

TIME

BY KATHARINE LEE BATES

THEY see amiss who picture Time as old,
A stooping baldpate with his wrinkled hand
Clutched on a scythe. Not so I understand
My comrade of a lifetime, who has told
This listening heart from childhood manifold
Strange stories of the past as through the land
We ran together, while the glad winds fanned
Back from his forehead locks of youthful gold.

But these my mortal limbs may not much longer
Maintain the ardor of his quickening pace;
I find him ever younger, swifter, stronger,
Singing no more of strifes and splendors gone,
But panting for the goal of his great race,
As the importunate vision sweeps him on.

THE PASSING OF NEW ENGLAND

BY MARGARET BALDWIN

I

THE individuality which has always characterized New England is passing. From the days when our forefathers guarded their steps with the flintlock and the prayer-book, to the present generation, there has always been that about New England, vivid and compelling, which has set it apart from every other place. But the day is at hand when this is becoming a thing of the past. It is being fused psychologically with the common stock.

Anyone who has known its rural regions for thirty or forty years, where ways and manners alter slowly, knows how great the change even in that short space of time. Local color has faded. Community customs have vanished. Household methods and arts have disappeared. The strict piety of the elders has relaxed to an easy tolerance. Sunday is a day of pleasure and recreation, rather than of rest or religion; and the social side of life, even in its simplest forms, is far different from that of other days.

These might seem, at first, things of minor importance; but changes which begin at the hearthstones of a people are fundamental. City life is bound to absorb individuality; but when the change reaches beyond, the general and essential difference is complete. That all the world changes, we know; but the significance here is in that which made New England its distinctive self — the ways of life, the type of people, which grew out of its elementality. But who deals with the elemental now?

Any exception to the rule is of rare occurrence; but once in a while it is to be found — a lone individual, always a woman, left by some untoward fate to live out her life alone, and in whose house and personality are still preserved old customs and aspects. She still clings to old ways of doing things, to something of the old manner of viewing life. When such as these are gone, the last example of earlier New Englandism will have vanished in their going.

Within the year it has been my privilege to spend a little time with one of these uncommon persons, to revive a long-past acquaintance, and get a glimpse of old days and ways in much of their old setting. This is the more unusual for the reason that her house sets on the high road which leads to a populous summer region, little more than five miles away, where the bright

and modern life of summer people is in full swing four months of the year. Yet she is as far removed, in spirit and in truth, as if she lived in another world. And indeed she does, in a way; for it takes little stretch of the imagination to feel that one who still makes practical and personal use of a garment sixty-three years old does dwell in a world of her own — lives by the light of a vanished order, a solitary keeper of its creeds and secrets.

It is thirty years since she was first left alone on her farm. A few years later she married, but was soon left a widow. Her only child died at birth. These things make the only touch of romance, however plain, which has ever entered her life, and she is now past sixty years old. During all these years her steps have followed in what she calls the old paths — paths of the field, the pasture, and the wood-lot, through all seasons and all weathers.

She is a farmer, practical and efficient, earning her living and laying by something always for taxes, insurance, sickness, and emergency. Being strong and well and nearly six feet tall, there is little about her farm which she does not lay her own hand to. Her firewood, cut from her own land, she hires someone to saw and split and put under cover each year — an enormous shedful, two or three years' supply ahead; and her ploughing, though done with her own horse and plough, she turns over to another. But planting and harvesting and haying are her own work, and to my questions about it all, her quaint answer was that there were but two or three things about the place which she ever had to have 'a man-person for.'

II

I had come late in the day, and we had had 'tea' — that meal which, in rural New England forty years ago, was