

THE LATIN QUARTER OF THE UNITED STATES

By ELEANOR KELLOGG
Drawing by Jefferson Machamer

TO MOST people Cape Cod means cod. And cod, naturally enough, means fishing, fishermen and fishing villages. Cape Cod in fiction is represented much as the old home farm is on the stage—an idyllic place with no particular resemblance to the real thing. There are fishermen to catch the cod—picturesque persons in oilskins and rubber boots, with long beards and a propensity for telling tall tales, once their catch is landed. There are paintable fishing smacks with the sunlight slanting on their sails (for if you are going to think about fishing smacks you might as well have the sunshine right). There are villages of gabled cottages draped with fish nets. There are inhibitions and nautical terms.

No one can be blamed for holding this picture of Cape Cod, the sickle-like peninsula which juts out so sharply from the lower part of Massachusetts, for the natives of the Cape are among the most active in spreading it abroad. Step into the elaborate drug store of Hyannis, the metropolis of the Cape, and see the souvenir postcards depicting four old salts with their heads together. Step into one of the Cape's innumerable gift shops—always spelled "shoppe"—and glance at the elaborately illustrated books about Cape Cod, with their pictures of old salts and gabled cottages draped with fish nets. Disguise yourself as a motor tourist and ask anybody you can find on the Cape who isn't another motor tourist. Yes, for publicity purposes Cape Cod is always represented as a quaint place, full of old sea captains and history and, of course, cod.

And one cannot blame the Cape Codders, for a generation ago the Cape really was that sort of place, as the stories of the oldtimers and the reference books in the public library alike bear witness. Until tourists became more profitable, the Cape lived by fishing and trading. Everything from cod to whales abounded in the sparkling waters where now the summer colonists gambol, careless and unstockinged. In the days of the clipper ships there were plenty of sea captains on Cape Cod, and they went as far as San Francisco and Australia and the furthest of the Far East.

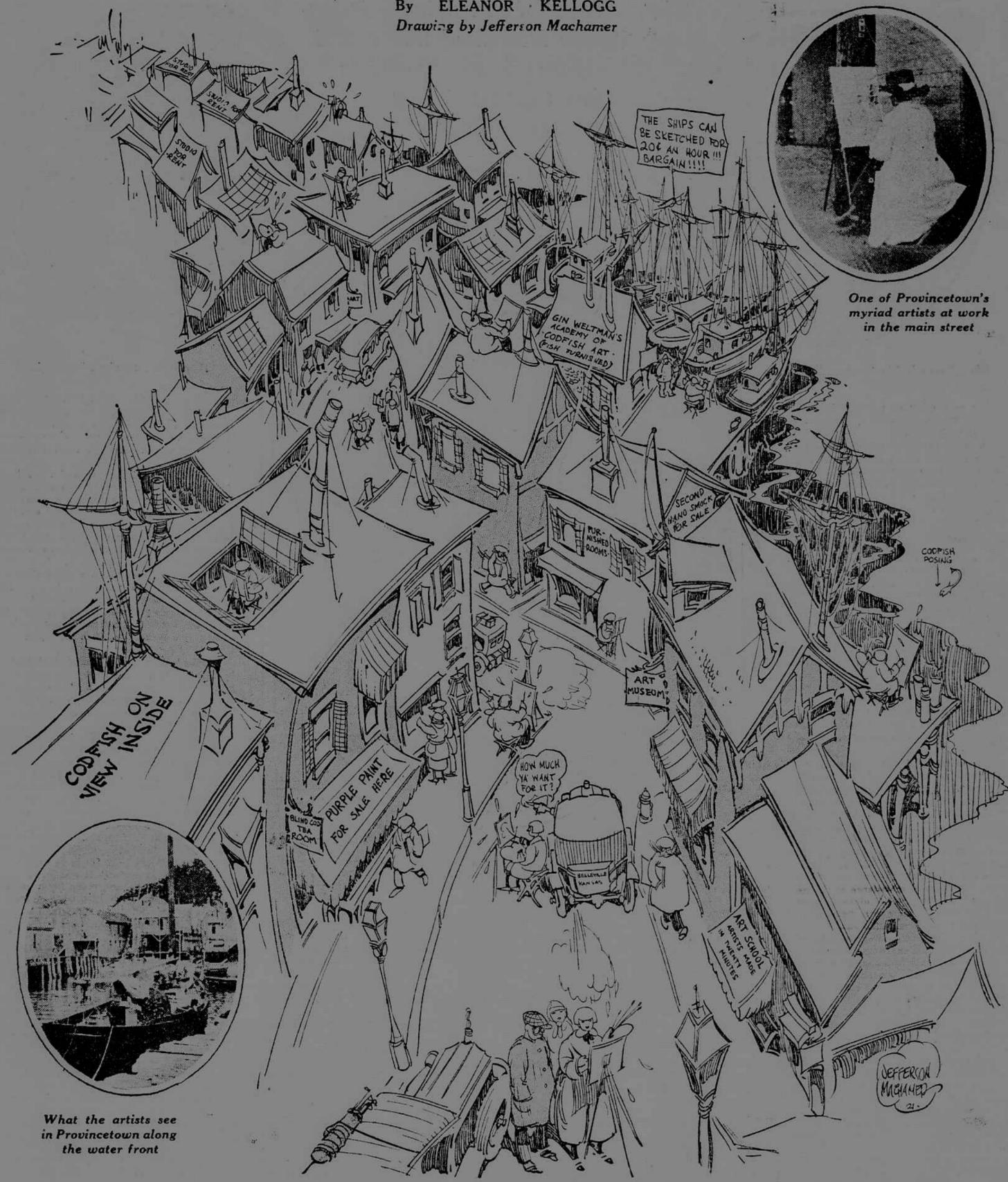
The wharves that are now occupied chiefly by working artists and the masters of sight-seeing yachts, bustling with activity in those days. Wellfleet, Truro and Provincetown were noted then as maritime centers and even Wood's Hole, which is now completely overwhelmed by the visiting biologists and the summer colonists of Penzance (nothing is said about the pirates), was famed for whaling and the building of ships.

