

## WILLIAM WOOD

*New England's Prospect*

1635

*We know very little about William Wood, author of New England's Prospect, A True, Lively, and Experimentall Description of That Part of America, Commonly Called New England, a work that first appeared in 1634. Apparently he arrived in New England in 1629 and returned to England four years later. It is possible that he returned again to Massachusetts Bay, since the records of the province note the existence of a William Wood who lived in Saugus in 1635 and 1636, a William Wood who became a founder of Sandwich in 1637, and a William Wood who died in Concord about forty years later (in 1670 or 1671). Unlike the other promoters whose writing appears in this book it is impossible to link the author of this tract to any particular biographical details.*

*Whoever he was, the Wood who wrote New England's Prospect was a talented and literate observer of early Massachusetts. As had become a well-established custom among promoters by the early 1630s, Wood described the natural resources of the region in great detail. He even wrote poems about particular aspects of the regional flora and fauna; his verse about trees, which begins with "Trees both in hills and plains in plenty be, / The long-lived oak and mournful cypress tree," continues for twenty lines, extolling the qualities of particular species. His prose often included precise descriptions of the regional Indians, including the Pequots, Narragansetts, and Mohawks, and their customs and beliefs. These passages make New England's Prospect valuable because Wood, like Harriot and Smith, witnessed Indian practices in the years before widespread migration of colonists displaced coastal groups and before the Pequot War (1637), the most notable early conflict between Indians and colonists in New England. Though Wood apparently spent little time among Indians himself, he used a strategy common to writers of promotional materials about North America: he included the observations of others who had more experience. Fortunately for modern readers, Wood found ample detail about mundane aspects of*

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William Wood, *New England's Prospect*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977).

daily life, and his discussion of the lives of Indian women in New England has allowed us rare insight into gender roles among America's natives.

*Writing more in a descriptive than an overtly promotional tone, Wood seems to have been striving for a level of objective reportage in his account. His title page noted that the work intended to lay "downe that which may both enrich the knowledge of the mind-travelling Reader, or benefit the future Voyager." If this was the case, what impact could his description of Indians have had on the potential migrants to New England? In what ways do Wood's descriptions of America's peoples differ from those of Harriot? Do his accounts of the Indians' government, religion, and social customs seem realistic? What do his writings say about the roles of Indian men and women? What can we learn about early colonist-Indian relations from studying the "Small Nomenclator" that Wood appended to his work?*

### Of Their Wondering at the First View of Any Strange Invention

These Indians being strangers to arts and sciences, and being unacquainted with the inventions that are common to civilized people, are ravished with admiration at the first view of any such sight. They took the first ship they saw for a walking island, the mast to be a tree, the sail white clouds, and the discharging of ordnance<sup>1</sup> for lightning and thunder which did much trouble them, but this thunder being over and this moving-island steadied with an anchor, they manned out their canoes to go and pick strawberries there. But being saluted by the way with a broadside, they cried out, "What much hoggerly,<sup>2</sup> so big walk, and so big speak, and by and by kill"; which caused them to turn back, not daring to approach till they were sent for.

They do much extol and wonder at the English for their strange inventions, especially for a windmill which in their esteem was little less than the world's wonder, for the strangeness of his whisking motion and the sharp teeth biting the corn (as they term it) into such small pieces, they were loath at the first to come near to his long arms, or to abide in so tottering a tabernacle,<sup>3</sup> though now they dare go anywhere so far as they have an English guide. The first plowman was counted little better than a juggler: the Indians, seeing the plow tear up more ground in a day than

<sup>1</sup> Firearms.

<sup>2</sup> Hoggishness; i.e., brutishness.

<sup>3</sup> Dwelling.

their clamshells could scrape up in a month, desired to see the workmanship of it, and viewing well the coulter and share, perceiving it to be iron, told the plowman he was almost Abamacho,<sup>4</sup> almost as cunning as the Devil. But the fresh supplies of new and strange objects hath lessened their admiration and quickened their inventions and desire of practising such things as they see, wherein they express no small ingenuity and dexterity of wit, being neither furthered by art [n]or long experience.

