

must make your fulcrum of solid beef and pudding; an abstract idea will do for Jonathan.

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\* \* TO THE INDULGENT READER.

My friend, the Reverend Mr. Wilbur, having been seized with a dangerous fit of illness, before this Introduction had passed through the press, and being incapacitated for all literary exertion, sent to me his notes, memoranda, &c., and requested me to fashion them into some shape more fitting for the general eye. This, owing to the fragmentary and disjointed state of his manuscripts, I have felt wholly unable to do; yet, being unwilling that the reader should be deprived of such parts of his lucubrations as seemed more finished, and not well discerning how to segregate these from the rest, I have concluded to send them all to the press precisely as they are.

COLUMBUS NYE, *Pastor of a Church in Bungtown Corner.*

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It remains to speak of the Yankee dialect. And, first, it may be premised, in a general way, that any one much read in the writings of the early colonists need not be told that the far greater share of the words and phrases now esteemed peculiar to New England, and local there, were brought from the mother-country. A person familiar with the dialect of certain portions of Massachusetts will not

fail to recognise, in ordinary discourse, many words now noted in English vocabularies as archaic, the greater part of which were in common use about the time of the King James translation of the Bible. Shakspeare stands less in need of a glossary to most New Englanders than to many a native of the Old Country. The peculiarities of our speech, however, are rapidly wearing out. As there is no country where reading is so universal and newspapers are so multitudinous, so no phrase remains long local, but is transplanted in the mail-bags to every remotest corner of the land. Consequently our dialect approaches nearer to uniformity than that of any other nation.

The English have complained of us for coining new words. Many of those so stigmatized were old ones by them forgotten, and all make now an unquestioned part of the currency, wherever English is spoken. Undoubtedly, we have a right to make new words, as they are needed by the fresh aspects under which life presents itself here in the New World; and, indeed, wherever a language is alive, it grows. It might be questioned whether we could not establish a stronger title to the ownership of the English tongue than the mother-landers

themselves. Here, past all question, is to be its great home and centre. And not only is it already spoken here by great numbers, but with a far higher popular average of correctness, than in Britain. The great writers of it, too, we might claim as ours, were ownership to be settled by the number of readers and lovers.

As regards the provincialisms to be met with in this volume, I may say that the reader will not find one which is not (as I believe) either native or imported with the early settlers, nor one which I have not, with my own ears, heard in familiar use. In the metrical portion of the book, I have endeavoured to adapt the spelling as nearly as possible to the ordinary mode of pronunciation. Let the reader who deems me over-particular remember this caution of Martial :—

*“ Quem recitas, meus est, O Fidentine, libellus ;  
Sed male cum recitas, incipit esse tuus.”*

A few further explanatory remarks will not be impertinent.

I shall barely lay down a few general rules for the reader's guidance.

1. The genuine Yankee never gives the rough sound to the *r* when he can help it, and often

displays considerable ingenuity in avoiding it even before a vowel.

2. He seldom sounds the final *g*, a piece of self-denial, if we consider his partiality for nasals. The same of the final *d*, as *han'* and *stan'* for *hand* and *stand*.

3. The *h* in such words as *while*, *when*, *where*, he omits altogether.

4. In regard to *a*, he shows some inconsistency, sometimes giving a close and obscure sound, as *hev* for *have*, *hendy* for *handy*, *ez* for *as*, *thet* for *that*, and again giving it the broad sound it has in *father*, as *hânsome* for *handsome*.

5. To the sound *ou* he prefixes an *e* (hard to exemplify otherwise than orally).

The following passage in Shakspeare he would recite thus :—

“ Neow is the winta uv eour discontent  
 Med glorious summa by this sun o' Yock,  
 An' all the cleouds thet leowered upun eour heouse  
 In the deep buzzum o' the oshin buried ;  
 Neow air eour breows beound 'ith victorious wreaths ;  
 Eour breused arms hung up fer monimunce ;  
 Eour starn alarums chänged to merry meetins,  
 Eour dreffle marches to delightful measures.  
 Grim-visaged war heth smeuthed his wrinkled front,  
 An' neow, instid o' mountin' barebid steeds  
 To fright the souls o' ferfle edverseries,

He capers nimly in a lady's chämber,  
To the lascivious pleasin' uv a loot."

6. *Au*, in such words as *daughter* and *slaughter*, he pronounces *ah*.

