CHAPTER IV

BACKGROUND OF MIGRATION

The tales written a generation ago generally ended with the marriage of the hero and the heroine and the words "So they lived happily ever afterwards". One of grandfather's songs, oft repeated, by demand had as its last stanza:

"Now in a cot by the riverside
Young William and Mary do reside;
And 'er blesses the night that h'ever she did wait
For her own true love at the garden gate".

For the first few years of their married life, there are no anecdotes which grandfather told, as I remember. His father had died May 3, 1854, two years before John married. His older sister, Ann, married William Turner, February 1, 1836, probably a few months before John married Grace Bone. His younger sisters, Eliza and Rachel were probably "out to service" for the rector of the parish saw to it that surplus sons and daughters did not grow up in idleness, but were apprenticed out to farmers of such standing that they could learn the skills necessary to the rural life of the times. Cousin Will of Camelford has preserved his grandfather's apprenticeship papers. “Jimmy", then only sixteen may still have been under the parental roof. The widowed mother, naturally, remained in her home, to which John probably brought his bride. I say "probably", for it was possible that he brought her to Coudray Park.

In due course the union was blessed; a son, William Bone Baker was born August 31, 1837. Then followed in fairly regular order:

Mary Jane	May 14,	1839
John Jr.		1841
Julius	Nov. 26,	1844
Frank	Dec.	1845
James	Feb.	1847

Six children before the trek to "Ameriky" in the early months of 1849.

But these were not routine, monotonous years. There was a ferment in the countryside. The invention of the steam engine, the process of smelting iron by use of coal instead of wood, the invention of the cotton gin, the spinning jenny, the "mule", the spread of canals and the beginning of railways was making of England an industrial nation. Industry drew young men and women from the farms to the factories in cities. city life was tragic in many cases and great numbers prepared to venture to the new world, including Australia, where farm life could be continued under what was believed to be happier auspices. Some of those who went before prospered; others told tall tales to avoid confession that they had not bettered themselves. Land speculators flooded Europe with marvelous tales of the productivity of the virgin soil, the limitless acres that could be acquired for a song, the game which abounded. Because settlers dipped cattails in melted, hot tallow and burned them as candles, a common report was that candles grew in the swamps. Others wrote of an insect (fire-flies) which could be collected by mucilage on a stick and used to illuminate a cabin Naturally, such tales caused interest and eventually unrest on the part of the stay-at-homes. When one of these wanderers returned from America for a visit in the old home and came calling at Pattacott, John's mother scolded him with "Doan't 'ee be goin' yer tellin' h'up the h'ol' lies!" Perhaps this unrest would have been sufficient to move the John Bakers to emigrate eventually, but it only contributed at the time.

One time when grandfather was criticizing some American ways, I countered with "How did you happen come to America?"

“Wull, ah'll tell 'ee", he answered. "An ‘ad the purtiest vield of v’eat did h'ever a-zee. 'Twas h'about come time to cut. Ah was down in the middle of the viald a lookin' at un, w'an vip! right atween me legsl H’it were a voxen. Then I yeard the 'unter's 'orn. Ah never was so vexed. In a trice they gummed a ridin' in their red coats and caps. Ah knawed they couldn't jump the 'edge; ah'd a let un grow too ‘igh. Ah knawed ah'd 'ave to h’ope the gate and lut un ride through me w'eat. But ah was that vexed ah dropped to me knees and kept a lookin at the w'eat. But w'en 'ee hallooed to me, ah dursen't wait, but ah walked as slowly h's ah could. When ah h'oped the gate and ‘ee rode through, Dquire _____ 'it me wi’ ’is ridin’ crop across me vace and chucks (cheeks) "H'I’ll tache ‘ee not to come h’ope

the gate w'en gentlemen call' 'ee shouted. Ah dusen't cuss un, ah knawed ah dursen't cuss un. But w'en 'ee'd passed, ah stamped me veet and ah said 'ah'll go to Ameriky!".

But going to "Ameriky" was easier said than done. How to get the money? The laws of primo-geniture were still in effect. The farms belonged to the oldest son and to him only. Such an heir could not give title to a purchaser which would hold against the claim of the oldest son of the would-be seller, if such a con ever chose to assert his claim. Now could John, under those conditions, hope to get anything out of Coudray Park and Pattacott by which to establish himself anywhere else?"

Earlier it has been told that John's father was named William; so also his grandfather and the grandfather's father. All the way back to the patent granted by Queen Anne, the owner of either Pattacott, or of Coudery Park, or of both had borne the name of William Baker. Now, John's younger brother was named William. So, it seemed possible that no one would be likely to contest the holding of this brother William, if any one could be found to lend him the money to buy out John. This, William was able to do so far as a share in Pattacott was concerned. It appears that the other sons and daughters of William Baker also inherited shares. Who took the chance on Coudery Park, no one seems to know, but whoever it was soon sold to a man by the name of Pearse, whose sons still own it. There must have been more confidence in the integrity of these farmers than most men have now in one another; for even a mortgage on such a farm could not be foreclosed. Debtors could be put in prison but their farm could not be foreclosed, or their entailed lands could not be taken away from them. Nevertheless, such a money lender was found; John promised that he would never return to England, nor would his heir. Some six hundred Pounds Sterling was the sum agreed upon, although according to grandfather, the land was worth all of eight hundred Pounds. This difference of two hundred pounds is an indication of the gamble which the money lender considered himself as taking.

In 1989 when my uncle Will (John's eldest son) went back to England to revisit the scenes of his boyhood, his uncle William was not at all warm in his welcome until his nephew declared "I wouldn't take it as a gift if I had to live on it.