It is thought they would soon learn any mechanical trades, having quick wits, understanding apprehensions, strong memories, with nimble inventions, and a quick hand in using of the ax or hatchet or such like tools. Much good might they receive from the English, and much might they benefit themselves, if they were not strong fettered in the chains of idleness; so as that they had rather starve than work, following no employments saving such as are sweetened with more pleasures and profit than pains or care, and this is indeed one of the greatest accusations that can be laid against them which lies but upon the men (the women being very industrious). But it may be hoped that good example and good instructions may bring them to a more industrious and provident course of life, for already, as they have learned much subtlety and cunning by bargaining with the English, so have they a little degenerated from some of their lazy customs and show themselves more industrious.

In a word, to set them out in their best colors, they be wise in their carriage, subtle in their dealings, true in their promise, honest in defraying of their debts, though poverty constrain them to be something long before. Some having died in the English debt had left beaver by order of will for their satisfaction. They be constant in friendship, merrily conceited<sup>5</sup> in discourse, not luxuriously abounding in youth nor dotingly forward in old age, many of them being much civilized since the English colonies were planted, though but little edified in religion. They frequent often the English churches where they will sit soberly, though they understand not such hidden mysteries. They do easily believe some of the history of the Bible, as the creation of the world, the making of man, with his fall. But come to tell them of a Saviour, with all the passages of the Gospel, and it exceeds so far their Indian belief that they will cry out "Pocatnie" (*id est*, is it possible?). Yet such is their conviction of the right way that when some English have come to their houses, victuals being offered them, forgetting to crave God's blessing upon the creatures received, they have been reproved by these which formerly never knew

<sup>4</sup> The devil.

<sup>5</sup> Intelligent or clever.

what calling upon God meant. Thus far for their natural disposition and qualities.

### Of Their Kings' Government and Subjects' Obedience

Nor for the matter of government amongst them. It is the custom for their kings to inherit, the son always taking the kingdom after his father's death. If there be no son, then the queen rules; if no queen, the next to the blood-royal.<sup>6</sup> Who comes in otherwise is but counted an usurping intruder, and if his fair carriage bear him not out the better, they will soon unsepter him.

The kings have not many laws to command by, nor have they any annual revenues; yet commonly are they so either feared or beloved that half their subjects' estate is at their service and their persons at his command, by which command he is better known than by anything else. For though he hath no kingly robes to make him glorious in the view of his subjects, nor daily guards to secure his person, or court-like attendance, nor sumptuous palaces, yet do they yield all submissive subjection to him, accounting him their sovereign, going at his command and coming at his beck, not so much as expostulating the cause though it be in matters thwarting their wills, he being accounted a disloyal subject that will not effect what his prince commands.

Whosoever is known to plot treason or to lay violent hands on his lawful king is presently executed. Once a year he takes his progress, accompanied with a dozen of his best subjects, to view his country, to recreate<sup>7</sup> himself, and establish good order. When he enters into any of their houses, without any more compliment he is desired to sit down on the ground (for they use neither stools nor cushions), and after a little respite all that be present come in and sit down by him, one of his seniors pronouncing an oration gratulatory to his majesty for his love and the many good things they enjoy under his peaceful government.

A king of large dominions hath his viceroys, or inferior kings, under him to agitate his state affairs and keep his subjects in good decorum. Other officers there be, but how to distinguish them by name is something difficult. For their laws, as their evil courses come short of many other nations', so they have not so many laws, though they be not without some which they inflict upon notorious malefactors, as traitors to their prince, inhumane murderers, and (some say) for adultery, but I cannot warrant it

<sup>6</sup> Many eastern woodlands Indians, including groups in New England, were matrilineal.

<sup>7</sup> Refresh or enliven.

for a truth. For theft, as they have nothing to steal worth the life of a man, therefore they have no law to execute for trivials, a subject being precious in the eye of his prince where men are so scarce. A malefactor having deserved death, being apprehended is brought before the king and some other of the wisest men, where they inquire out the original of a thing. After proceeding by aggravation of circumstances, he is found guilty, and being cast by the jury of their strict inquisition, he is condemned and executed on this manner: the executioner comes in, who blindfolds the party, sets him in the public view, and brains him with a tomahawk or club; which done, his friends bury him. Other means to restrain abuses they have none, saving admonition or reproof; no whippings, no prisons, stocks, bilboes,<sup>8</sup> or the like.