Whether the seagoing life of the Cape ended before the tourists came is a moot question, but one might hazard a guess that the final blow was dealt by the flivver. At any rate, the tourists are now in full possession. There still is fishing, but the first families no longer fish. Those who have not moved away take summer boarders. The fishing smacks at Provincetown, where the smell of fish is the strongest of any place on the Cape, are manned by swarthy Portuguese, whose offspring are meanwhile serving as models to the visiting artists. To-day the income of the Cape is drawn from gift shops, tearooms, inns, garages, summer boarders and cranberries—and the cranberry funds are not in the majority.

The Bookworm and I have just finished our second annual tramping expedition on Cape Cod. We call it tramping by courtesy, but it really consists in getting picked up in the flivvers and other roadcraft of the native Cape Codders and inducing the drivers to talk.

Our first summer was a shock. We picked out Cape Cod partly because we had just seen a motion picture dealing with fishermen's life and imagined the Cape must be like that, and partly because of the romantic fiction we had read somewhere in our respective youths. But this year we knew what to expect, and, being used to its incongruities, we found the Cape thoroughly delightful. It is a distinct advantage to tramp through a countryside which blooms with tea rooms and postcards as well as with clam chowder, and where almost every one takes lodgers. And when, in addition, this countryside looks quite as picturesque as one had imagined, what more could the hardened city dweller desire?

Impeccable asphalt roads run the length and breadth of the peninsula, bearing the traveler to Provincetown, the glory hole; to Hyannis, the metropolis of the Cape, and to Mashpee, the dark spot. There are miles of invigorating country, with raspberries and blueberries and all sorts of eatables running around wild. There are towns of white cottages with sea-green shutters and silver door-knobs and inviting old-time gardens. There are miles of wharves and colonies of boats. There is—now and then—a smell of fish. And



What the artists see in Provincetown along the water front

always there is the sea, beating against the base of the cliffs as at Highland, retreating over desolate salt marshes as at Wellfleet, and continually lapping at the most delectable of bathing beaches.

And if one insists upon fleeing the maddening tea room he or she can do that. There are still unfrequented roads through the woods of scrubby pine. There are still New England housewives, the daughters of sea captains, who supply the visitor with homemade bread and blueberry pie and cream that is really cream—al at a marvelously low price. There are even—I reiterate—fishermen and fishing smacks and cod.

But the Cape is greatly changed. Nobody denies that, least of all the old sailor if he does not suspect that you are a motor tourist. Cape Cod to-day is no longer a region of motion picture fishing villages, but is the summer playground of college professors and Cleveland millionaires and all sorts of persons. An endless procession of motor tourists burns up the impeccable asphalt roads. An endless array of artists lines the streets of Provincetown, painting pictures in dooryards while the motor tourists rush by and buy paintings on the rush.

The charming cottages with the sea-green shutters and silver door-knobs are there, but many of them have become Blue Gables or The Sign of the Fir, whence tea or Russian crash or hand-painted salt-cellars are dispensed to a curio-loving public.