7. To the dish thus seasoned add a drawl *ad libitum*.

[Mr. Wilbur's notes here become entirely fragmentary.—C.N.]

a. Unable to procure a likeness of Mr. Biglow, I thought the curious reader might be gratified with a sight of the editorial effigies. And here a choice between two was offered,—the one a profile (entirely black) cut by Doyle, the other a portrait painted by a native artist of much promise. The first of these seemed wanting in expression, and in the second a slight obliquity of the visual organs has been heightened (perhaps from an over-desire of force on the part of the artist) into too close an approach to actual *strabismus*. This slight divergence in my optical apparatus from the ordinary model—however I may have been taught to regard it in the light of a mercy rather than a cross, since it enabled me to give as much of directness and personal application to my discourses as met the

wants of my congregation, without risk of offending any by being supposed to have him or her in my eye (as the saying is)—seemed yet to Mrs. Wilbur a sufficient objection to the engraving of the aforesaid painting. We read of many who either absolutely refused to allow the copying of their features, as especially did Plotinus and Agesilaus among the ancients, not to mention the more modern instances of Scioppius Palæottus, Pinellus, Velserus, Gataker, and others, or were indifferent thereto, as Cromwell.

β. Yet was Cæsar desirous of concealing his baldness. *Per contra*, my Lord Protector's carefulness in the matter of his wart might be cited. Men generally more desirous of being *improved* in their portraits than characters. Shall probably find very unflattered likenesses of ourselves in Recording Angel's gallery.

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γ. Whether any of our national peculiarities may be traced to our use of stoves, as a certain closeness of the lips in pronunciation, and a smothered smoulderingness of disposition, seldom roused to open flame? An unrestrained intercourse with

fire probably conducive to generosity and hospitality of soul. Ancient Mexicans used stoves, as the friar Augustin Ruiz reports, Hakluyt, III., 468,—but Popish priests not always reliable authority.

To-day picked my Isabella grapes. Crop injured by attacks of rose-bug in the spring. Whether Noah was justifiable in preserving this class of insects?

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δ. Concerning Mr. Biglow's pedigree. Tolerably certain that there was never a poet among his ancestors. An ordination hymn attributed to a maternal uncle, but perhaps a sort of production not demanding the creative faculty.

His grandfather a painter of the grandiose or Michael Angelo school. Seldom painted objects smaller than houses or barns, and these with uncommon expression.

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ε. Of the Wilburs no complete pedigree. The crest said to be a *wild boar*, whence, perhaps, the

name. (?) A connection with the Earls of Wilbraham (*quasi* wild boar ham) might be made out. This suggestion worth following up. In 1677, John W. m. Expect —, had issue, 1. John, 2. Haggai, 3. Expect, 4. Ruhamah, 5. Desire.

“Hear lyes y<sup>e</sup> bodye of Mrs Expect Wilber,  
Y<sup>e</sup> crewell salvages they kil'd her  
Together w<sup>th</sup> other Christian soles eleaven,  
October y<sup>e</sup> ix daye, 1707.  
Y<sup>e</sup> stream of Jordan sh' as crost ore  
And now expects me'on y<sup>e</sup> other shore :  
I live in hope her soon to join ;  
Her earthlye yeeres were forty and nine.”

*From Gravestone in Pekussett, North Parish.*

This is unquestionably the same John who afterward (1711) married Tabitha Hagg or Ragg.

But if this were the case, she seems to have died early ; for only three years after, namely, 1714, we have evidence that he married Winifred, daughter of Lieutenant Tipping.

He seems to have been a man of substance, for we find him in 1696 conveying “one undivided eightieth part of a salt-meadow” in Yabbok, and he commanded a sloop in 1702.

Those who doubt the importance of genealogical studies *fuste potius quam argumento erudiendi*.



I trace him as far as 1723, and there lose him.  
In that year he was chosen selectman.

No gravestone. Perhaps overthrown when new  
hearse-house was built, 1802.

He was probably the son of John, who came  
from Bilham Comit. Salop. circa 1642.

This first John was a man of considerable impor-  
tance, being twice mentioned with the honourable  
prefix of *Mr.* in the town records. Name spelt  
with two *l*-s.

“ Hear lyeth y<sup>e</sup> bod [*stone unhappily broken.*]  
Mr. Ihon Willber [Esq.] [*I inclose this in brackets as  
doubtful. To me it seems clear.*]  
Ob’t die [*illegible ; looks like xviii.*] . . . iii [*prob. 1693.*]  
. . . . . paynt  
. . . . . diseased seinte :  
A friend and [fath]er untoe all y<sup>e</sup> opreast,  
Hee gave y<sup>e</sup> wicked familists noe reast,  
When Sat[an bl]ewe his Antinomian blaste,  
Wee clong to [Willber as a steadf]ast maste.  
[A]gaynst y<sup>e</sup> horrid Qua[kers] . . . . .”

It is greatly to be lamented that this curious  
epitaph is mutilated. It is said that the sacrilegious  
British soldiers made a target of this stone during  
the war of Independence. How odious an ani-  
mosity which pauses not at the grave! How  
brutal that which spares not the monuments of

authentic history! This is not improbably from the pen of Rev. Moody Pyram, who is mentioned by Hubbard as having been noted for a silver vein of poetry. If his papers be still extant, a copy might possibly be recovered.