### Of Their Marriages

Now to speak something of their marriages. The kings or great powwows, alias conjurers, may have two or three wives but seldom use it, men of ordinary rank having but one; which disproves the report that they had eight or ten wives apiece. When a man hath a desire to marry, he first gets the good will of the maid or widow; after, the consent of her friends for her part. And for himself, if he be at his own disposing, if the king will, the match is made, her dowry of wampompeag<sup>9</sup> paid, the king joins their hands with their hearts, never to part till death unless she prove a whore, for which they may (and some have) put away their wives, as may appear by a story.

There was one Abamoeh married a wife, whom a long time he entirely loved above her deservings, for that she often in his absence entertained strangers, of which he was oftentimes informed by his neighbors. But he harboring no spark of jealousy, believed not their false informations (as he deemed them) being in a manner angry they should slander his wife, of whose constancy he was so strongly conceited.<sup>10</sup> A long time did her whorish glozing<sup>11</sup> and Siren-like tongue, with her subtle carriage, establish her in her husband's favor till fresh complaints caused him to cast about how to find out the truth and to prove his friends liars and his wife honest, or her a whore and his friends true. Whereupon he pretended a long journey to visit his friends, providing all accoutrements for a fortnight's journey, telling his wife it would be so long before she could expect his

<sup>8</sup> Iron bars with shackles for confining the feet.

<sup>9</sup> Wampum, originally small shells, later glass beads.

<sup>10</sup> Convinced.

<sup>11</sup> Flattery.

return, who outwardly sorrowed for his departure but inwardly rejoiced that she should enjoy the society of her old leman,<sup>12</sup> whom she sent for with expedition, not suspecting her husband's plot, who lay not many miles off in the woods; who, after their dishonest revelings, when they were in their midnight sleep, approaches the wigwam, enters the door, which was neither barred nor locked, makes a light to discover what he little suspected. But finding his friends' words to be true, he takes a good bastinado<sup>13</sup> in his hand, brought for the same purpose, dragging him by the hair from his usurped bed, so lamentably beating him that his battered bones and bruised flesh made him a fitter subject for some skillful surgeon than the lovely object of a lustful strumpet.<sup>14</sup> Which done, he put away his wife, exposing her to the courtesy of strangers for her maintenance, that so courtesan-like had entertained a stranger into her bosom.

### Of Their Worship, Invocations, and Conjurations

Now of their worships. As it is natural to all mortals to worship something, so do these people, but exactly to describe to whom their worship is chiefly bent is very difficult. They acknowledge especially two: Ketan who is their good god, to whom they sacrifice (as the ancient heathen did to Ceres)<sup>15</sup> after their garner<sup>16</sup> be full with a good crop; upon this god likewise they invoke for fair weather, for rain in time of drought, and for the recovery of their sick.

But if they do not hear them, then they verify the old verse, *flectere si nequeo superos, acharonta movebo*,<sup>17</sup> their powwows betaking themselves to their exorcisms and necromantic<sup>18</sup> charms by which they bring to pass strange things, if we may believe the Indians who report of one Passacon-away that he can make the water burn, the rocks move, the trees dance, metamorphise himself into a flaming man. But it may be objected, this is but *deceptio visus*.<sup>19</sup> He will therefore do more, for in winter, when there is no green leaves to be got, he will burn an old one to ashes, and putting those into the water produce a new green leaf which you shall not only see but substantially handle and carry away, and make of a dead snake's skin a

<sup>12</sup> Lover.

<sup>13</sup> A stick or staff.

<sup>14</sup> Prostitute.

<sup>15</sup> Roman goddess of agriculture.

<sup>16</sup> Storehouses used for grain.

<sup>17</sup> A passage from Vergil's *Aeneid* meaning "If I cannot sway the gods above, I'll stir up Hell." See Alden Vaughan's edition of Wood's *New England's Prospect*, 100, n. 45.

<sup>18</sup> Related to the telling of the future by communication with the dead.

<sup>19</sup> An illusion.

living snake, both to be seen, felt, and heard. This I write but on the report of the Indians, who constantly affirm stranger things.

But to make manifest that by God's permission, through the Devil's help, their charms are of force to produce effects of wonderment, an honest gentleman related a story to me, being an eyewitness of the same: a powwow having a patient with the stump of some small tree run through his foot, being past the cure of his ordinary surgery, betook himself to his charms, and being willing to show his miracle before the English stranger, he wrapped a piece of cloth about the foot of the lame man [and] upon that wrapping a beaver skin through which he—laying his mouth to the beaver skin—by his sucking charms he brought out the stump which he spat into a tray of water, returning the foot as whole as its fellow in a short time.

