

3. Thomas Morton Praises the New English Canaan, 1632

The Authors Prologue.

If art & industry should doe as much
As Nature hath for Canaan, not such
Another place, for benefit and rest,
In all the universe can be possest,
The more we proove it by discovery,
The more delight each object to the eye
Procures, as if the elements had here
Bin reconcil'd and pleas'd it should appeare,
Like a faire virgin, longing to be sped,
And meete her lover in a Nuptiall bed,
Deck'd in rich ornaments t' advaunee her state
And excellence, being most fortunate,
When most enjoy'd, so would our Canaan be
If well employ'd by art and industry
Whose offspring, now shewes that her fruitfull wombe
Not being enjoy'd, is like a glorious tombe,
Admired things producing which there dye,
And ly fast bound in darck obscurity,
The worth of which in each particuler,
Who list to know, this abstract will declare.

In the Moneth of June, Anno Salutis: 1622. It was my chaunce to arrive in the parts of New England with 30. Servants, and provision of all sorts fit for a plantation: And whiles our howses were building, I did endeavour to take a survey of the Country: The more I looked, the more I liked it.

And when I had more seriously considered of the bewty of the place, with all her faire indowments, I did not thinke that in all the knowne world it could be paralel'd. For so many goodly groues of trees; dainty fine round rising hillucks: delicate faire large plaines, sweete cristall fountaines, and cleare running streames, that twine in fine meanders through the meads, making so sweete a murmuring noise to heare, as would even lull the sences with delight a sleepe, so pleasantly doe, they glide upon the pebble stones, jetting most jocundly where they doe meete; and hand in hand runne downe to Neptunes Court, to pay the yearely tribute, which they owe to him as soveraigne Lord of all the springs. Contained within the volume of the Land, Fowles in abundance, Fish in multitude, and discovered besides; Millions of Turtledoves one the greene boughes: which sate pecking, of the full ripe pleasant grapes, that were supported by the lusty trees, whose fruitfull loades did cause the armes to bend, which here and there dispersed (you might see) Lillies and of the Daphnean-tree, which made the Land to mee seeme paradice, for in mine eie, t'was Natures

From Thomas Morton, "New English Canaan" in Peter Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*. . . . Washington, D.C., 1838, vol. II, pp. 10, 36-37, 41-42.

Master peece: Her cheifest Magazine of, all where lives her store: if this Land be not rich, then is the whole world poore. . . .

The Salvages are accustomed, to set fire of the Country in all places where they come; and to burne it, twize a yeare, vixe at the Spring, and the fall of the leafe. The reason that mooves them to doe so, is because it would other wise be so overgrowne with underweedes, that it would be all a copice wood, and the people would not be able in any wise to passe through the Country out of a beaten path. . . .

And least their firing of the Country in this manner; should be an occasion of damnifying us, and indaingering our habitations; wee our selves have used carefully about the same times; to observe the winds and fire the grounds about our owne habitations, to prevent the Dammage that might happen by any neglect thereof, if the fire should come neere those howses in our absence.

For when the fire is once kindled, it dilates and spreads it selfe as well against, as with the winde; burning continually night and day, untill a shower of raine falls to quench it.

And this custome of firing the Country is the meanes to make it passable, and by that meanes the trees growe here, and there as in our parks: and makes the Country very beautifull and commodious.

4. William Wood Portrays Indian Women's Housing and Horticulture, 1634

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

[Women's] 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; 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 English man sit on his heeles 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 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: an other work is their planting of corn, wherein they exceed our English husband-men, keeping it so clear with their Clam shell-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

From William Wood, *New England's Prospect*. London: Thomas Cotes, 1634, pp. 99-100.

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.

5. Anne Bradstreet Eulogizes Nature, 1650

"Contemplations" [Verses 18-20]

18

... When I behold the heavens as in their prime,
And then the earth (though old) stil clad in green,
The stones and trees, insensible of time,
Nor age nor wrinkle on their front are seen;
If winter come, and greeness then do fade,
A Spring returns, and they more youthfull made;
But Man grows old, lies down, remains where once
he's laid.

