

Feb. 14. Spoke on the subject of the late deaths. For three weeks there have been three in each week.

Feb. 28. It is a solemn and distressing time with us. There were seventeen deaths in Mattapoisett in November and December; and in January and February the same number, seventeen.

Mar. 6. There have been four deaths this week.

Mar. 28. At evening had a meeting of prayer and humiliation in the meetinghouse in view of the divine judgments upon us. Oh that we may find help!

Apr. 2. We have new cases. The disease is evidently contagious.

Apr. 10. Two physicians are here from Bedford.

On September 28, 1815, there occurred a great gale, followed by a heavy tide on the Buzzard's Bay shores, which did much damage to all the towns of the region and came to be known as the "September Hurricane." Of this storm it is said:

"The total loss in Rochester is stated at \$50,000. The tide there rose fourteen feet above low water mark, and four feet higher than ever known there before; the ordinary tides being about six feet. Vessels floated from the stocks, rope walks, stores and houses were destroyed and a great amount of salt lost."

In Mattapoisett the meeting-house at Hammondtown was partly destroyed, and had to be taken down. The Bethuel Landers house, now occupied as a summer cottage by J. Lewis Stackpole, Jr., was taken from its foundations, turned around in the street, and the occupants were removed in boats.

The damage to the salt industry was far more than was

occasioned by the loss of the salt merely. The works themselves were largely swept away by the tide and the high winds.

Some of the anecdotes relating to this gale that have been preserved are as follows:

“A salt house from Sippican, partly filled with salt, held its position till the tide had risen nearly to the roof, when it was upset and floated across the bay. Its ruins were found in the woods at Wareham.”

“Another lot of salt works floated several miles unbroken, but landed on a craggy shore and fell to pieces on the rocks. The salt house, however, settled on some stones that held it in perfect shape, and it was later launched like a vessel and carried back to the original position. The place where it was grounded was about nine feet above the level of common high tides.”

☞ Theophilus Pease, of Rochester, aged seventy-three, having repaired to a small island at Mattapoisett during the gale, to preserve some hay, soon saw his dangerous situation. Having a pitchfork in his hand, and a line in his pocket, he lashed the fork across the limbs of a tree, which he selected, and stood upon it about six hours, partly in the water, until the tide ebbed. There were only three or four trees on the island, all of which were carried away by the flood, but the one he selected; a remarkable instance of preservation.”

“A store containing West India goods, situated at Great Neck, was floated entire to Wareham, perhaps a mile, where it remained with its goods in perfect preservation.”

From an article in the Massachusetts Historical Collections, by Rev. Ezra S. Goodwin, of Sandwich, some

further knowledge of this great storm and its effects may be gathered, as follows:

The injury in Buzzard's Bay was much greater than in Vineyard Sound. The highest water in Buzzards Bay occurred about 11 h. 40 min., three hours later than at Barnstable Bay.

Coasting vessels were scattered about, and mostly driven high on shore. Some of them floated into the forest. One lodged among the trees in an upright position and was later relaunched.

The spray while the tide was rising resembled a driving snowstorm. Grass was entirely killed, not a green blade to be seen. The leaves of the trees appeared as if they had been scorched. Several cedar swamps perished from the salt water. Most of the bushes perished also, but one or two species of laurel, the common bayberry and some swamp whortleberries survived. Winter rye had been sown in August. Rye was resown in some of the fields but the original crop had perished.

The wells and watering places for cattle were filled with sea-water, and fresh water was a thing of price.

Little rain had fallen for some time, and the soil was very dry. Much of the salt water therefore penetrated the earth and saturated it with the salt, which also crystallized along the shore.

Some wells near the sea had formerly risen and fallen with the tide and yet remained fresh. They now changed their habit. The water remained at a fixed height and was also salt. The saltness of the wells continued till November. After the snow of winter dissolved the salt wells became fresh. The freshness came back suddenly.

After a time of dry weather they grew salt again, but not so bad as before. Some did not wholly recover until the spring of 1818.

There was a curious and lasting effect on the land. In 1816 some of the overflowed fields were planted with oats and had a larger crop than ever before. Indian corn also flourished, planted as a spring crop. The salt seems to have acted in some cases like a manure. But in 1817 clover decreased and in 1818 almost disappeared. Mosses also were destroyed, and wild grass came in where the cultivated grass had been. Some good effects of the storm were seen, but not enough to compensate for the property destroyed.

In the middle years of the first half of the nineteenth century temperance matters were prominent all over the United States. A vigorous warfare was made against "New England rum" and other spirituous liquors, which heretofore had been in general use. A temperance crusade known as "The Washingtonian Movement" spread over the country, and total abstinence societies were everywhere formed.

In 1830 the town of Rochester sent a petition to the legislature to make a law authorizing the County Commissioners or the selectmen of the towns to license tavern keepers, giving them all the usual rights and duties of this office, except the right to sell spirituous liquors. A little later a second petition was presented, after an elaborate report (which is duly recorded in the town book) in which the town's committee grew eloquent in regard to "the wife's streaming eyes over her naked and supperless children," and declared that "Banking Corporations, Turnpike Roads, Canals, and even