The manner of their action in their conjuration is thus: the parties that are sick or lame being brought before them, the powwow sitting down, the rest of the Indians giving attentive audience to his imprecations and invocations, and after the violent expression of many a hideous bellowing and groaning, he makes a stop, and then all the auditors with one voice utter a short canto.<sup>20</sup> Which done, the powwow still proceeds in his invocations, sometimes roaring like a bear, other times groaning like a dying horse, foaming at the mouth like a chased boar, smiting on his naked breast and thighs with such violence as if he were mad. Thus will he continue sometimes half a day, spending his lungs, sweating out his fat, and tormenting his body in this diabolical worship. Sometimes the Devil for requital of their worship recovers the party, to nuzzle them up in their devilish religion. In former time he was wont to carry away their wives and children, because he would drive them to these matins<sup>21</sup> to fetch them again to confirm their belief of this, his much desired authority over them. But since the English frequented those parts, they daily fall from his colors,<sup>22</sup> relinquishing their former fopperies,<sup>23</sup> and acknowledge our God to be supreme. They acknowledge the power of the Englishman's God, as they call him, because they could never yet have power by their conjurations to damnify the English either in body or goods; and besides, they say he is a good God that sends them so many good things, so much good corn, so many cattle, temperate rains, fair seasons, which they likewise are the better for since the arrival of the English, the times and seasons being much altered in seven or eight years, freer from lightning and

<sup>20</sup> A song or ballad.

<sup>21</sup> A monastic hour; morning prayer. Vaughan suggests that Wood is referring to "devil worship" (101, n. 47).

<sup>22</sup> Authority, influence.

<sup>23</sup> Foolishness or folly.

thunder, long droughts, sudden and tempestuous dashes of rain, and lamentable cold winters.

### Of Their Wars

Of their wars: their old soldiers being swept away by the plague which was very rife amongst them about fourteen years ago, and resting themselves secure under the English protection, they do not now practice anything in martial feats worth observation, saving that they make themselves forts to fly into if the enemies should unexpectedly assail them. These forts some be forty or fifty foot square, erected of young timber trees ten or twelve foot high, rammed into the ground, with undermining within, the earth being cast up for their shelter against the dischargements of their enemies, having loopholes to send out their winged messengers, which often deliver their sharp and bloody embassies in the tawny sides of their naked assailants, who wanting butting-rams and battering ordnances to command at distance, lose their lives by their too near approachments.

These [people] use no other weapons in war than bows and arrows, saving that their captains have long spears on which, if they return conquerors, they carry the heads of their chief enemies that they slay in the wars, it being the custom to cut off their heads, hands, and feet to bear home to their wives and children as true tokens of their renowned victory. When they go to their wars, it is their custom to paint their faces with diversity of colors, some being all black as jet, some red, some half red and half black, some black and white, others spotted with diverse kinds of colors, being all disguised to their enemies to make them more terrible to their foes, putting on likewise their rich jewels, pendants, and wampompeag, to put them in mind they fight not only for their children, wives, and lives, but likewise for their goods, lands, and liberties. Being thus armed with this warlike paint, the antic<sup>24</sup> warriors make towards their enemies in a disordered manner, without any soldier-like marching or warlike postures, being deaf to any word of command, ignorant of falling off or falling on, of doubling ranks or files, but let fly their winged shaftments without either fear or wit. Their artillery being spent, he that hath no arms to fight, finds legs to run away. . . .

### Of Their Language

Of their language, which is only peculiar to themselves, not inclining to any of the refined tongues: some have thought they might be of the dispersed

<sup>24</sup> Grotesque or bizarre.

Jews because some of their words be near unto the Hebrew, but by the same rule they may conclude them to be of some of the gleanings of all nations because they have words which sound after the Greek, Latin, French, and other tongues. Their language is hard to learn, few of the English being able to speak any of it, or capable of the right pronunciation, which is the chief grace of their tongue. They pronounce much after the diphthongs, excluding L and R, which in our English tongue they pronounce with as much difficulty as most of the Dutch do T and H, calling a lobster a *nobstann*.