[19]

By birth more noble then those creatures all,
Yet seems by nature and by custome curs'd,
No sooner born, but grief and care makes fall
That state obliterate he had at first:
Nor youth, nor strength, nor wisdom spring again
Nor habitations long their names retain,
But in oblivion to the final day remain.

20

Shall I then praise the heavens, the trees, the earth
Because their beauty and their strength last longer
Shall I wish there, or never to had birth,
Because they're bigger, & their bodyes stronger?
Nay, they shall darken, perish, fade and dye,
And when unmade, so ever shall they lye,
But man was made for endless immortality.

From Anne Bradstreet, *The Works of Anne Bradstreet in Prose and Verse*. Ed. John Harvard Ellis. Charlestown: Abram E. Cutter, 1867, p. 376.

6. Edward Johnson Describes the Transformation of the Wilderness, 1654

... The chiefe Edifice of this City-like Towne is crowded on the Sea-bankes, and wharfed out with great industry and cost, the buildings beautifull and large, some fairely set forth with Brick, Tile, Stone and Slate, and orderly placed with comly streets, whose continuall inlargement presages some sumptuous City. The wonder of this moderne Age, that a few yeares should bring forth such great matters by so meane a handfull, and they so far from being enriched by the spoiles of other Nations, that the states of many of them have beene spoiled by the Lordly Prelacy, whose Lands must assuredly make Restitutions. But now behold the admirable Acts of Christ; at this his peoples landing, the hideous Thickets in this place were such, that Wolfes and Beares nurst up their young from the eyes of all beholders, in those very places where the streets are full of Girles and Boys sporting up and downe, with a continued concourse of people. Good store of Shipping is here yearly built, and some very faire ones; both Tar and Mastes the Countrey affords from its own soile; also store of Victuall both for their owne and Forreiners-ships, who resort hither for that end: this Town is the very Mart of the Land, French, Portugalls and Dutch come hither for Traffique. ...

... The Lord is pleased also to compleat this Commonwealth abundantly beyond all expectation in all sorts of needful occupations, it being for a long time the great fear of many, and those that were endued with grace from above also, that this would be no place of continued habitation, for want of a staple-commodity, but the Lord, whose promises are large to his Sion, hath blest his peoples provision, and satisfied her poor with bread, in a very little space, every thing in the country proved a staple-commodity, wheat, rye, oats, peas, barley, beef, pork, fish, butter, cheese, timber, mast, tar, sope, plank-board, frames of houses, clabboard, and pipestaves, iron and lead is like to be also; and those who were formerly forced to fetch most of the bread they eat, and beer they drink, a hundred leagues by Sea, are through the blessing of the Lord so encreased, that they have not only fed their Elder Sisters, Virginia, Barbados, and many of the Summer Islands that were prefer'd before her for fruitfulness, but also the Grandmother of us all, even the firtle Isle of Great Britain, beside Portugal hath had many a mouthful of bread and fish from us, in exchange of their Madeara liquor, and also Spain; nor could it be imagined, that this Wilderness should turn a mart for Merchants in so short a space, Holland, France, Spain, and Portugal coming hither for trade, shipping going on gallantly, till the Seas became so troublesome, and England restrain'd our trade, forbidding it with Barbados, etc. and Portugal stopt and took our ships; many a fair ship had her framing and finishing here, besides lesser vessels, barques, and ketches, many a Master, beside common Seamen, had their first learning in this Colony. Boston, Charles-Town, Salem, and Ipswitch, our Maritan [maritime] Towns began to encrease roundly, especially Boston, the which of a poor country village, in twice seven years is become like unto a small city.

From Edward Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working Providence*, ed. J. Franklin Jameson. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1910, pp. 71, 246-247.