

Lovell's Island and Gallop's Island.

THE LOST FRIGATE MAGNIFIQUE. — THE QUARANTINE HOSPITAL. —
NIX'S MATE.



WEST of the Brewster archipelago, and upwards of six miles from the Hub of the Universe, stands Lovell's Island, separated from George's by the main ship-channel, and exposed on its northern side to the full force of the Atlantic, which was found to encroach so greatly upon it, that, in 1843, measures were taken to build there a costly and massive sea-wall. Lovell's is three-quarters of a mile long, and about half that distance in width, and is the flattest of the large islands in the harbor. It was named, probably, for Capt. William Lovell, who lived in Dorchester in 1630; and the first mention of it occurs in the Massachusetts Records in 1636. In 1648 it was granted to Charlestown, "pvided that halfe of the timber and fire wood shall belong to the garrison at the Castle." A part of the island was also given to James Brown, "if he set up a stage and follow a trade of fishing there." Again, in 1654, it was granted to Hull; but at the present time belongs to the Government of the United States, and is used by the Light-House Board. A steep little upland rises beyond the wharf, covered with long, fine grass; and descends towards the north to a long, low point, reaching out into the sea, and called Ram's Head. This was the scene, some sixty years ago, of a dreadful shipwreck, when a vessel from Maine struck upon the rocks at midnight, and, though all its crew and passengers reached the hill-top, at morning not one was found alive, the cold being so intense as to freeze them to death. It was thus vividly described by an ancient poet: —

"At length they gain'd the sea-beat strand,
And rescued from the waves;
On Lovell's Island only land,
To find more decent graves.

"For ere the tempest, howling night,
With horror ceas'd to roar;
Each soul had gone with rapid flight,
Where sorrow springs no more.

“ Among the rest, a youthful pair,
Who, from their early youth ;
Had felt of love an equal share,
Adorn'd with equal truth,

“ Lay prostrate 'mid the dire alarms,
Had calm resign'd their breath ;
Fast locked within each other's arms,
Together sunk to death.”

The great boulder, which is still visible on the bluff, and has been for many decades the rendezvous of picnic-parties, became invested with a mournful and romantic interest from the events of that terrible night. Under its unavailing shelter were found the bodies of the young man and woman aforesaid, closely locked in each other's arms. They were on the eve of being married, and had sailed for Boston, to buy there the furniture of their home. Sad fate was theirs, — to die inside the harbor, within cannon-shot of a thousand happy firesides !

In the early days of the Colony, many trees covered Lovell's, and were cut for fire-wood. Upon its southern point stood, until lately, a solitary tree, used for many years as a guide for the pilots of incoming vessels. The island has been found a good pasture for horses, and once was overrun by pretty pink-eyed rabbits. On the wharf are duplicates of the great whistling buoy off the Graves, and the bell-buoy off Harding's Ledge, besides an endless number and variety of others, ready, in emergency, to take the places of those now in different parts of the Bay. A track runs thence to Ram's Head, over which horses draw the great granite blocks used on the sea-wall and breakwater. This was first built at an expense of \$90,000; but proved inadequate, and the necessary additions cost the Government some \$40,000 more.

Between Lovell's and Deer Island is the channel of Broad Sound, used by small vessels and steamboats bound for the eastern ports, but too shallow for large ships. It is much shorter and less intricate than the main channel, but even here the inevitable dangers of the sea have been fatally predominant. So late as June, 1858, the beautiful new schooner *Prairie Flower*, with a pleasure-party of 47 Salem gentlemen on board, was upset by a squall here, and seven of her passengers were drowned.