Every country do something differ in their speech, even as our northern people do from the southern, and western from them; especially the Tarrenteens, whose tongues run so much upon R that they wharle<sup>25</sup> much in pronunciation. When any ships come near the shore, they demand whether they be King Charles his Tories, with such a rumbling sound as if one were beating an unbraced drum. In serious discourse our southern Indians use seldom any short colloquiums but speak their minds at large without any interjected interruptions from any, the rest giving diligent audience to his utterance. Which done, some or other returns him as long an answer. They love not to speak *multa sed multum*,<sup>26</sup> seldom are their words and their deeds strangers. According to the matter in discourse, so are their acting gestures in their expressions.

One of the English preachers, in a special good intent of doing good to their souls, hath spent much time in attaining to their language, wherein he is so good a proficient that he can speak to their understanding and they to his, much loving and respecting him for his love and counsel. It is hoped that he may be an instrument of good amongst them.<sup>27</sup> They love any man that can utter his mind in their words, yet are they not a little proud that they can speak the English tongue, using it as much as their own when they meet with such as can understand it, puzzling stranger Indians, which sometimes visit them from more remote places, with an unheard language.

### Of Their Deaths, Burials, and Mourning

Although the Indians be of lusty and healthful bodies, not experimentally knowing the catalogue of those health-wasting diseases which are incident

<sup>25</sup> According to Vaughan, this meant "pronounce with a guttural sound" (110, n. 62).

<sup>26</sup> "Many but much." According to Vaughan, Wood meant to suggest "they say much in a few words" (110, n. 63).

<sup>27</sup> Wood here is presumably referring to Roger Williams, perhaps the most important English missionary working among New England Indians during the early seventeenth century (*ibid.*, n. 64).

to other countries, as fevers, pleurisies,<sup>28</sup> callentures,<sup>29</sup> agues,<sup>30</sup> obstructions, consumptions, subfumigations,<sup>31</sup> convulsions, apoplexies,<sup>32</sup> dropsies,<sup>33</sup> gout, stones, toothaches, pox, measles, or the like, but spin out the thread of their days to a fair length, numbering threescore, fourscore, some a hundred years, before the world's universal summoner cite them to the craving grave.

But the date of their life expired, and death's arrestment seizing upon them, all hope of recovery being past, then to behold and hear their throbbing sobs and deep-fetched sighs, their grief-wrung hands and tear-bedewed cheeks, their doleful cries, would draw tears from adamant<sup>34</sup> eyes that be but spectators of their mournful obsequies. The glut of their grief being past, they commit the corpses of their deceased friends to the ground, over whose grave is for a long time spent many a briny tear, deep groan, and Irish-like howlings,<sup>35</sup> continuing annual mournings with a black, stiff paint on their faces. These are the mourners without hope, yet do they hold the immortality of the never-dying soul that it shall pass to the southwest Elysium, concerning which their Indian faith jumps much with the Turkish Alcoran,<sup>36</sup> holding it to be a kind of paradise wherein they shall everlastingly abide, solacing themselves in odoriferous gardens, fruitful corn fields, green meadows, bathing their tawny hides in the cool streams of pleasant rivers, and shelter themselves from heat and cold in the sumptuous palaces framed by the skill of nature's curious contrivement; concluding that neither care nor pain shall molest them but that nature's bounty will administer all things with a voluntary contribution from the overflowing storehouse of their Elysian Hospital, at the portal whereof, they say, lies a great dog whose churlish snarlings deny a *pax intransitibus*<sup>37</sup> to unworthy intruders. Wherefore it is their custom to bury with them their bows and arrows and good store of their wampompeag and

<sup>28</sup>Inflammation of the membrane lining the thorax and enveloping the lungs.

<sup>29</sup>Calenture was a disease characterized by delirium and hallucinations, afflicting sailors in the tropics.

<sup>30</sup>Fevers.

<sup>31</sup>According to Vaughan, this is an obsolete form of *suffumigation*, but the meaning "is not clear because subfumigation (fumigation from below) was a therapeutic treatment rather than a disease or ailment" (111, n. 65).

<sup>32</sup>Strokes.

<sup>33</sup>Swelling in body tissue.

<sup>34</sup>Immovable, impregnable.

<sup>35</sup>Presumably a pejorative reference to Irish Catholics and the fact that many English people of this period considered the Irish rude barbarians.

<sup>36</sup>The Koran.

