

THE ANTINOMIAN CONTROVERSY.

CHAPTER I.

THE REV. JOHN WHEELWRIGHT OF "THE MOUNT."

THOMAS MORTON'S house at Merry-Mount was burned to the ground in December, 1630, and its occupants were driven away. For several years thereafter the region between the Neponset and the Monaquit — the seaward slope of the Blue Hill range — was without other inhabitants than the few Indians of Chickatabot's following, who, the sole representatives in those parts of the Massachusetts tribe, flit to and fro across the pages of the record, and haunt "the Massachusetts Fields," the mere ghosts of their race.

Indeed, for a short space of time, and yet one measured by years, the Neponset seems to have been looked upon as practically the southern boundary of Massachusetts. Starting from Salem, and making their first lodgment on the shores of Boston Bay at Charlestown, the outposts of what is known in New England history as the Great Migration had pushed their way up the valleys of the Charles and the Mystic, and south as far as the Neponset; but at the Neponset the southerly movement paused. It was a barrier in the way, — the first and the smallest of many barriers of the same kind which New England civilization was destined to surmount.

It was in this unoccupied region — a region some five miles or so across, between Dorchester on the north and Wessagusset on the south — that in 1634 Alderman of Bear Cove, as Hingham was then called, losing his way, wandered through woods and swamps for three days and two nights without encountering a human being;¹ for, though it was known to have a fertile soil, clear of trees, and to be well adapted to farming purposes, the border land, as it then was, seems to have been under a sort of ban. Morton's doings had given it an evil name. It was no fit home for godly families.

This state of affairs was not likely to continue long. The early settlers of Massachusetts Bay, unlike those of Plymouth, were many of them men of substance. At home the associates of Carver and Bradford had been plain people, while, of those who came with Winthrop and Saltonstall, many had belonged to the gentry; and these last brought with them to the New World the English passion for landed possessions, — that land-hunger which they inherited direct from Germanic and Norman ancestors, and which they left unimpaired and unsatisfied to their descendants. Every man of mark among them was eager, as soon as he set foot in New England, to secure a domain for himself and his descendants. The peninsula of Boston was small, — “too small to contain many,” as Wood described it only three years after the settlement; so that those living there were “constrained to take farms in the country.” Accordingly, Governor Winthrop had the Ten-Hill farm of 600 acres in Medford, besides some 1,200⁰ acres more “about six miles from Concord northwards.” Governor Dudley

¹ *Supra*, 337.

had 1,700 acres, — 200 on the west side of the Charles over against Cambridge, 500 on the easterly side of the river, above the falls, and 1,000 from Concord northwards. Sir Richard Saltonstall had 1,600 acres, part in Watertown, part in Natick, and, later, part in Springfield. So it went on; and it naturally resulted that, as immigration increased, the land-hunger, which was quite as well developed in the new as in the old comers, could find in more remote parts only that on which to feed.

Then it was that people began to look across the Neponset; and accordingly, at the session of the General Court, held in May, 1634, it was ordered "that Boston shall have convenient enlargement at Mt. Wollaston." Six months later that territory was formally annexed to Boston as a sort of outlying dependency, Dorchester intervening between the two, and the process of dividing it up among private owners, in estates of from 200 to 700 acres, was begun. On the 14th of December a committee of five was appointed to go out and assign "what may be sufficient for William Coddington and Edmund Quincy to have for their particular farms there." Quincy was the progenitor of the family after a member of which the town in which the Mount lay received its name a century and a half later; Coddington afterwards became the father of Rhode Island. The Mt. Wollaston bay-front was now assigned to the two, — the place where Morton's house had stood subsequently falling to Coddington, though it finally passed by purchase and descent into the hands of a Quincy.

Allotments to others were at the same time made, but they are not to the present purpose. It is necessary to pass over a couple of years before coming to

two names — William Hutchinson and John Wheelwright¹ — which are associated not only with holdings at the Mount, but with controversies that for a time seemed to threaten the very existence of the colony. Its life was spared; but through more than a century and a half its history bears the deep pit-marks of those controversies, much as men of those early days bore from childhood scars of the smallpox.

Theological controversies are as a rule among the most barren of the many barren fields of historical research; and the literature of which they were so fruitful may, so far as the reader of to-day is concerned, best be described by the single word impossible. Among modern writers Hallam had to acquaint himself with it in at least a general way; and even Hallam, who was not wont to flinch at an array of books and authors, was appalled, not more by the mass than by the aridity of those devoted to this particular branch of learning. More than once he refers to the subject, with a touch of sadness as well as a warmth of imagery not usual with him. "Our public libraries," he in one place remarks, "are cemeteries of departed reputation; and the dust accumulating upon their untouched volumes speaks as

¹ The allotment to William Hutchinson was made by votes of January 1st, 1636 and January 1st, 1637, and included 600 acres of land, lying in what is now North Quincy, "betwixt Dorchester bounds and Mount Woollistone ryver." (*Second Report of Boston Record Com's*, (1877), 7, 14.) The Wheelwright allotment was made by vote of ^{February 20} ~~March 2~~, and April 1st, 1637. It included 250 acres lying south of Mt. Wollaston, and "extended into the countrey." (*Ib.* 15, 17, 45, 46.) The Rev. John Wilson's and the Rev. John Wheelwright's holdings at "the Mount" seem to have been contiguous, and what Lechford remarked of Blackstone and Williams might have been remarked of Wheelwright: — "He lives neere master *Wilson*, but is far from his opinions." (*Supra*, 325.)

forcibly as the grass that waves over the ruins of Babylon ;” and again, speaking of the wordy “champions of a long war,” he declares of their writings that “they belong no more to man, but to the worm, the moth, and the spider. Their dark and ribbed backs, their yellow leaves, their thousand folio pages, do not more repel us than the unprofitableness of their substance.”