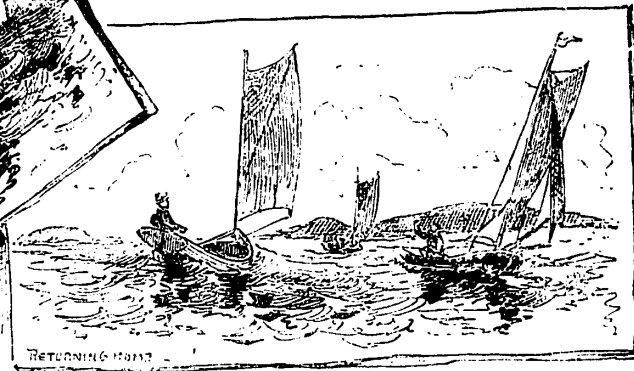
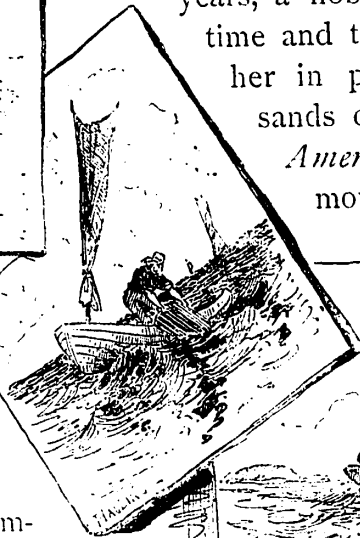
The ancient history of Lovell's was not recorded, and only here and there is a passing mention made of it. Away back in the year 1645, the crew of a Portuguese ship in the Roads stole some goats from these islands, upon which the Puritan magistracy rose in wrath, and made a prize of the unfortunate vessel. They did not release her until a good round fine had been screwed out of the captain. During the same year a ketch was wrecked

upon the island; although, two years before, the Boston pilots led La Tour's fleet safely out through Broad Sound, past the island, "where no Ships of such burden had gone out before, or not more than one." In August, 1685, a ship came in with small-pox on board, and was ordered by the council "to remove lower to Lovell's Island, and there the Passengers, Ship, and Goods between Decks to be Aired: None to come to Town till further Order." In the latter part of 1782 Admiral Vaubaird's French fleet sailed

into Boston Harbor. The immense three-deckers, *Triumphant* and *La Couronne*, and a dozen smaller frigates, passed inward safely; but the *Magnifique*, a stately line-of-battle ship, missed stays off Lovell's Island, and went ashore. There she lay for many years, a noble and melancholy wreck, until time and the winter storms gradually broke her in pieces, or buried her under the sands of the sea. The ship-of-the-line *America* was then being built at Portsmouth, and Congress gave her to



THE LOBSTER MAN



RETURNING HARBOR

the French Government, to recompense it for the lost *Magnifique*. The Boston pilot whose care-

lessness caused her loss became sexton of the New North Church; and the parish lads annoyed him by chalking on the meeting-house door, —

"Don't you run this ship ashore
As you did the seventy-four."

The treasure-seekers have made many an attempt to secure the riches which they fancy went down with the *Magnifique*. About the year 1840 they found pieces of the very beautiful wood of which she was built; and in 1859 large quantities of lead, copper, and cannon-balls were found. Ten years later the United-States engineers who were widening the channel brought up many oaken timbers of the old French frigate, more than twenty feet below the surface of the ground. The place where she struck, on Man-of-War Bar, is now solid land, above the sweep of high tides.

About six miles from Boston, and between the main channel and Nantasket Roads, rises the high bluff of Gallop's Island, whose Revolutionary fortifications have been replaced by a dainty summer-house, perked jauntily over the channel. Below is the great sea-wall, built since 1868 by the United-States engineers. From this bluff the strange gravelly ridge of Beachy Point stretches many rods to the eastward along the channel, almost submerged at high tide, but bold and conspicuous enough when the ebb tide has lowered the channel.

