league inland. And on a day of unusual heat and sunshine, all roads lead to the harbor; and the horse-cars for Atlantic Avenue are crowded with people eager to inhale the bracing air of the ocean. The fares on the steamboats are so small that even the poorest can go: the accommodations are so luxurious that the veriest Sybarite of the Back Bay need suffer no discomfort.

The steamboat has hardly left its pier when the interest of the voyage begins,—the vast and varied panorama commences to unroll. On the right the narrow water-lane of Fort-Point Channel runs off to the South Bay; on the left is the broad mouth of the combined Charles and Mystic rivers, with the picturesque antiquities of the American navy at the head

of its vista. The long line of docks and piers, steamships and elevators, on the north, is the water-front of East Boston, the Birkenhead of the Puritan city. (If you wish to know more about this point, or others in the harbor, turn to the Alphabetical Index, at the beginning of the book.) On the right are the great piers and docks of New Boston (often so-called), covered with railway tracks, freight-houses, and elevators, and usually containing several British freight-steamships. This broad and busy plain, dedicated to commerce, has been constructed within a few years, on the melancholy mud-flats, by building high and substantial sea-walls, and filling in with



gravel. The veteran master of the British steamship *Sorrento* recently said: "During all my experience as an officer and commander of steamships in the Atlantic trade, I have never before loaded at such magnificent docks.

The great depth of water at low tides, and the spacious sheds and elevator, render the most complete facilities for the loading and discharging of large steamships."

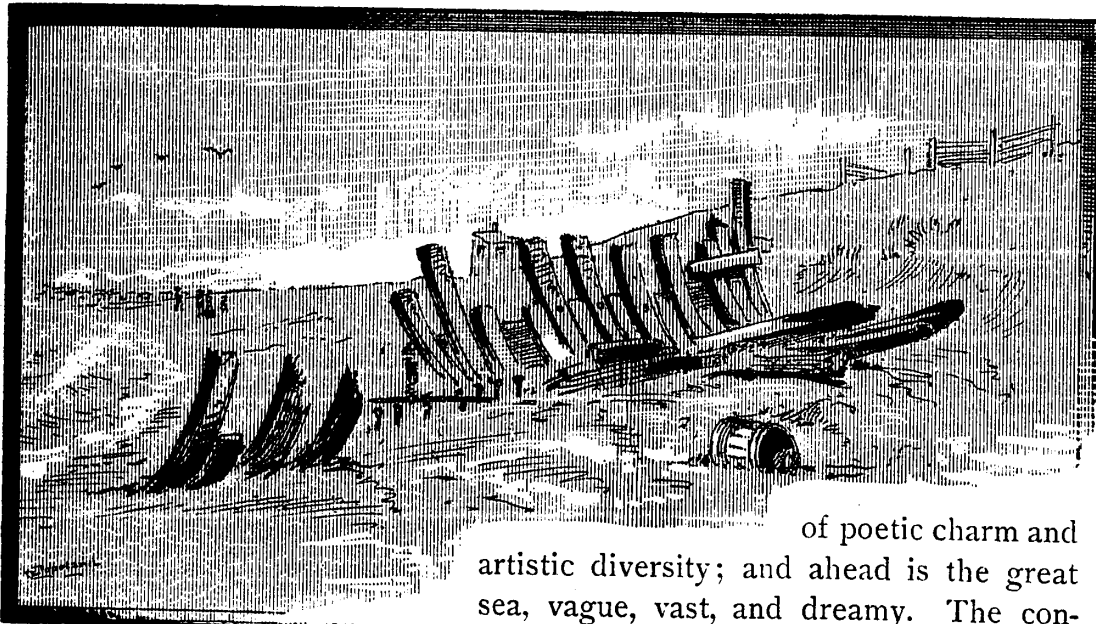
At about a mile from the State House, the steamboat usually passes through a fleet of small vessels, weather-beaten coasters, and dainty yachts, anchored off Fort-Point Channel. Mr. Howells has given us this beautiful picture of the inner harbor of Boston: "A light breeze ruffled the surface of the bay, and the innumerable little sail-boats that dotted it took the sun and wind upon their wings, which they dipped almost into the sparkle of the water, and flew lightly hither and thither like gulls that loved the brine too well to rise wholly from it. Larger ships, farther or nearer, puffed or shrank their sails as they came or went on the errands of commerce, but always moved as if bent upon some dreamy affair of pleasure;