So far as its substance was concerned, the great New England religious controversy of 1637 forms no exception to the general truth of Hallam’s criticism. Not only were the points in dispute obscure, but the discussion was carried on in a jargon which has become unintelligible ; and, from a theological point of view, it is now devoid of interest. At most, it can excite only a faint curiosity as one more example of that childish excitement over trifles by which communities everywhere and at all times are liable to be swept away from the moorings of common sense. But the, so-called, Antinomian controversy was in reality not a religious dispute, which was but the form it took. In its essence that controversy was a great deal more than a religious dispute ; it was the first of the many New England quickenings in the direction of social, intellectual and political development, — New England’s earliest protest against formulas. The movement of sap in a young tree was not more natural, and the form the quickening took, and the individuals who participated in it were the only matters of chance. It was designed by no one. No one at the time realized its significance. It was to that community just what the first questioning of an active mind is to a child brought up in the strictest observance of purely conventional forms. So viewed, the mis-called Anti-

nomian controversy becomes, in the light of subsequent history, full of interest. As an illustration of the men and manners and modes of thought of a civilization wholly unlike any which now exists, it is replete with life and incident.

John Wheelwright was the third minister of the gospel who regularly preached within the limits fixed in the Massachusetts patent south of the Neponset. William Monell and Joseph Hull of Weymouth alone preceded him; and when Wheelwright's voice was first heard in that wilderness, the voice of Monell had been silent for more than twelve years, while Hull had taken up his work only a twelvemonth before. Wheelwright was in his day esteemed a learned and eloquent divine, and he was also a very famous one; for it was his fortune, by a discourse delivered on a day of public fasting and prayer in January, 1637, to throw the Massachusetts community into a state of commotion without a parallel in its history. It was, perhaps, the most momentous single sermon ever preached from the American pulpit; and, indeed, in this respect to be compared only with the yet more famous Sacheverell sermons, preached seventy years later in London.

The author of this memorable fast-day deliverance was born in 1592 at Saleby, a little hamlet of the market-town of Alford, some twenty-four miles from the English Boston, in the region known as the fens of Lincolnshire. This region has the reputation of being one of the least interesting in England. Saturated with water through one half of the year, through the other half it is a dreary flat; and yet, towards the close of the sixteenth century, the fens of Lincolnshire seem to have been somewhat prolific of men destined to play prominent parts in the settlement of America.

The names of all the fen hamlets terminate with *by*, indicative of their Danish origin ; and at Willoughby, only a few miles from Saleby, and a little over thirty from the yet more famous Scrooby, in the next county of Notts, John Smith was born thirteen years before Wheelwright. Of the latter's youthful days not much is known. His father, a landholder of the middle class, gave the son a good education, and in due course of time he became a student at Cambridge. There is a tradition that he and Oliver Cromwell knew each other well in their college days. The story is to the effect that in later years the Protector once said : — " I remember the time when I was more afraid of meeting Wheelwright at football than I have been since of meeting an army in the field, for I was infallibly sure of being tripped up by him." This, like most utterances resting on tradition, has an apocryphal ring ; but it is an established fact that Cromwell esteemed Wheelwright highly, and showed him marked favor at a subsequent time.¹ Taking his degree at Cambridge in 1618, Wheelwright five years later, in 1623, having married in the meanwhile, succeeded his wife's father in the vicarage of Bilsby, one of a cluster of hamlets close to the spot of his birth. The great religious movement against dogmas and ritualism was then fast developing in England, and assuming more and more strongly the Puritan phase. Wheelwright was married, possessed of some property, and secure in a comfortable living ; but he was a born controversialist, and seems to have entered into the spirit of the rising protest with all the superfluous energy of

¹ Bell, *John Wheelwright*, Prince Society Publications. Where other authorities are not specified, reference for statements relating to Wheelwright should be made to Bell's work.

youth. Before 1633 the crisis with him had come; he was already silenced for non-conformity, and, though he had neither resigned nor been removed, his vicarage had been treated as vacant, and into it a successor inducted. During the next three years he ministered privately, but with an ever-increasing reputation, and in April, 1636, embarked for New England.

Before this Wheelwright's first wife had died, and he had married Mary, a daughter of Edward Hutchinson of Alford, and sister of one William Hutchinson. This William Hutchinson had, with his wife Anne, gone to America in 1634, and landed in Boston in September, thus preceding Wheelwright by about two years. Arriving on the $\frac{25^{\text{th}}}{\text{th}}$ of $\frac{J^{\text{une}}}{J^{\text{uly}}}$, 1636, on the $\frac{12^{\text{th}}}{25^{\text{th}}}$ of the next month Wheelwright was admitted to the church, being then in his forty-fifth year. In 1636, and, indeed, for years after that, there was but one meeting-house in Boston, — the rude, one-story barrack already described. In this edifice were gathered together each Sabbath and lecture-day all the inhabitants of Boston who were neither too young profitably to attend divine worship, nor incapacitated for some good and sufficient reason. The Rev. John Wilson, first pastor of the church, ministered to the flock, though somewhat overshadowed by the greater eminence in public estimation of his colleague, — or teacher, as he was called, — the Rev. John Cotton.

Wheelwright had not been many weeks a member of the church before some of its more active members began to agitate the question of installing him by Cotton's side as an additional teacher. The suggestion was first publicly made on Sunday, November 1 $\frac{1}{2}$, 1636, at the church-meeting which regularly followed the services; and a week later it assumed formal shape.

A decided opposition was at once developed, at the head of which were Wilson, the pastor, and Winthrop, the ex-governor, while the whole movement, as was natural enough in so small a community, soon connected itself with the political situation. To understand how this came about, and the close bearing it had on all that followed, a retrospect is necessary.

The popularity of Winthrop, not only in the colony at large but in his own town and church of Boston, had for some time been on the decline. This was due to no fault of his; but would rather seem to have been one of those inexplicable, temporary eclipses which nearly every prominent public man is at some time in the course of his career fated to pass through. With or without cause the community wearies of him, and then, perhaps, presently returns to him; nor in either case can any one say why. The smaller the community, also, the more liable it is to this ebb and flow of popular favor. Accordingly, at the election of 1634, the freemen, without ostensible reason, but in supposed reply to a famous discourse of John Cotton's on the tenure of office by magistrates, had quietly relegated Winthrop to private life, and chosen Dudley governor in his stead. A year later again they chose Haynes, who had then only recently come over, to succeed Dudley.

Among the many newcomers during the terms of these two governors were three persons destined to play parts of especial prominence in the early history of the colony; these three were Anne Hutchinson, Henry Vane and Hugh Peters. It will be necessary to speak in some detail of Mrs. Hutchinson at a later point in the narrative, and her presence in Boston was not at once felt. With the other two it was different. From

the moment they set foot on Massachusetts soil, both Vane and Peters became leading factors in the development of the colony.