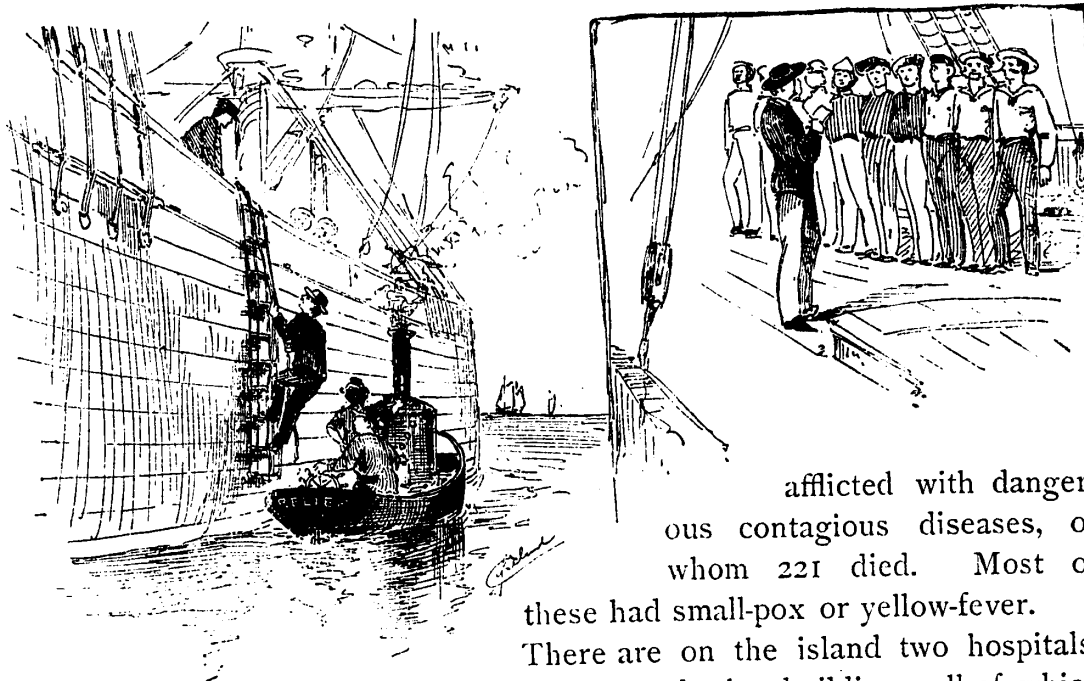
The first owner of the island, long before 1650, was Capt. John Gallop, then the best pilot in the Bay, who had here a snug farm, with a meadow on Long Island, a sheep-pasture on Nix's Mate, and a house in Boston. He achieved great distinction by piloting in the ship *Griffin* through a new-found channel, when she had on board 200 passengers, including the Rev. John Cotton, the Rev. Thomas Hooker, and other fathers of New England. Shurtleff thinks that this channel was the Black-Rock Passage; and Savage prefers to consider it the channel leading from the north, between Lovell's and the Great Brewster. Gallop was also distinguished for a naval exploit off Block Island, where he attacked a party of Indians in possession of the shallop of John Oldham (formerly of Hull), slaying several of the savages, and recovering the body of his murdered friend. When the old pilot died, in 1650, he valued the island at £12, and estimated its area at 16 acres.

The richness of the soil made this a favorite location for successive generations of farmers. Even now it produces about seven hundred bushels of vegetables yearly, and ten tons of hay; and its dairy yields milk and butter enough for the local demand. In old times the farmers here supplied the ships in Nantasket Roads with vegetables and milk and pure spring water; and many parties of summer voyagers used to visit these fertile shores, and enjoy the quaint hospitalities of the Snow place.

Gallop's was long owned by gentlemen of Quincy and Hingham, and passed, in 1819, into the possession of Peter Newcomb, who dwelt here for many years. It was purchased from his son by the city of Boston in 1860, for \$6,600, and loaned to the United States for a camp-ground. In the latter part of the Secession War there were long lines of barracks on the island, where at times 3,000 recruits were quartered, many of them being professional bounty-jumpers, with \$1,500 to \$2,000 in each man's pocket. All manner of employments were assigned to these soldiers, to keep them from mischievous idleness; but the sutler was the busiest man on the island, and the happiest. During the winter the recruits suffered terribly from the cold. The island was under the command of Gen. Hendrickson, and had a church and a library. Here the Thirty-eighth Massachusetts Regiment was quartered, on returning from the wars, in 1865. They were