the steamboats that shot vehemently across their tranquil courses seemed only gayer and vivider visions, but not more substantial. Yonder a black sea-going steamer passed out between the far-off islands, and at last left in the sky above those reveries of fortification, a whiff of sombre smoke, dark and unreal as a memory of battle. . . . There is always a shabbiness about the wharves of sea-ports; but I must own that as soon as you get a reasonable distance from them in Boston, they turn wholly beautiful. They no longer present that imposing array of mighty ships which they could show in the days of Consul Plancus, when the commerce of the world sought chiefly our port, yet the docks 'are still filled with the modester kinds of shipping; and, if there is not that wilderness of spars and rigging which you see at New York, let us believe that there is an aspect of selection and refinement to the scene, so that one should describe it, not as a forest, but, less conventionally, as a gentleman's park of masts. The steamships of many coast-lines gloom, with their black, capacious hulks, among the lighter sailing-craft, and among the white, green-shuttered passenger-boats; and behind them those desperate and grimy sheds assume a picturesqueness, their sagging roofs and crooked gables harmonizing agreeably with the shipping; and then, growing up from all rises the mellow-tinted, brick-built city, roof, and spire, and dome,—a fair and noble sight, indeed, and one not surpassed for a certain quiet and cleanly beauty by any that I know."

As the course crosses the line of two miles from the State House, the high hills of South Boston bound the view on the right, crowned by the great building which was erected in 1834 for a summer-resort, under the name of the Mount-Washington House, and has been occupied for more than forty years by the Perkins School for the Blind. In the nearer waters several gray old hulks are moored, containing reserve stocks of powder and other explosives. Farther on, City Point appears, on the right, with its esplanade and fleet of yachts, beyond which towers the large asylum on Thompson's Island, across Dorchester Bay. On the left, observe the spindle, or beacon, rising from the gravelly shoals which mark the site of the ill-omened Bird Island, long since washed away by the tides.