Naturally enough both the people of Massachusetts and Massachusetts writers have always taken a peculiar interest in the younger Vane. He figures in the list of those who were governors of the Colony and the State, and not only was he subsequently prominent among the statesmen of the English Commonwealth, but the romance which hangs about his death on the scaffold casts a strong gleam of light as well as a tragic shadow upon what is otherwise rather a matter of fact and commonplace record of names, few indeed of which are more than locally remembered. The hand of either the assassin or the headsmen is apt, also, to exercise a perturbing and, at times, even a transmuting influence on the judgments of history; and this has been especially so in the case of Vane. At best, his personality is far from being of the distinct kind; if, indeed, so far as Massachusetts is concerned, he has not so long been held up as the ideal of an etherealized Puritan, youthful and poetic, gracefully wearing his halo of martyrdom, that at last effusiveness of sentiment has had more to do with the popular estimate in which he is held, than calm judgment backed by adequate knowledge. Judged, on the other hand, in the ordinary way and by what he did and what he left behind him, "young Sir Harry Vane" was a born parliamentary leader, and an administrator who on occasion did not fear to combine with his energy a sufficiency of guile; while, as a thinker and writer, he was undoubtedly a man of large and aspiring mind, nourishing lofty ideas far in advance of his time, but with a faculty of expression by no means equal-

ling the fineness of his thought. Consequently his writings are not only mystical, but they are so involved and dull that Hume was fully justified in pronouncing them unintelligible and devoid of common sense; and now they are read only by the closest students of political history, nor always clearly understood even by them. In the minds and memories of the great majority of well-informed persons of his own country, Vane is associated chiefly with the sonnet addressed to him by Milton, and with Cromwell's ejaculation, as characteristic as it was contemptuous, when he turned the Long Parliament out of doors. It is also remembered that he met with calm courage a death no less cruel than early and undeserved.

When he landed in Boston, in October, 1635, young Vane was scarcely more than a boy. He would seem to have been what in ordinary life is known as an ingenuous youth, in eager sympathy with the most advanced thought of his day. As such he was full of high purpose; but his judgment was by no means mature, and accordingly he was petulant and indiscreet, — at times overbearing. From the outset he impressed himself deeply on the colonists. There was a glamour about him. A solemn sedateness of manner was then in vogue; but the winning faculty none the less made itself felt, and Vane was in person a handsome young patrician, — a man of unusual aspect, as Clarendon phrases it. His zeal and youthful piety, his manifest simplicity and directness of purpose, won all hearts. Furthermore, at this time Massachusetts was sorely pressed by the machinations of Gorges and Laud, and stood in utmost need of friends at court; Vane was the son of a privy-councillor, one of the King's most influential advisers, and, naturally

enough, the colonists, overwhelmed by a sense of their own littleness, were inclined to magnify out of all due proportion any possible influence at Whitehall. Everything therefore contributed and combined to lend importance to young Vane. His father's son, he represented also Lords Brooke and Say, the Puritan patentees of Connecticut; and he had come to New England upon the express license and command of King Charles. The result was, that before this "noble young gentleman of excellent parts," as Winthrop describes him, had been two months in America, the inhabitants of Boston, at a general meeting upon public notice, agreed that none of them should sue one another at law "before that Mr. Henry Vane and the two elders have had the hearing and deciding of the cause, if they can." It is no matter for wonder if such adulation turned the head of the recipient, especially when that recipient was a youth yet in his twenty-fourth year.

Hugh Peters, the companion of Vane in his outward voyage, was a man of wholly different stamp. While "young Sir Harry" was innately a patrician, Peters, though he had been educated at Cambridge, was of the people. There was more than an absence of natural fineness in his composition; he was coarse-grained. Over ten years Vane's senior, tall and thin, nervous and active both in mind and in body, Peters was voluble in speech and afraid of nothing. With his strong voice and fiery zeal, he was looked upon in his day as the typical Puritan fanatic and preacher; and already, before coming to New England, he was famous for the success with which he swayed great audiences. He had himself experienced persecution; yet it was not in his nature to brook opposition from

others. Not long after his arrival at Boston, the banishment of Roger Williams made vacant the Salem pulpit, and Peters was called to fill it. This he did most acceptably through five years, making himself conspicuous not only for the strict church discipline he enforced upon his people, but for the bustling outdoor energy with which he devised new business outlets for them. Subsequently, in 1641, he was sent back to England as a sort of agent of the colony, and during the Civil War he became a fighting chaplain in the army of the Parliament. Eliot says that he then "beat the pulpit drum" for Cromwell; and Burnet describes him as "a sort of an enthusiastical buffoon preacher." He certainly fought, preached and carried despatches by turns; now stimulating the soldiery by his wild eloquence, and now rushing in with them to the sack of Winchester and Basing House. When Laud, a broken, weak old man, was leaving the peers' chamber after his arraignment, Peters overwhelmed him with abuse, and, had he not been restrained, would have struck him. He preached by special appointment before Cromwell and the Commons at the Solemn Fast during the sittings of the High Court of Justice, and during the trial he was conspicuous for his exertions among the soldiery to incite them to clamor for the execution of the King. Whatever it may have been at Salem, his oratory at this time was famous for its extravagance of language, and for the coarse, familiar interpretations of Scripture by means of which he was wont to stir his audience and raise a solemn laugh. At the funeral of the Protector, he walked by Milton's side. Thus, when the Restoration took place, he had won for himself a dangerous prominence, and was even looked upon as "the most notorious incen-

diary of all the rebels." As such he was marked for destruction. His trial may be read among those of the Regicides, and he was butchered at Charing Cross on the 16th of October, 1660.¹

Landing in Boston in October, Vane was admitted to membership of the Boston Church on the 1st of November, and during the same month Peters was preaching a sort of commercial crusade in Boston and at Salem, moving the country to organize a fishing company. In January the two, acting apparently in

¹ The word "butchered" is here used advisedly, for the details of the execution are incredible in their brutality. John Cook and Hugh Peters were tried and executed together. They were dragged from the gaol to the scaffold on hurdles, the head of Harrison, who had been executed before, being fastened on Cook's hurdle, looking towards him. Peters' courage, alone of those that suffered, did not rise to the occasion. "He was in great amazement and confusion, sitting upon the hurdle like a sot all the way he went, and either plucking the straws or gnawing the fingers of his gloves;" and "he was observed all the while to be drinking some cordial liquors to keep him from fainting." Cook suffered first, bearing himself exultingly, but expressing the wish that Peters "might have been reprieved for some time, as not being prepared or fit to die." When Cook was "cut down and brought to be quartered, one they called Colonel Turner called to the sheriff's men to bring Mr. Peters near, that he might see it, and by and by the hangman came to him, all besmeared in blood, and rubbing his bloody hands together, he (tauntingly) asked, 'Come, how do you like this, Mr. Peters? How do you like this work?' To whom he replied, 'I am not (I thank God) terrified at it, you may do your worst.'" Presently he ascended the ladder, and, "after he had stood stupidly for a while, he put his hand before his eyes and prayed for a short space; and the hangman often reminding him to make haste by checking him with the rope, at last, very unwillingly he was turned off the ladder."