There are whole towns made up of the summer people, particularly along the sheltered southern shore of the Cape, where the water is warm. Wianno is reputed by the natives to be "the richest summer colony in the world" for its size, but Hyannisport and Falmouth Heights and Penzance all look the part. Provincetown doubles its population in summer, we were told. Cotuit bulges with summer boarders.

As for the harbors from which the fishing fleets and trading schooners used to set sail, they are given over in great part to the yachts and yawls of the summer colonists. There

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are fishing smacks at Provincetown, but there are as many artists painting them as there are smacks to be painted. They gather oysters at Cotuit, but there are almost as many summer visitors as there are oysters. The wharves at Wellfleet are deserted, but the town's two inns, one hotel and various boarding houses are well peopled.

One can approach Cape Cod in two ways—at the beginning or at the end. To begin at the beginning one goes overland, by train, motor or foot power, starting from Buzzards Bay or Woods Hole. To begin at the end one takes the boat from Boston to Provincetown. Provincetown really should be the climax of the journey, partly because it is at the tip end of the Cape and partly because the climax is the point at which one turns around and heads for home again. But the Bookworm and I already knew something of Cape Cod, and so this summer we plunged right into the climax—Provincetown.

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It has many things that are not found elsewhere, including cornhusk mattresses.

Approaching that long, low coast, with its three lighthouses, the first thing one sees is the Pilgrim Monument; the second is the bobbed hair.

Provincetown's main street which isn't Main Street (but which is Commercial Street) is the eighth wonder of the age as far as traffic conditions go. It is about as wide as a good-sized alley and is bounded on one side—not always the same side—by a sidewalk on which fat persons are emphatically de trop. Up and down the devious length of this thoroughfare—and it is miles long with more curves than a corkscrew—chortle and honk huge sight-seeing jitneys which go from one end of town to the other, always at top speed. When jitney meets jitney pedestrians take to the shops and the wharves.

Commercial Street is most of Provincetown. There is a hinterland of little tangled alleys in the rear, but everybody who is anybody lives on Commercial Street—lives, walks, rides, paints, loaf and sightsees on this narrow and precarious roadway.

On Commercial Street, too, are the artists. One cannot go half a dozen steps without coming upon a lady of uncertain age, wearing a

smock and a shade hat, sitting before an easel in the dusty road and painting purple trees and yellow church steeples. There are more artists on the wharves and still more in the restaurants, while in the vicinity of the art schools one counts them by the cluster. In fact, the Bookworm and I, with a camera and only one bobbed head between us, were besieged by small boys inquiring whether we didn't want a model.

The procession of artists bent on the daily grind starts out early in the morning. By 9 o'clock the street is full of people with paint kits and easels, going out to look for a suitable spot. By 10 the suitable spot has been found, the easels set up and the purple paint is going on the canvas. By 11 the motor tourists are searching by. By 12 the artists are eating clam chowder and carefully refraining from talking shop. By 1 they have returned to the suitable spot. And so the day passes.

In Provincetown not every house is a gift shop or tearoom. Some are art shops. Some are art schools. Some are art clubs. Some are art exhibition rooms. Some are art museums. All the others take lodgers or have rooms to let.

There is art in the town hall and art in the postoffice. The sixth annual costume ball, which included a bullfight and other features not known even to Washington Square, is only an instance of what goes on in the square-steepled town hall (which seems to have nothing particularly to do with the town). As for the postoffice, it boasts a bulletin board which would make that of any Greenwich Village shop or club turn purple with envy. Instead of the ordinary lost and found notices and civil service announcements, one finds on it the notices of six sorts of art exhibitions, including wood block prints and "monotypes," an announcement of the costume ball given by the Provincetown Art Association, cards of eight or ten tearooms, and so on. In addition the curious are given such tidbits as the following: "Stop at the Provincetown Art Shop for home-made candies." "For sale, cook stove and outdoor sketching easel." "Young

Danish artist wishes to give piano lessons. Doesn't speak English very well."

Whatever of Provincetown does not center on Commercial Street overflows to the wharves. The artists sketch there, of course. The train comes in on a pier. Sightseeing busses go out from the pier. The local board of trade is built on a pier and has every appearance of a yacht club. The stalls along the main pier sell anything from clam chowder to tonic. "Tonic," by the way, is New England for pop, cream soda, ginger ale, near beer and almost anything else that comes in a bottle. To the pier come visiting sailors, summer colonists, Portuguese art models and all the philosophic veterans who in any other town would be loafing around the corner drug store. The reason probably is that Provincetown has no corners.