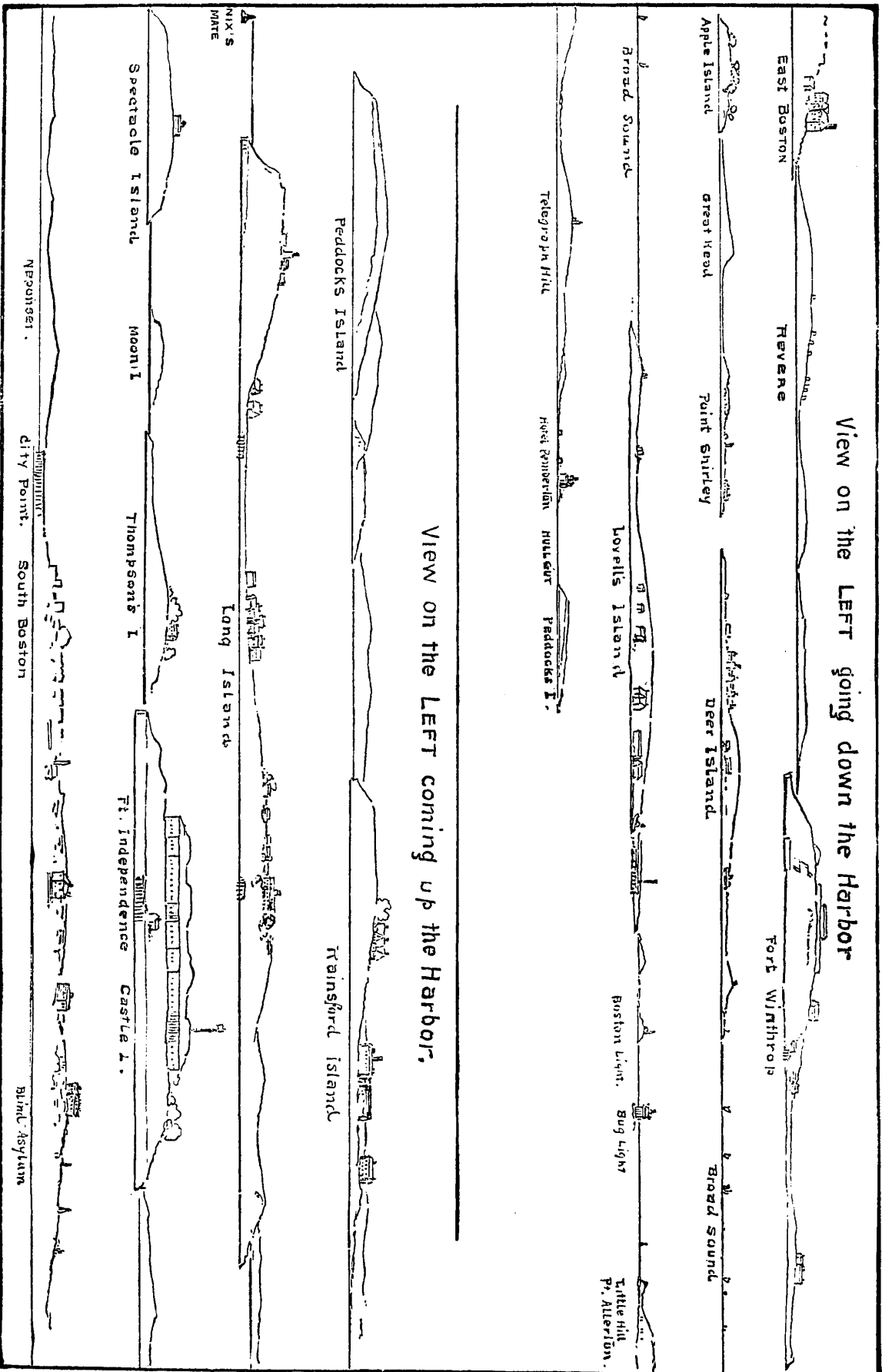
At three miles, in a direct line from the State House, the steamboat passes between the two innermost guardians of the harbor,—Governor's Island (on the left), with its lofty mounds and citadel and low-lying water-batteries, and Castle Island (on the right), almost covered by a handsome stone fort. The view now widens rapidly; and the course is laid for more than two miles across President Roads, which were anciently known as the King's Roads. Here you are tempted to smile at the famous Maryland author who called our maze of pretty islets "a bay like a sterile archipelago of cold gray islands;" and to sympathize with Lady Duffus Hardy, prais-

ing "the glorious sail down Boston Harbor." On the right the long asylum on Thompson's Island appears again, and the high barn crowning the bluff of Spectacle Island is nearer at hand. On the left rise the graceful elms of Apple Island, with the diversified shores and villages of Winthrop close beyond. However sultry, dusty, grimy, may be the streets just left behind, here all is cool and invigorating. If the sea gives forth no breath, the forward motion of the boat is enough to make the atmosphere vibrate. If the air will not blow against you, you are blown against the air; and the result is not dissimilar. You may now fairly say, with the old Puritan of two centuries ago, "A sup of New England's air is better than a whole draught of Old England's ale." The sense of refreshment is delicious. On every side the green islands rest, fair emeralds on a sapphire plain, full



of poetic charm and artistic diversity; and ahead is the great sea, vague, vast, and dreamy. The contemplation of fellow-pilgrims, too, even if they be of "the doughnut democracy," as Nora Perry calls a large part of our harbor-excursionists, adds not a little to the interest of the trip. All types are here, from the wide-eyed rustic, enjoying every minute of the unwonted excursion, to the *blasé* Somerset-Club young man, for whom no harbor this side of the Mersey can possibly have any charms; mothers, with noisy broods of happy children; young couples, whom earth, air, and sea have no power to attract away from each other's eyes; sedate spinsters; rakish commercial travellers; prim clergymen, in conventional black; merry young girls, dressed like incarnate rainbows; care-worn men of business; the old, the young, the grave, the gay, the citizen, the countryman, the hoodlum, the snob, the gentleman, — all enjoying the superlative comfort and coolness which here replace the torridity of the town.