Another account says that "he smiled when he went away," but what he said "either in speech or prayer, it could not be taken, in regard his voice was low at that time, and the people uncivil."

Such was a public political execution at Charing Cross, in the most crowded streets of London, in the year of grace, 1660. See, also, on this subject note (5) in *Baxter's Memoir of Sir Ferdinando Gorges*, 6.

concert, went still further in their efforts for the well-being of the colony. "Finding some distraction in the Commonwealth, arising from some difference in judgment, and withal some alienation of affection among the magistrates and some other persons of quality, they procured a meeting at Boston of the governor [Haynes], the deputy [Bellingham], Mr. Cotton, Mr. Hooker, Mr. Wilson, and there was present Mr. Winthrop, Mr. Dudley and themselves." The real cause of the trouble thus mysteriously referred to, though well understood by all, could not readily be set forth in an open, public way, for it was nothing more nor less than Dudley's jealousy of Winthrop. This had broken out as early as 1633, and had then culminated in the famous interview at Charlestown, at which the former charged the latter with exceeding his authority as governor. Winthrop, in reply, challenged his critic to show wherein he had so exceeded, "and speaking this somewhat apprehensively, the deputy began to be in a passion, and told the governor that, if he were so round, he would be round too. The governor bad him be round, if he would. So the deputy rose up in great fury and passion, and the governor grew very hot also, so as they both fell into bitterness." A half reconciliation was then effected through the mediation of the clergy, but the two men were of different disposition, and Dudley could not well help criticising Winthrop; for while Winthrop, of a calm temper and naturally tolerant, inclined to the ways of mercy and forbearance, Dudley, a man of thoroughly intolerant nature, was ever harsh and severe. Narrow in mind and rough of speech, with all a narrow-minded man's contempt for opinions different from his own, "the deputy" was as outspoken as he

was courageous. Accordingly in the Charlestown interview of 1633 he had not hesitated to attack Winthrop for the too great leniency of his administration. Heavier fines, severer whippings, more frequent banishments, were called for; and as this view strongly commended itself to the average Puritan, and especially to the average Puritan divine, it had contributed in no small degree to the decline of Winthrop's popularity, and Dudley's final substitution for him in the position of governor.¹ And so, as Winthrop put it, "factions began to grow among the people, some adhering more to the old governor, and others to the late governor, Mr. Dudley,— the former carrying matters with more lenity, and the latter with more severity."

The meeting now arranged by Vane and Peters

¹ Winthrop has been regarded by most of the native New England historians, and notably by Palfrey, with a veneration which has impaired respect for their judgment whenever the authority of the first governor is invoked. They see things only through his eyes, and the ordinary scrutiny of modern historical criticism is laid aside where he is involved. Repeated instances of this indiscriminate adulation will be referred to in the course of this narrative. Nevertheless the difficulty of Winthrop's position, and the skill and high-minded rectitude with which he on the whole demeaned himself, should always be borne in mind. On this point the evidence of a foreign student and investigator carries more weight than that of one to the manor born:—"Every page in the early history of New England bears witness to the patience, the firmness, the far-seeing wisdom of Winthrop. But to estimate these qualities as they deserve, we must never forget what the men were with whom, and in some measure by whom, he worked. To guard the Commonwealth against the attacks of courtiers, churchmen and speculators, was no small task. But it was an even greater achievement to keep impracticable fanatics like Dudley and Endicott within the bounds of reason, and to use for the preservation of the state those headstrong passions which at every turn threatened to rend it asunder." Doyle, *English in America; the Puritan Colonies*, i. 165.

with a view to healing these factions was highly characteristic. The Lord was first sought. The prayer over, Vane declared the occasion of the meeting and the result sought to be obtained from it; which he described as "a more firm and friendly uniting of minds, especially of Mr. Dudley and Mr. Winthrop."

It must at first have been somewhat awkward for the officious youth, as both Winthrop and Dudley professed an utter unconsciousness of any ill-feeling or jealousy. They did not deny that there had been something of the sort long previous, but Winthrop professed "solemnly that he knew not of any breach between his brother Dudley and himself:" while Dudley comfortably remarked "that for his part he came thither a mere patient; and so left it to others to utter their own complaints." Fortunately for Vane, the existing governor, Haynes, then came to his aid, and, after a certain amount of clumsy circumlocution, proceeded, "as his manner ever was," to deal with Winthrop "openly and freely," specifying certain cases in which the latter had, as he expressed it, "dealt too remissly in point of justice." To this Winthrop replied, and, after partly excusing and explaining, came at last to the real point at issue. He "professed that it was his judgment that, in the infancy of plantation, justice should be administered with more lenity than in a settled state, because people were then more apt to transgress, partly of ignorance of new laws and orders, partly through oppression of business and other straits; but, if it might be made clear to him that it was an error, he would be ready to take up a stricter course." The aid of the clergy was then invoked. The matter was referred to the ministers present, — Cotton, Hooker and Wilson, —

to be considered overnight, and the next day they were to report a rule for the future guidance of the magistrates; and this they did, all agreeing in one conclusion, "that strict discipline, both in criminal offences and in martial affairs, was more needful in plantations than in a settled state, as tending to the honor and safety of the gospel." Winthrop thereupon professed himself satisfied. He admitted that he had theretofore "failed in overmuch lenity and remissness," but promised that he would "endeavor (by God's assistance) to take a more strict course hereafter. Whereupon there was a renewal of love amongst them."

This took place on January $\frac{12}{28}$ and $\frac{19}{29}$, 1636, and in the following May young Vane was chosen governor to succeed John Haynes. He was chosen on the 25th of the month, or what is now the 4th of June. The day following John Wheelwright landed in Boston.