<sup>37</sup>"Peace to those entering."

mowhacheis,<sup>38</sup> the one to affright that affronting Cerberus,<sup>39</sup> the other to purchase more immense prerogatives in their paradise. For their enemies and loose livers, whom they account unworthy of this imaginary happiness, they say that they pass to the infernal dwellings of Abamacho, to be tortured according to the fictions of the ancient heathen.

### Of Their Women, Their Dispositions, Employments, Usage by Their Husbands, Their Apparel, and Modesty

To satisfy the curious eye of women readers, who otherwise might think their sex forgotten or not worthy a record, let them peruse these few lines wherein they may see their own happiness, if weighed in the woman's balance of these ruder Indians who scorn the tutorings of their wives or to admit them as their equals—though their qualities and industrious deservings may justly claim the preeminence and command better usage and more conjugal esteem, their persons and features being every way correspondent, their qualifications more excellent, being more loving, pitiful, and modest, mild, provident, and laborious than their lazy husbands.

Their employments be many: first their building of houses, whose frames are formed like our garden arbors, something more round, very strong and handsome, covered with close-wrought mats of their own weaving which deny entrance to any drop of rain, though it come both fierce and long, neither can the piercing north wind find a cranny through which he can convey his cooling breath. They be warmer than our English houses. At the top is a square hole for the smoke's evacuation, which in rainy weather is covered with a pluver.<sup>40</sup> These be such smoky dwellings that when there is good fires they are not able to stand upright, but lie all along under the smoke, never using any stools or chairs, it being as rare to see an Indian sit on a stool at home as it is strange to see an Englishman sit on his heels abroad. Their houses are smaller in the summer when their families be dispersed by reason of heat and occasions. In winter they make some fifty or threescore foot long, forty or fifty men being inmates under one roof. And as is their husbands' occasion, these poor tectonists<sup>41</sup> are often troubled like snails to carry their houses on their backs, sometime to fishing places, other times to hunting places, after that to a planting place where it abides the longest.

<sup>38</sup>Indian gold.

<sup>39</sup>The three-headed dog that guarded Hades in Greek and Roman myth.

<sup>40</sup>According to Vaughan, "Wood apparently meant a rain-cover" (112, n. 70).

<sup>41</sup>Builders.

Another work is their planting of corn, wherein they exceed our English husbandmen, keeping it so clear with their clamshell hoes as if it were a garden rather than a corn field, not suffering a choking weed to advance his audacious head above their infant corn or an undermining worm to spoil his spurns. Their corn being ripe they gather it, and drying it hard in the sun convey it to their barns, which be great holes digged in the ground in form of a brass pot, sealed with rinds of trees, wherein they put their corn, covering it from the inquisitive search of their gourmandizing husbands who would eat up both their allowed portion and reserved seed if they knew where to find it. But our hogs having found a way to unhinge their barn doors and rob their garner, they are glad to implore their husbands' help to roll the bodies of trees over their holes to prevent those pioneers whose thievery they as much hate as their flesh.

Another of their employments is their summer processions to get lobsters for their husbands, wherewith they bait their hooks when they go afishing for bass or codfish. This is an everyday's walk, be the weather cold or hot, the waters rough or calm. They must dive sometimes over head and ears for a lobster, which often shakes them by their hands with a churlish nip and bids them adieu. The tide being spent, they trudge home two or three miles with a hundredweight of lobsters at their backs, and if none, a hundred scowls meet them at home and a hungry belly for two days after. Their husbands having caught any fish, they bring it in their boats as far as they can by water and there leave it; as it was their care to catch it, so it must be their wives' pains to fetch it home, or fast. Which done, they must dress it and cook it, dish it, and present it, see it eaten over their shoulders; and their loggerships<sup>42</sup> having filled their paunches, their sweet lullabies scramble for their scraps. In the summer these Indian women, when lobsters be in their plenty and prime, they dry them to keep for winter, erecting scaffolds in the hot sunshine, making fires likewise underneath them (by whose smoke the flies are expelled) till the substance remain hard and dry. In this manner they dry bass and other fishes without salt, cutting them very thin to dry suddenly before the flies spoil them or the rain moist them, having a special care to hang them in their smoky houses in the night and dankish weather.

In summer they gather flags,<sup>43</sup> of which they make mats for houses, and hemp and rushes, with dyeing stuff of which they make curious baskets with intermixed colors and protractures<sup>44</sup> of antic imagery. These

<sup>42</sup> Sluggards, lazy or idle persons.