Why should I want to stay in England when in America I have a farm forty times as large!"

Then there was the preparation for the trip: the auctioning of personal property which could not be carried to America, the securing of passage, the packing of baggage. Details of these items are almost entirely lacking. Concerning the auction, I have the following story from Cousin Will Baker, who had it from his father, William Bone Baker, a lad of about twelve when the event took place.

Grandfather approached an auctioneer, probably in Launceston, who had an enviable reputation for getting good prices from bidders. After listening to grandfather's description of the property he had for sale, the auctioneer decided it merited the attention of so gifted a specialist as he, and the journey of several miles which the auction would entail. But, he warned, he would not undertake the project unless John promised to do exactly aa he would be told. On receiving this promise, he made a list of the kinds and quantities of liquors which grandfather must provide. Though grandfather hisself enjoyed a "wee drap" every now and then, he was not accustomed to such grand spirits and he considered the quantities outrageously extravagant. Nevertheless, he had given his promise and so could not demur. However, he made a mental reservation to chisel on quantities, and so bought not a half of what he had been directed to purchase. The morning of the auction game and with it the auctioneer, before the family had finished breakfast. The auctioneer immediately asked to be shown the liquors which were to be offered to the bidders. His immediate reaction was in the nature of a minor explosion. "You stingy, penny-pinchin' farmer! h'I've a mind to go right 'ome." " 'ow do 'ee think the buyers would be generous if thee's so close-visted? Ah shall lose h'all me reputation h'as h'an h'auctioneer if ah let 'ee do this way. H'it won't be me that'll make un bid; 'twill be the spirit h'in un“. And volumes more to the same effect. But eventually he quieted down, asked for a pitcher and a tray of glasses and mixed the first serving.

Presently a few neighbors strayed into the yard. The auctioneer restrained grandfather from going out to greet them. "Dawn't 'ee go h'out h'empty 'anded. Wait h'until they's enough to take a tray full. H'an serve they fust 'oo look the most likely to buy. No use lickerin' h'up they penniless scroungers. H’an ver Gos sake

doan’ee let nun know h'I's yer". The neighbors soon began to arrive in numbers and grandfather passed out his drinks -- which in the meantime had been warmed to make them more potent.

The tray was emptied quickly and grandfather was kept busy refilling it. It soon became apparent that the liquor supply would be exhausted before the auction began. But the auctioneer was resourceful.

“H’I reckon th' 'as a drap o' zider in the ‘ouse", he 'suggested. “H’O yes, a bravish bit", grandmother replied. "Bring h'up a jug 'o 't", the auctioneer ordered. It was brought promptly. *Naow, bring h'all the sugar th' 'as in the 'ouse", he commanded. This was tragic, but the sugar was brought. He put the biggest iron kettle on the crane, poured into it all the remaining liquors of all kinds, stirred in the sugar and then filled the kettle with elder. This made too deep a mixture to be stirred by a spoon. Looking about for something longer, he spied grandfather's mattock standing in the corner. With a deft motion, he knocked off the metal head and to grandmother's consternation, proceeded to stir the brew with the handle. When granny gasped a protest, he answered: "They'll drink un, never fear."

When he gauged the mood of the crowd sufficiently mellow, the auctioneer went out the back door, dodged around the house so as to approach the gathering from the direction of the road, climbed into a cart and began his harangue.

"H'I apologize, gentlemen, vor being late. It is one of my fust principles to be on time, but today I 'ave been detained, and h'll apologize. “H’I' understand that your neighbor, John Baker, h'is 'about to go to Ameriky. 'I do no knaw un, you gentlemen do. 'I'm told 'ee's a good neighbor, that ‘ee 'as six childer, that 'ee's the chorister of the church choir, that 'ee does many a chore in the parish, much as collecting the church tithes. I'am h'I right?" he suddenly asked a group at the side. "Aye, aye, right, right", they answered. "You knaw un betterin h'I do", he continued. "H'an once ‘ee' gets to Ameriky, thee'll never see un again. A good neighbor wi' a vamily of small childer”.

The unction in the voice of the auctioneer and the warming of the liquor was beginning to loose the sentimental strain latent in all Englishmen, and by sly

references to certain good deeds of which the auctioneer professed to have heard vague rumors, some of the crowd was almost moved to tears.

Watching his audience closely, the speaker deemed it time to turn the sentiment to a practical direction and wound up with "Zo, h'I knaw thee'll wish un to carry away the memory of ‘is neighbors 'oo h'are generous h'an will bid ver 'is goods w'at they be worth". “W’at be h'I bid vor this 'ere cart?" and so the auction began. Whenever the bidding got slow, or prices to sag, a nod to grandfather served to set the hot cider mixture to circulating. And the auctioneer would make another sentimental speech about the good neighbor going so far away, never to return, and, doubtless would have full need for every penny they might pay for his goods "not that 'ee wants a tuppence more'n h'ts worth", he would add.

On one of these interludes he reminded them that everything was for sale except the horse, "H'ol Dumpling. ‘er’s not vor sale. H'all the childer 'ave learned to ride on 'er back. 'er's been in the vambly twenty year or sore. Once when Janny vell in the river, 'er backed around and let un catch ‘er tail h'an dragged un h'out. They'll never sell 'er lest zum buyer -- not you gentlemen -- get 'er h'an abuse 'er. They's giving h'ol Dumpling to the glue vactory w'er they'll knaw 'er will die quickly an comfortably.

The bidding was brisk, prices paid were good and at the end of the day's work, when grandfather expressed satisfaction with the results, the auctioneer modestly disclaimed credit, repeating his observation, "H'it want me that made un bid; 'twas the spirit in un”.