CHAPTER II.

MISTRESS ANNE HUTCHINSON.

WHEN Wheelwright found himself on New England soil, it must have been to the house of his brother-in-law, William Hutchinson, that he first directed his steps. It was the reunion of a family; for not only was Mrs. Wheelwright a sister of Hutchinson, but their mother also had now come over. Nor was Wheelwright himself welcomed there as a relative merely; he was looked upon as another eminent man added to the colony, — a new pulpit light. He at once plunged into whatever of religious or political life the little settlement contained; for of that life the house of William Hutchinson, or rather the house of his wife, Anne Hutchinson, had then for some time been the centre.

It has already been mentioned that the Hutchinsons had come over to New England in 1634, about two years before Wheelwright. Of this couple their contemporaries tell us that the husband was "a man of very mild temper and weak parts, and wholly guided by his wife;" while she was a woman "of a haughty and fierce carriage, of a nimble wit and active spirit,¹ and a very voluble tongue, more bold than a man, though in understanding and judgment inferior to many women." This vigorous bit of portraiture is from the pen of the Rev. Thomas Weld,

¹ "Of a ready wit and bold spirit." Winthrop, i. 239, 296.

the unfortunate gentlewoman's most malignant enemy, and it is not necessary here to inquire as to its truth to nature. Suffice it now to say that during the two years which intervened between her own arrival in Boston and the arrival of her husband's brother-in-law, Mistress Anne Hutchinson, as she was called, slowly, skilfully, conscientiously, had been accumulating, in the heart of the little, nascent community into which she had come, that mass of combustible material which was soon to kindle into a fierce blaze. Wittingly or unwittingly, though probably the latter, she had entered upon a desperate undertaking, which she was destined to carry forward with a degree of courage and persistence, combined with feminine tact, which made the infant commonwealth throb through its whole being. She had attempted a premature revolt against an organized and firmly-rooted oligarchy of theocrats.

The early Massachusetts community was in its essence a religious organization. Church and state were one; and the church dominated the state. The franchise was an incident to church membership. The minister — the “unworthy prophet of the Lord” — was the head of the church. There was a deep significance, as there may have been a bitter sneer, in Blackstone's parting shot as he left Boston, in which the “lord-bishops” were joined with “the lord-brethren.” At the point it had now reached, the Reformation of the previous century had resulted in practically substituting for a time many little popes and little bishops for the one pope and the few great bishops. The fundamental principle of that Reformation had been the paramount authority of the Holy Scriptures as a rule or guide in life, as opposed to the

dictation of popes, synods and councils. The human mind after centuries of implicit obedience had revolted; and, in the revolt, the reaction as usual was complete. Instead of unquestioning submission to human authority, no human authority whatever was allowed to intervene between man and God's Word. The issue could not be put more forcibly than it was by John Knox in one of his discussions with Queen Mary. She said to him: — "You interpret Scripture after one manner, the Pope and cardinals after another; whom shall I believe, or who shall be judge?" — and Knox at once replied — "Ye shall believe God, that plainly speaketh in His Word; and further than the Word teaches you, ye neither shall believe the one nor the other. The Word of God is plain; and if there appear any obscurity in one place, the Holy Ghost, which is never contrarious to Himself, explains the same more closely in other places; so that there can remain no doubt but unto such as obstinately remain ignorant."

Thus God's Word was beyond question, and it only remained to interpret it and declare its meaning in any given case; but the interpreting and the declaring were the function of the clergy. The "lord-brethren" had thus been substituted for the "lord-bishops," — many local popes for the one at Rome. The casuistry to which the early New England clergy gravely had recourse in defending the position thus assumed might have moved the admiration of a Jesuit. When earnestly adjured by brethren, more liberal as well as more logical, not to make men hypocrites by compelling an outward conformity, thus practising that in exile which they themselves went into exile to escape, — when thus adjured, they replied that they had fled

from man's inventions; but there was a wide difference between man's inventions and God's institutions, and they compelled a conformity only to the latter. The institution being of God, the sin was not in the magistrate who compelled, but in his perverse will who stood in need of compulsion.¹ And so the final "thus saith the Lord" had passed from Rome to Massachusetts. Priest and inquisition had given way to bishop and high-commission, and they in their turn to minister and magistrate.

It is true, this system, unlike that of Rome, carried within it the seeds of its own decay, for it rested on discussion, and no final, inspired authority was recognized when irreconcilable differences of opinion arose. The minister carried with him only such weight as belonged to his individual character and learning, and to his ordained position; though "the unworthy prophet of the Lord," God had not touched that prophet's lips with fire, nor did he claim to be in direct communication with Him. Neither were any intermediates recognized. Early New England abjured all Saints. But when it came to the interpretation of the Scriptures, — the inspired Word, the one guide both on earth and heavenward, — though open and almost endless discussion was allowed and even encouraged, and that discussion, bristling with dialectics and casuistry, was overlaid with a rubbish of learning, yet it has not in the result always been at once apparent wherein the minister differed from

¹ "Christ doth not persecute Christ in New England. . . . For though Christ may and doth afflict his own members; yet he doth not afflict (much less persecute) Christ in them, but that which is left of old Adam in them, or that which is found of the seed of the serpent in them." Cotton, in *Publications of Narragansett Club*, ii. 27-8.

the priest. Both priest and minister had recourse to civil persecution to compel religious conformity; and, while the fagots that consumed Servetus and Savonarola were not unlike, they forever bear witness to a strong family resemblance between Romish cowl and bands of Geneva.