<sup>43</sup> Reeds or rushes, North American cattails.

<sup>44</sup> Drawings.

baskets be of all sizes from a quart to a quarter,<sup>45</sup> in which they carry their luggage. In winter they are their husband's caterers, trudging to the clam banks for their belly timber, and their porters to lug home their venison which their laziness exposes to the wolves till they impose it upon their wives' shoulders. They likewise sew their husbands' shoes and weave coats of turkey feathers, besides all their ordinary household drudgery which daily lies upon them, so that a big belly hinders no business, nor a childbirth takes much time, but the young infant being greased and sooted,<sup>46</sup> wrapped in a beaver skin, bound to his good behavior with his feet up to his bum upon a board two foot long and one foot broad, his face exposed to all nipping weather, this little papoose travels about with his bare-footed mother to paddle in the icy clam banks after three or four days of age have sealed his passboard<sup>47</sup> and his mother's recovery.

For their carriage it is very civil, smiles being the greatest grace of their mirth; their music is lullabies to quiet their children, who generally are as quiet as if they had neither spleen or lungs. To hear one of these Indians unseen, a good ear might easily mistake their untaught voice for the warbling of a well-tuned instrument, such command have they of their voices.

These women's modesty drives them to wear more clothes than their men, having always a coat of cloth or skins wrapped like a blanket about their loins, reaching down to their hams, which they never put off in company. If a husband have a mind to sell his wife's beaver petticoat, as sometimes he doth, she will not put it off until she have another to put on. Commendable is their mild carriage and obedience to their husbands, notwithstanding all this—their [husband's] customary churlishness and savage inhumanity—not seeming to delight in frowns or offering to word it with their lords, not presuming to proclaim their female superiority to the usurping of the least title of their husband's charter, but rest themselves content under their helpless condition, counting it the woman's portion.

Since the English arrival, comparison hath made them miserable, for seeing the kind usage of the English to their wives, they do as much condemn their husbands for unkindness and commend the English for their love, as their husbands—commending themselves for their wit in keeping their wives industrious—do condemn the English for their folly in spoiling

<sup>45</sup> Eight bushels; see Vaughan, 114, n. 75.

<sup>46</sup> Stained dark.

<sup>47</sup> Passport. As Vaughan notes, "Wood apparently here used a whimsical allusion to the infant's entrance into human society" (114, n. 77).

good working creatures. These women resort often to the English houses, where *parēs cum paribus congregatae*,<sup>48</sup> in sex I mean, they do somewhat ease their misery by complaining and seldom part without a relief. If her husband come to seek for his squaw and begin to bluster, the English woman betakes her to her arms, which are the warlike ladle and the scalding liquors, threatening blistering to the naked runaway, who is soon expelled by such liquid comminations.<sup>49</sup>

In a word, to conclude this woman's history, their love to the English hath deserved no small esteem, ever presenting them something that is either rare or desired, as strawberries, hurtleberries, raspberries, gooseberries, cherries, plums, fish, and other such gifts as their poor treasury yields them. But now it may be that this relation of the churlish and inhumane behavior of these ruder Indians towards their patient wives may confirm some in the belief of an aspersion which I have often heard men cast upon the English there, as if they should learn of the Indians to use their wives in the like manner and to bring them to the same subjection—as to sit on the lower hand and to carry water and the like drudgery. But if my own experience may out-balance an ill-grounded scandalous rumor, I do assure you, upon my credit and reputation, that there is no such matter, but the women find there as much love, respect, and ease as here in old England. I will not deny but that some poor people may carry their own water. And do not the poorer sort in England do the same, witness your London tankard bearers and your country cottagers? But this may well be known to be nothing but the rancorous venom of some that bear no good will to the plantation. For what need they carry water, seeing everyone hath a spring at his door or the sea by his house?

Thus much for the satisfaction of women, touching this entrenchment upon their prerogative, as also concerning the relation of these Indian squaws.

### "A SMALL NOMENCLATOR" OF THE INDIAN LANGUAGE

Because many have desired to hear some of the natives' language, I have here inserted a small nomenclator, with the names of their chief kings, rivers, months and days, whereby such as have insight into the tongues may know to what language it is most inclining; and such as desire it as an unknown language only, may reap delight, if they can get no profit.

<sup>48</sup>"Equals gathered together with equals."

<sup>49</sup>Threats of divine punishment or vengeance.