And so we pass between the diversified shores of Long Island, on the



PANORAMIC VIEWS BETWEEN BOSTON AND HULL.

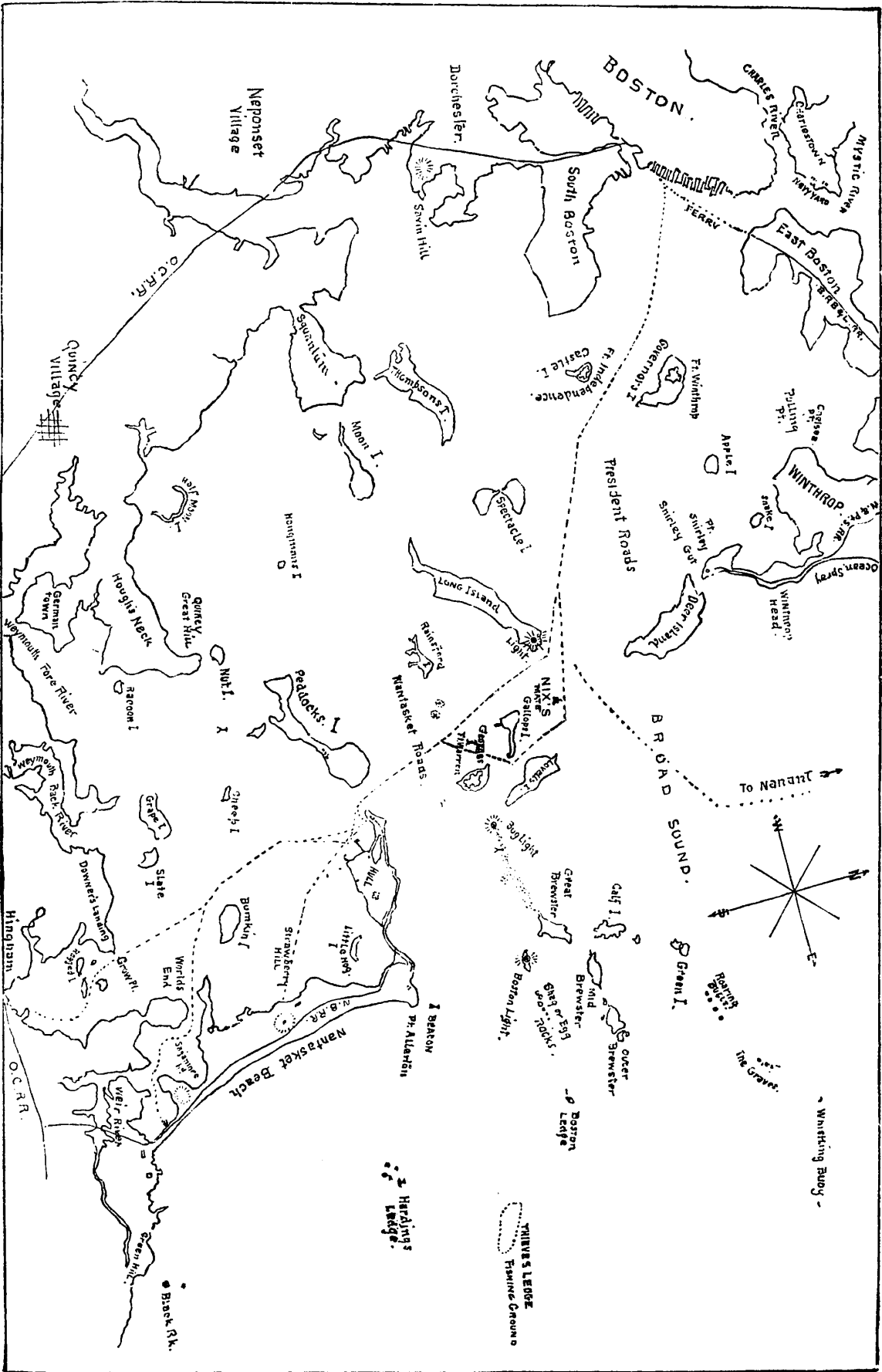
right, with the hotel near its centre, and Deer Island on the left, where rise the great brick buildings of the city charitable and correctional institutions. At the sixth mile, in a straight line from the State House, the boat is running south-east, with Broad Sound and the open sea on one side, and on the other the bold bluff of Long-Island Head, crowned by a lighthouse and the green mounds of a battery. She then passes the grim black pyramid of Nix's Mate, and enters the narrow ship-channel, having Lovell's Island, sacred to buoys, on the left, and Gallop's Island, with its hospitals and high bluffs, on the right. If the tide favors, however, the boat leaves the ship-channel just before reaching Nix's Mate, and steers straight for Hull. Beyond the immense and frowning bulwarks of Fort Warren she runs across Nantasket Roads, with the buildings on Rainsford Island conspicuous on the right, and the rocky archipelago about the lighthouse and the open sea on the left. Here the "glimmer-glass" of the inner harbor gives place to a suggestion of the ocean-swell, — only a trifle, not enough to disturb the most delicate, but still a fair suggestion, with brisk little white-caps corrugating the blue ripples. In front are the lonely cliffs of Peddock's Island and the snug village of Hull, with the many-gabled Hotel Pemberton proudly prominent. After traversing a swift and narrow strait, the steamer rounds in at the pier of Hull, where passengers may take the railway to Nantasket.