Not unnaturally, therefore, it has of late been somewhat the fashion to ignore this difference between priest and clergyman, and, indeed, some have even been disposed to deny its existence. Like Milton, they have claimed that after all, — “New Presbyter [was] but old Priest writ large.” And yet, practically and in point of fact, the difference was not to be measured, for in itself it was great, and in its logical consequences vital. It was the same difference in spiritual matters which exists politically between an absolute ruler under right divine, and a civil authority exercised under the restrictions of a written constitution. In the spiritual contests of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Pope represented divine right; the Bible, the written constitution. The constitution was, it is true, indisputably vague, and everything depended on the construction given to its provisions. Except in certain small localities like Holland, or among a few most advanced thinkers of the day, who, like Roger Williams, were looked upon as visionaries, the conception of spiritual freedom and religious toleration had no more footing in the mind of the seventeenth century than the idea of freedom in crime and immunity from its legal penalties has now. Human thought had not yet grasped the distinction between personal liberty where the rights of others are not involved, and license where those rights are involved; so far, indeed, from having

grasped this distinction, one of the plainly stated contentions of the more advanced advocates of religious tolerance was, if a man conscientiously disbelieved in the right of any human authority, he ought not to be forced to obey it. None the less, the first great step towards educating the human mind to the difference between spiritual freedom and criminal license was taken when Bible law was substituted for papal dictum. The written word then became matter for judicial construction; but, like any other written law, when once construed and its meaning ascertained by competent and recognized authority, it was held by common consent to be the rule in force. It only remained to compel obedience to it, just as now obedience is compelled to the criminal law. When, therefore, Cotton argued that, while it was wrong to persecute man against conscience, no man's conscience compelled him to reject the truth; and therefore to force the truth upon him could be no violation of conscience, — when he argued in this way he uttered that which to us is foolishness; but, from his standpoint of time and light, he was merely asserting that on points of doubtful construction the law must be established by the tribunal of last resort, and, when once established, must be uniformly obeyed by all or enforced upon all. The fallacy which lurked between his premises and his conclusion did not suggest itself to him. A spiritual authority and a spiritual law were deemed just as necessary as a criminal authority and a criminal law.

Nevertheless, though the divine of the reformed church of the sixteenth century did set himself up as the ordained expounder of the written law, the importance of the ground gained when a written law was

substituted for an inspired dictum must not be lost sight of. All else followed in due time. In the searching discussion which ensued, the learning, the common sense, and finally even the authority and commission of those who comprised the tribunal, were questioned; and at last the law itself, and the necessity of any law, or of general conformity to it, was openly denied. "This was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof;" but two centuries and a half ago, to the early New England Puritans, it was worse than a paradox, — it was a blasphemy. As well doubt the existence of God himself as question the binding authority of His Word.

The Hebrew Bible was, then, the fundamental religious law — the spiritual constitution, as it were — of the Puritan community. The clergy were the ordained and constituted expounders of that law, — the Supreme Theological Court. Before them and by them as a tribunal, each point at issue was elaborately and learnedly discussed; reasons were advanced and authorities cited for each decision they rendered. Behind their decisions was the Word; and behind the Word was God and His Hereafter. The spiritual organization was complete.

The religion of the Puritan was, also, realistic in all its parts, — so realistic, indeed, as to be a practical piece of machinery, — human, mundane machinery. There was God, the Constitution and the Court — and the clergy were the Court. But to the men and women composing the Puritan community, the Court was no more a reality — hardly more a visible thing — than the Supreme Being himself; for in those days religion meant a great deal. It was no sentiment or abstraction. The superstition which prevailed is to

the modern mind well-nigh inconceivable. All shared in it. Sleeping and waking, at bed and board, in the pulpit, in the field or at the work-bench, God and his providences, the Devil and his snares, were ever present. Their direct interposition was seen in events the most trivial. A harmless reptile crawls bewildered among the elders at a synod and is killed by one of them, "and out of doubt the Lord discovered somewhat of his mind in it;" so the serpent personified the Devil, and the synod the churches of Christ, while Faith was represented by that elder who crushed the head of the Evil One. There takes place "a great combat between a mouse and a snake, in the view of divers witnesses;" and the pastor of the first church of Boston interprets the portent to his people, while the governor of the colony records his words. The snake is again the Devil, while the mouse becomes "a poor contemptible people, which God had brought hither, which should overcome Satan here and dispossess him of his kingdom." Two unfortunate men are drowned while raking for oysters; "it was an evident judgment of God upon them, for they were wicked persons." The hand of God was heavy also on those who spake "ill of this good land and the Lord's people here;" some were taken by the Turks, and they and their wives and their little ones sold as slaves; others were forsaken of their friends, or their daughters went mad or were debauched, or their children died of the plague, or their ships blew up with all on board. Soon or late, some ill befell them or theirs; and through that ill the finger of the Lord was revealed. A poor barber, called hastily to perform a dentist's office, and bewildered in a storm of snow between Boston and Roxbury, is found frozen to

death; and presently it is remembered he had been a theological adherent of Mrs. Hutchinson. There befalls a great freshet, and the Indians "being pow-wowing in this tempest, the Devil came and fetched away five of them." A father, industrious or interested in his task, works one hour after Saturday's sunset, and the next day his little child of five years is drowned; and he sees in his misfortune only "the righteous hand of God, for his profaning His holy day against the checks of his own conscience." A wife is suspected of the murder of her husband, a mother of killing her illegitimate child, and as they touched them "the blood came fresh" into the dead faces, and the bodies "bled abundantly." And when the most terrible misfortunes incident to maternity befell Anne Hutchinson and her friend, the no less unhappy Mary Dyer, the grave magistrates and clergy, gloating in blasphemous words over each lying detail of the monstrous fruit of their wombs, saw therein "God himself bring in his own vote and suffrage from heaven."

But it is needless to multiply instances. The records of the time are full of them; for even angry men in their disputes would treasure up in memory every trivial or ludicrous mishap which befell their opponents, and, while so doing, they were said to be busy "gathering Providences." The finger of an omnipresent Almighty was thus visible everywhere and at all times; now meting out rewards and punishments while reversing the action of the wind and tide, and then revealing itself in terror through strange portents in the sky.

Among a people educated to this high pitch of fervor, theological controversy was the chief end towards

which the higher branches of education were directed. The Scriptures, and the volumes of commentary upon them, were the sole literary nutriment; while they were studied only that scholars might, with gloomy joy, dispute over the unknowable. Not that there were then no other books in the world. It is true, there was no light current literature in the modern sense of the term; but the great body of the classics existed, and every man and every woman of good education had a familiarity with them now possessed by few. They were "the humanities" of the time. Of the great names in modern letters, also, the greatest were already known. Boccaccio, Dante, Ariosto and Tasso were familiar in the Italian. Don Quixote is alluded to in the New Canaan as a book with which every one was acquainted. Rabelais had died nearly a century before, and the third reprint of Montaigne's *Essays*, in its English translation, had appeared in 1632. Bacon, Shakspeare, Spenser and Ben Jonson had done their work; Milton was doing his, for it was in 1634 that *Comus* was set upon the stage: but, to the New England Puritan, Spenser was an idle rhymester, Jonson a profane scoffer, and Shakspeare a wanton playwright. As to Boccaccio and Rabelais, copies of their works would in primitive Massachusetts have been rooted out as Devil's tares. That there were French books, as well as Latin, in Governor Winthrop's library, we know; and it is possible to imagine him sitting in his library in primitive Boston with a volume of Montaigne in his hand: but to Endicott or Dudley and the rest, while those writings of Cotton, which to us are as devoid of life as they are of value, were full of interest, the pages of the French humorist would have seemed idle words. Fauticism