veterans of the Louisiana campaigns, and the later battles in the Carolinas; and, as their steamer approached the harbor, one of their number wrote: "The luxuriant banks of the Mississippi, or the historical ones of the Potomac, had no charms compared with the dwarfed shrubbery of Cohasset, of Scituate, of Marshfield, and of Plymouth." Here also the Second Massachusetts Heavy Artillery and the Fifty-fourth (colored) and Sixty-first Infantry Regiments were encamped.

Since 1867 the island has been used as a quarantine hospital, for infectious diseases,—the Quarantine Grounds lying between Gallop's and Deer Islands. Between 1866 and 1881 there were 765 persons placed here,



The Port Physician boarding an Inbound Ship.

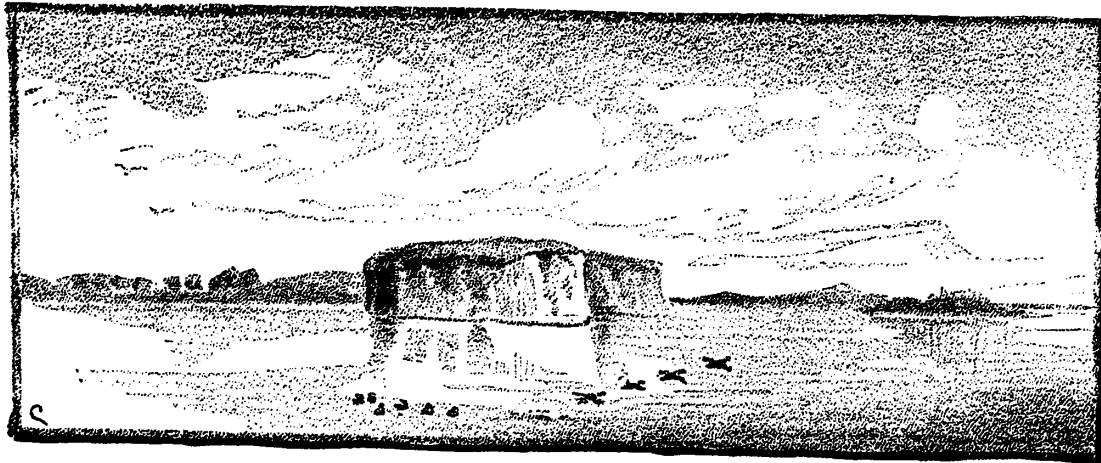
afflicted with dangerous contagious diseases, of whom 221 died. Most of these had small-pox or yellow-fever.

There are on the island two hospitals, a dwelling, and other buildings, all of which belong to the city of Boston. The appearance of the place is cheerful and bright, in spite of its mournful destination; and, if any thing could revive the poor sailors whose veins have been filled with fatal poison on the far Spanish Main, it would be the tender care and pure sweet air which awaits them on this cool northern islet. But the record of deaths shows that nothing avails to save, in many cases; and the yearly enlarging cemetery on the island bears witness that poor Jack finds here his last snug harbor, his long repose from a life of unutterable toil and hardship.

Nix's Mate is a large, gravelly shoal between Long Island and Gallop's Island, partly bare at low tide, and crowned by a singular and ominous-looking beacon, now perhaps eighty years old. It is a massive piece of copper-riveted masonry, 40 feet square and 12 feet high (with stairs on one side), upon whose top stands a black wooden pyramid, 20 feet high. As early as

1636 this locality was known as Nixes Island, when it was granted to John Gallop; and at a later day it divided with Bird Island the dishonor of being the place of execution for pirates, where the bones of these luckless seadogs were exposed in chains and on gibbets. Murderers and burglars were executed on the Common, or down on Boston Neck; but the people whose crimes were perpetrated on the ocean suffered the penalties of the law in sight of its accusing waters.