Provincetown's nose is out of joint this summer because of the Pilgrim Tercentenary at Plymouth. The two towns are deadly rivals in this matter of the Pilgrims, and last year Provincetown had a Pilgrim Tercentenary of its own. It seems that the Pilgrims landed on Cape Cod before they ever saw Plymouth and spent a month wandering around its intricate coast. But the important thing is that they went away again.

Not all the residents of Provincetown are artists or renters of rooms to artists, though the summer visitor may find it hard to credit this statement. There are old settlers here, too, but they are difficult to find. The Bookworm and I discovered one quite accidentally—not in Provincetown. And this kindly soul let us in on the secret that in summer when the artists move in the first families of Provincetown move out. Some of them spend the hectic months in the seaside cottages that border the road between Provincetown and the outer world, while others flee to the lower part of the Cape for peace and seclusion. This fact is not advertised around Provincetown, but, anyhow, out they go.

Seven miles down the Cape from Provincetown is Highland, site of the perfect summer resort and also of the Cape's greatest tragedy. Here on a cliff ninety feet above the sea is Highland Light, second largest light on the Atlantic Coast. Dozens of summer cottages dot the bare, rolling upland at the base of the lighthouse, while below a white, sandy beach stretches for miles. There are a hotel and a golf course and a camp ground for motor tourists, but the real attractions at Highland are the winey air that sweeps over the hills and the far glimpses of limitless blue sea.

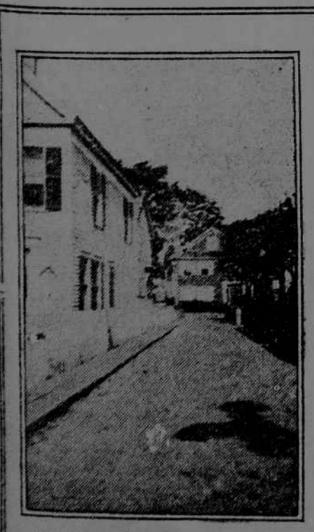
As for the tragedy, though not ending fatally it is a profoundly moving story. It concerns Bill, one of the keeper of the light and incidentally one of the guides to the hundreds of tourists who flock to the lighthouse. Bill, according to his own version of the affair, formerly worked on a railroad. He used to be a conductor, and he necessarily came in contact with a great many people. In fact, there never was a time when he did not have people around, and Bill grew weary of his kind. Looking about for a more desirable occupation, he hit upon lighthouse keeping as the perfect job for a man who wanted solitude. And it just happened—such things do happen—that instead of the lonely spot he hoped for Bill drew Highland, one of the most frequented spots of the greatly frequented Cape. Every motor car going to or from Provincetown stops there, and in addition busses from two or three rival companies make the trip daily from Provincetown. And Bill's life now is one long business of guiding flappers up the narrow, uneasy stairs of the lighthouse and explaining to them what it is that makes the wheels go round. Bill is bearing up under it, but he feels that fate has not dealt fairly with him.

If Provincetown is the Cape's glory hole and Mashpee is its dark spot, Hyannis is assuredly the metropolis. In Hyannis virtually every house is a gift shop. Sophisticated, genial and expensive, this town, with its comfortable architecture and its wide, tree-shaded streets, is a place to make the heart of the motor tourist do all sorts of acrobatics.

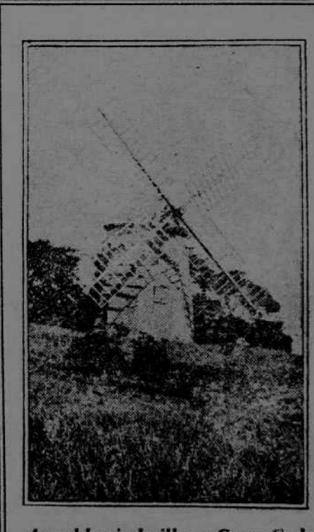
Main Street in Hyannis (if that is really its name) is one continuous showcase. "Real" antiques intermingled with hand-painted tables of the most approved gift shop pattern dot the lawns of this thoroughfare. Copper vases and firetrugs guard the approach to the shops themselves, while cloth dolls, windmills, sport hats and anything else that will hang are suspended from impromptu rafters built out over the porches.

In Greenwich Village they make their barns into studios, but in Hyannis they turn them into gift shops, and French laces and Madeira

(Continued on page twelve)



Off the main street it is quiet



An old windmill on Cape Cod