is no less destructive to the capacity of general literary enjoyment than a diseased appetite is to a delicate taste. Drunkards crave alcohol, and communities exalted with religious fervor care only for books on theology. Early New England had no others. Some adequate idea of the utter intellectual aridity which consequently prevailed may be derived from the Sewall diary. Sixty years after the Antinomian controversy, Pole's Synopsis, and the expositions of Calvin and Caryl, were the companions of the reading man's leisure, while the *Theopolis Americana* and the *Magnalia* were the ripe fruits of the author's brain.

Fortunately, the New Englander came of a hard-headed stock. Though individuals at times lashed themselves into a state of spiritual excitement bordering close upon insanity, and occasionally crossed the line, this was not common. When all was said and done, there was in the early settlers a basis of practical, English common sense, — a habit of composed thought and sober action, which enabled them to bear up with steady gait under draughts of fanaticism sufficiently deep and strong to have sent more volatile brains reeling through paroxysms of delirium. Only twice or thrice in all their history have New Englanders as a mass lost their self-control; and because they lost it then, other communities, with whom losing it has been matter of too frequent occurrence to excite remark, have never forgotten those occasions, nor allowed New Englanders to forget them. Such an occasion was the Antinomian controversy, and such again was the witchcraft mania.

Among this people, — strong, practical, self-contained and tenacious, burning with a superstitious zeal which evinced itself in no sharp, fiery crackle, but in a

steady glow, as of white heat, which two centuries did not suffice wholly to cool, — among this people stood the clergy, a class by themselves, almost a caste. Learned in things theological, highly moral, deeply imbued with a sense both of the dignity and the duties of their calling, the first generation of New England divines was no less bigoted as a class than men with minds at once narrow and strong are wont to be. That they were to the last degree intolerant needs not be said, for all men are intolerant who, in their own conceit, know they are right; and upon this point doubt never entered the minds of the typical divines of that generation. Their pride of calling was intense. Not only in their pulpits, but in their daily lives they were expected to and did make a peculiar sanctification obtrusively manifest. They were not as other men; and to this, not only their garments, but their Scriptural phrase and severe visage bore constant witness. And in these last characteristics — the dress, the speech and the faces of the clergy — lay the heart and the heat of the great Antinomian controversy. The ministers were the privileged class of that community, — “God’s unworthy prophets,” as they phrased it. Living in the full odor of sanctity among God’s people, — His chosen people, whom He “preserved and prospered beyond ordinary ways of Providence,” — they constituted a powerful governing order. And now, suddenly, a woman came, and calmly and persistently intimated that, as a class, God’s prophets in New England were not what they seemed. No longer were they unworthy in their own mouths alone.

Though she is said to have been a cousin of John Dryden, little is known of Mrs. Hutchinson’s antecedents in England; nor is it necessary that much

should be known. Her husband was the owner of an estate at Alford, and descended from a family the genealogy of which has since been traced with results more curious than valuable. Though Alford was so far from the English Boston that Mrs. Hutchinson could hardly have been a constant attendant at St. Botolph's Church, she seems to have been such an ardent admirer of the Rev. John Cotton that, when "he kept close for a time, and fitted himself to go to New England," she prepared to follow. Born about the year 1600, during the time she lived in Boston — a little less than four years — Anne Hutchinson was a woman in the full vigor of life. She had a strong religious instinct, which caused her to verge closely on the enthusiast, and a remarkably well-developed controversial talent. But above all else Anne Hutchinson, though devoid of attractiveness of person, was wonderfully endowed with the indescribable quality known as magnetism, — that subtle power by which certain human beings — themselves not knowing how they do it — irresistibly attract others, and infuse them with their own individuality. Among the many well-known phases of emotional religion, that of direct intercourse with the Almighty has not been the least uncommon; and, if Mistress Hutchinson did not ^{as} actually pretend to this, she verged dangerously near it. She certainly in moments of deep spiritual enthusiasm felt movements which she professed to regard as direct divine revelations. Not that she actually claimed to be inspired, or to speak as one prophesying; but at intervals she professed to feel that the Spirit of God was upon her, and then she was not as her ordinary self, or as other women. The exact line between this and inspiration is one not easy to draw; yet probably

some shadowy line did exist in her mind. However this may be, the mere suggestion of such a thing was enough with the early Massachusetts divines. The doctrine of an inward light was to them peculiarly hateful, and they regarded such a light rather as a gleam of hell fire than as a heaven-born beam. That they themselves were not in any way inspired was a cardinal point in their religious faith.¹ They had for their guide the written Word; and that only. For any one to claim to have more, — to be in direct spiritual communication with the Almighty, — was to assert a superiority in what was the very soul of their calling. They were “unworthy prophets” of the Lord; and here was one who claimed to be more nearly than they in the Master’s confidence. But the God they worshipped was that same Jehovah with whom direct and personal intercourse had been held by the prophets of old. He was not a metaphysical abstraction. Freely pictured in glass and on canvas, the awe with which a finer sense has since surrounded Him did not surround Him then. Always present, always in that human form in which He revealed himself to Moses, his face might well be seen at any moment, even as his voice was often heard and his hand felt. But to them, his servants, He had given only his Scriptures through which to ascertain his will. When, therefore, Mistress Hutchinson claimed, through a process of introspection, to evolve a know-

¹ This was explicitly set forth in the Westminster Confession of 1643: “The whole Council of God concerning all things necessary for his own Glory, Men’s Salvation, Faith and Life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary Consequence may be deduced from Scripture: Unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new Revelations of the Spirit, or Traditions of Men.” See, also, Ellis, *The Puritan Age in Massachusetts*, 124–166.

ledge of the divine will from her own inner consciousness, she not only, in the eyes of the ministers, began to share in the blasphemies of Knipperdolling and John of Leyden, but she did so through the assertion of a most impudent and irritating superiority. If she did not directly say it, her every act was a repetition of the phrase, "I am holier than thou!"