The usual form of the popular legend of this locality states that Capt. Nix was killed at sea, and that his mate was charged with the crime, and executed on this island, protesting his innocence, and prophesying that the place which witnessed his judicial murder would be washed away by the angry sea. This is certainly not historical, for the present name was applied



Nix's Mate Island, in 1700.

to the place two hundred and fifty years ago, at a time when no man had yet been executed in Massachusetts for murder or piracy. Another form of the legend states that Nix was a freebooter, who sailed into Boston in 1680, his ship well laden with treasures ravished from unarmed ships. Anchoring down the harbor, he and his mate went ashore on the island, on a dark night, and buried several bags of coin; after which, to keep the secret as close as possible, Nix murdered his companion, and buried him also. The continuation of the story is crowded with ghastly circumstances.

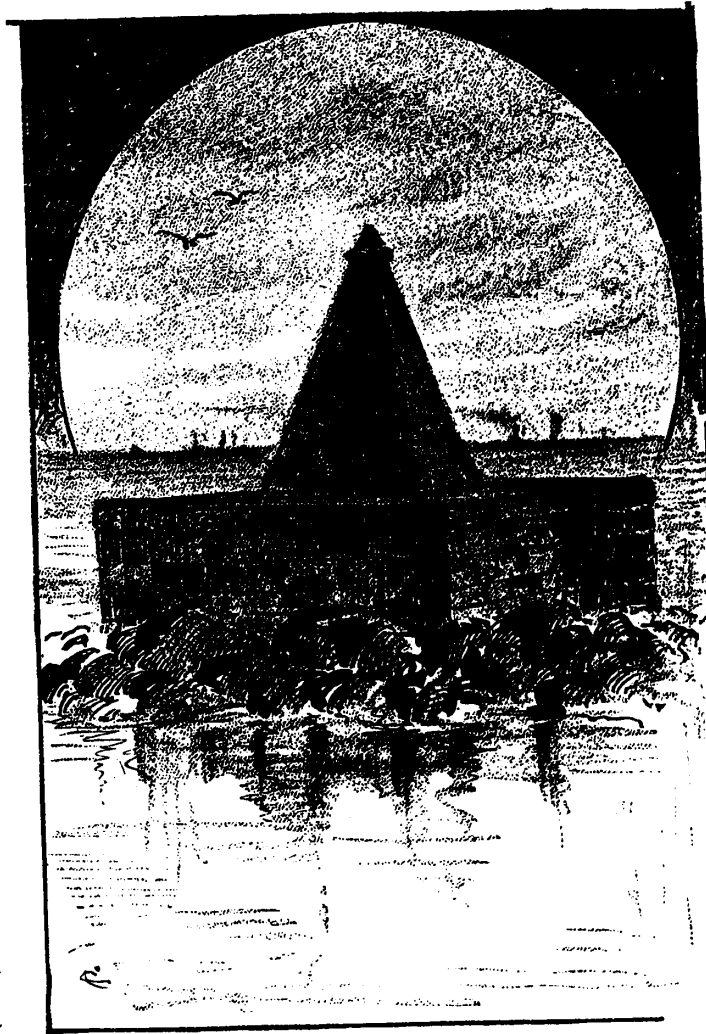
There are enough cases of this kind recorded in the sober annals of the colony, without need of invoking tradition. For upwards of a century Massachusetts Bay was infested with freebooters, who plundered passing vessels at will, and were sure of a short shrift and stern retribution when caught. So annoying were these scourges of the coast, that even Winthrop's *Blessing of the Bay*, the first vessel built in the colony, was armed and sent out as a cruiser against them. In 1689 Tom Pound and his ma-

rauding ship were captured by the Boston vessel *Mary*, after a fight, in which the commander of the latter was mortally wounded. Pound was executed, his indictment charging that he, "being under a red flag at the head of the mast, purposely and in defiance of their Majesties' authority, had wilfully and with malice aforethought committed murder and piracy upon the high seas, being instigated thereunto by the Devil." About the same