If you are not inclined to land here, the boat will carry you on across a broad and beautiful bay, with the inner lines of Nantasket Beach on the left, and Peddock's Island and the Quincy and Weymouth shores on the right; past the round green melon of Bumpkin Island, and through the narrow pass between White Head and the pasture-hills of World's End; and then up the picturesque winding reaches of Weir River, to the Nantasket-Beach pier, hard by the Hotel Nantasket and the Rockland House, and but a few minutes' walk from the ocean-surf. Other steamboats, after leaving Hull, run south-east across the inner bay for about two miles, leaving Bumpkin Island on the right, and reach the pier at Strawberry Hill, near the Sea-Foam House, and a short distance from the sea.

The boats which touch at the old pier at Hull (the easterly one, near the hill) do not go to the beach, but run across the bay just spoken of to Downer Landing, with its pretty cottages and aristocratic Rose Standish House, and then wind up the crooked harbor to the ancient town of Hingham.

The routes of the steamers to Nahant, Ocean Pier, and Point of Pines, coincide with the course of the Nantasket boats as far as Long-Island Head. Off that point they bear away to the north-east, through Broad Sound, and shape their courses for their various destinations. Another excursion-route runs a new steamboat (of small size) from Johnson's Wharf,

OUTLINE MAP OF BOSTON HARBOR.



at City Point, South Boston, to Long Island, Winthrop, and other points in the upper harbor. The time-tables of all the harbor-lines change from month to month, and should be consulted in the Boston newspapers.

The Nantasket-Beach Railroad. — The Nantasket-Beach Railroad is a new enterprise, which is highly appreciated by the people around the harbor, both in Boston and along the beaches. It starts from the steamboat-pier at Hull, and runs around the shore, on the channel side of Cushing's Hill, along the crest of Stony Beach, over the west (or harborward) slope of Point Allerton, and then along the Nantasket plains to the great beach, which is traversed through almost its entire length. There are numerous stations, near the chief points of interest and attraction, at Point Allerton, Strawberry Hill, and beyond. After passing the Rockland House the railway turns inland, among strange rocky hillocks, and meets the Old Colony line in the town of Hingham. On foggy and stormy days, this route is availed of by the people who must go to Boston. The length of the line is nine miles; and the fare is ten cents, over the entire route or any part of it. It is one of the most charming rides imaginable; close beside the cool and salty sea, with the waves breaking so near as to throw spray, at high wind and tide, over the rails, — so near, that, in the winter of 1882, a section of the track was destroyed by a wrecked vessel that was thrown upon it. There is great variety of scenery, too, — the stately procession of vessels in the light-house channel; the Brewster Islands, "green and brown, like cairngorms set in blue enamel;" the lake-like expanses of the inner harbor; and the wide blue ocean, with its surges whitening up the strand beneath the car-windows.