time Thomas Hawkins, a young man from one of the best Massachusetts families, was executed for the same crime, with nine of his comrades. Fifteen years later John Quelch and five of his men were brought up the Bay, condemned as pirates, escorted by 40 musketeers and two ministers to Bird Island, and there executed. The *News-Letter* said that "notwithstanding all the great labour and pains taken by the Reverend Ministers of the Town of *Boston*, ever since they were first Seized and brought to Town, both before and since their Trial and Condemnation, to instruct, admonish, preach, and pray for them; yet as they led a wicked and vitious life, so to appearance they dyed

very obdurately and impenitently, hardened in their sin. His Excellency intends to send an Express to *England*, with an Account of the whole matter to Her Majesty."

In 1717 Captain Bellamy cruised in the Bay with the formidable pirate-ship *Whidah*, of 23 guns. She was finally decoyed on to Wellfleet bar, and 102 of her crew were drowned. For a hundred years parts of this vessel frequently became visible at low tide, and coins from time to time washed ashore near by. Six of the crew, previously detached into a prize, were



Nix's Mate.

taken, and executed at Boston. Well into the eighteenth century the British war-vessel *Sea-Horse* was stationed here for years to repress piracy; and many a long cruise did she make against their haunts. In 1724 John Phillips was the most notorious sea-robber in these waters; but, having impressed some unwilling young men into his service, they revolted, on good opportunity, killed their chief, and carried the vessel into Boston, where certain impenitent men of the crew were hung in gibbets on Bird Island, on whose gloomy shores many a jolly Jack the Rover had preceded them.

A famous sufferer on Nix's Mate was William Fly, who headed the crew of the *Elizabeth* in a mutiny, while on a voyage from Jamaica to Guinea, and threw overboard the captain and mate. Afterwards they changed the name of their vessel to *Fame's Revenge*, and embarked on a piratical cruise along the American coast. But their prisoners rose upon them, placed Fly and three of his men in irons, and ran the *Fame's Revenge* into Boston, where the unfortunate buccaneers were executed. Fly was hung in irons, on Nix's Mate, over the graves of his confederates; and here his bones shook and rattled in the sea-air for many months, as a grim warning to all mariners. The *Boston News-Letter* reported that Fly "advised Masters of Vessels not to be Severe and Barbarous to their Men, which might be a reason why so many turn'd Pirates; the other Two seem'd Penitent, beg'd that others might be warned by 'em."

The Boston merchantmen of those days were hard fellows to tackle. In 1748 Colonel Quincy's ship *Bethell*, 20 guns, bound for the Mediterranean, encountered a Spanish treasure-ship, which surrendered directly, fancying that its antagonist was an English sloop-of-war. The bold Captain Freeman had doubled his crew by dressing up dummies and handspikes with extra coats and hats. The *Bethell* and her prize sailed up Boston Harbor in triumph, and 161 chests of silver and 2 chests of gold were removed from the latter to Colonel Quincy's house. When such well-armed merchantmen fell into the hands of their mutinous crews, they became formidable scourges to commerce. As late as the year 1772, there are notices of pirates on the coast; and Col. Pierce's diary in that year says, "Nov. 22. The Pirates take a schooner and killed the hands."

A writer in the "Memorial History of Boston" resents Lord Macaulay's charge that there were many "old buccaneers living in comfort and credit at New York and Boston." But there were certainly many queer maritime characters in the little colony, such as those of whom Lowell speaks, "Retired sea-captains (true brothers of Chaucer's Ship-man), whose exploits had kindled the imagination of Burke, added a not unpleasant savor of salt to society. They belonged to the old school of Gilbert, Hawkins, Frobisher, and Drake, parcel-soldiers all of them, who had commanded armed ships, and had tales to tell of gallant fights with privateers or pirates, truest repre-

sentatives of those Vikings, who, if trade in lumber or peltry was dull, would make themselves Dukes of Dublin or Earls of Orkney."

Among the wild rovers of those days was Captain Cromwell, a poor vagabond of a common sailor about Boston in 1636; but ten years later, under a dubious license from Lord Warwick, he captured a fleet of Spanish ships, and brought the whole array into Plymouth, and then to Boston, where honest old Bradford averred that "he scattered a great deal of money, and yet more sin, I fear." He slew one of his men in the street with a rapier-thrust; presented a rich sedan-chair to Governor Winthrop; and then fared away on a three-years' cruise, in which he captured many prizes. Then he returned, to become a solid man of Boston, and presented to the town six great bells, doubtless originally intended for some Spanish-American convent. Between these fearless sea-kings and the freebooters whose bones rattled above Nix's Mate there was a world-wide difference, to be sure. Captain Kidd had been brought into Boston, a captive, and sent thence to London, to be put to death; but the fame of his exploits and gains led many an honest sailor astray, and led him to a dreary death on this surf-beaten shore.

A hundred years ago the island was large enough to be used for pasturing sheep, and its chief bluff bore the name of North-End Point. It is certainly a strange coincidence that Nix's and Bird, the two gibbet-bearers,

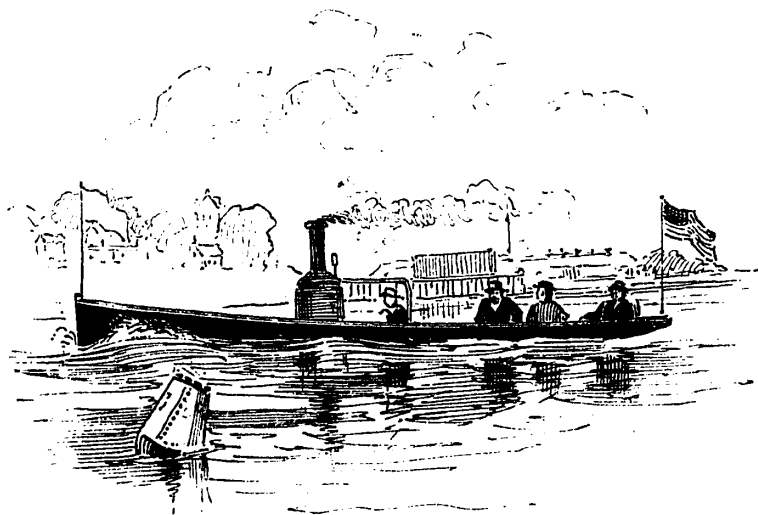
are the only islands in the harbor to be washed away and blotted out, as if

Lovell's Island and the Brewsters, from Gallop's Island.



kindly Nature refused to endure their presence. A curving shoal runs half a mile south-westward from the Nix's Mate beacon, and would be the most dangerous point in the Bay, were it not for the high black pyramid.

The beacon was erected under the auspices, and at the suggestion, of the Boston Marine Society, and formed the theme of many communications between that organization and the National Government. One of our cuts shows the island as it appeared many years ago, before the last of the aborigines had vanished from the scene. The approximate date when the last Massachusee canoe disappeared cannot be found; but in 1853 Edward Everett narrated the following incident, which is at least *ben trovato*: "A few days ago, as I saw in the newspapers, two light birch-bark canoes appeared in Boston Harbor, containing each a solitary Indian. They seemed as they approached to gaze in silent wonder at the city of the triple hills, rising street above street, and crowned with the dome of the State House, and at the long line of villas stretching far into the background; at the numerous tall vessels outward bound, as they dropped down the channel, and spread their broad wings to the breeze, and those which were returning weather-beaten from the ends of the earth; at the steamers dashing in every direction across the harbor, breathing volumes of smoke from their fiery lungs. They paddled their frail barks with dexterity and speed through this strange, busy, and to them, no doubt, bewildering scene; and having made the circuit of East Boston, the Navy Yard, the city itself, and South Boston, dropped down with the current, and disappeared among the islands."



The Port Physician going out.