Thus Mrs. Hutchinson's whole course in Massachusetts was a direct and insulting challenge to the body of the clergy. Bad enough in itself from their point of view, it was aggravated by the feminine ingenuity with which she made herself disagreeable. She belonged to a type of her sex for the production of which New England has since achieved a considerable notoriety. She seems to have been essentially transcendental. She might perhaps not inaptly be termed the great prototype of that misty school. She knew much; but she talked out of all proportion to her knowledge. She had thought a good deal, and by no means clearly; having not infrequently mistaken words for ideas, as persons with more inclination than aptitude for controversy are wont to do. To confute her was not easy, for her disputation was involved in a mist of language which gave the vagueness of a shadow to whatever she might be supposed to assert. Nevertheless, here was this eloquent mystic lifting up her voice under the very eaves of the sanctuary, and throwing the subtle charm of her magnetism over the hearts of God's people.

Boston was in 1637 the village capital of an infant colony. It was a very small place, — so small that when Josselyn visited it, a year later, he spoke of it as containing not above twenty or thirty houses. In this he must have been mistaken, as a stranger often is, in

roughly estimating the size of a town new to him ; for, even then, Boston must have numbered about two thousand inhabitants of all ages.¹ The original huts and cabins, of rough-hewn logs, were fast giving place to a better class of frame houses, the Elizabethan fronts and overhanging gables of which looked out on crooked, unpaved lanes, something more than cow-paths, but not yet streets. No building in the town was eight years old, and the new brick house of Mr. Coddington, the treasurer of the province, was the only one of the kind. It was a hard-working little community ; but, when work was done, only religion remained upon which social and intellectual cravings could expend themselves. There were no newspapers, — no dances, parties, concerts, theatres or libraries. They had the Sabbath services, followed by the church-meetings, and the Thursday lectures. The wedding was a civil service ; the funeral a sombre observance.² In a state of society such as this it was inevitable that the love of excitement, common to all mankind, should take a morbid shape. There must be religious sensations, seeing there could be no other ; and the place

¹ It is difficult to see how, with the strict church attendance then exacted, so large a population could have been accommodated in one meeting-house. Yet in 1638 Boston was called upon to furnish twenty-six men for the Pequot War, out of a total levy of one hundred and sixty. The population of Massachusetts in 1637 could not well have been less than twelve thousand. (See *supra*, 340, n.) It was probably more than that. If the levy was proportional, it would indicate for Boston a population of at least one thousand nine hundred and fifty.

² "Marriages are solemnized and done by the Magistrates, and not by the Ministers. At burials, nothing is read, nor any funeral Sermon made, but all the neighborhood, or a good company of them, come together by tolling of the bell, and carry the dead solemnly to his grave, and there stand by him while he is buried. The ministers are not commonly present." Lechford, *Plain Dealing*, 94.

was so small that a moderate-sized sensation absorbed it wholly. Though the stage was far from large, Mrs. Hutchinson found it admirably prepared for her; the audience craved excitement, every eye was upon her, her voice filled the theatre.

During her earlier life in Boston she seems to have acquired a well-deserved popularity by her considerate spirit and skill as a nurse and adviser in cases of child-birth, and ailments peculiar to her sex. She was evidently gentle, and by nature sympathetic. Then she began to meddle with theology, to which, from the first, she had shown herself much inclined. Even on her voyage her utterances had excited doubts as to her orthodoxy in the mind of the Rev. Zachariah Symmes, a devout man who had come with her; and his warnings to the magistrates for a time delayed her admission to the church. But admitted she was at last, and about two years later she began to make her presence felt. Her husband's house stood in what might be called the fashionable quarter of the town, — a good stone's throw to the south of the church and behind it, not far from the town spring, and nearly opposite the house of Governor Winthrop.¹ Here, and at the homes of certain of her acquaintances, she presently began to hold a series of exclusively female gatherings, and later of gatherings composed of both sexes. At the earlier of these she herself presided, and in all she was the leading spirit. These meetings were numerous attended, and at those held exclusively for women, forty, sixty, and even eighty would be present. The original idea was to recapitulate, for the benefit of

¹ It occupied the Old Corner Bookstore lot, now so called, on Washington and School streets, extending up the latter to the present City Hall enclosure. *Memorial History of Boston*, i. 174, n., 579, n.

such as had been unable to attend Sabbath services, the substance of the recent discourses of the clergy, and more particularly of Cotton. Small private gatherings of a similar character had been not uncommon ever since the beginning of the settlement ; but, though the idea was not new with Mrs. Hutchinson, she developed it. Under her inspiration the germ grew rapidly ; or, as she might herself have said, it came up in a night, even as the gourd came up which God prepared for Jonah. The woman was in fact a born social leader. Her meetings were the events of a primitive season.

At first the elders and magistrates favored them and smiled upon her. It looked like an awakening ; souls were being drawn to Christ. It soon became what would now be known as a revival. But Anne Hutchinson was light-headed as well as voluble. She had an unruly tongue as well as an insatiable ambition, and, not long contenting herself with the mere repetition of sermons, she began to comment upon them, to interpret and to criticise. In other words, she set up as a preacher on her own account. The women were not accustomed to hear one of their own sex "exercise," and she was popular among them ; so they flocked to her more and more. A community living in a state of religious exaltation is of course predisposed to mental epidemics. Accordingly, to the utter dismay of the clergy and the old magistrates, every one near enough to feel her influence was soon running after the new light. "It was a wonder," wrote Winthrop, "upon what a sudden the whole church of Boston (some few excepted) were become her new converts, and many also out of the church, and of other churches also ; yea ! many profane persons became of

her opinion." And in another place he asserts that "she had more resort to her for counsell about matter of conscience than any minister (I might say all the elders) in the country." To the same effect the Rev. Thomas Weld declared that she "had some of all sorts and quality in all places to defend and patronize" her opinions; "some of the magistrates, some gentlemen, some scholars and men of learning, some burgesses of our General Court, some of our captains and soldiers, some chief men in towns, and some men eminent for religion, parts and wit." Then Mrs. Hutchinson's head turned. She had a calling to be a religious enthusiast, and it would seem that visions of political greatness also began to float before her. In imagination she saw her husband seated in the chair of Winthrop and of Vane, with herself by his side, "a prophetess, raised up of God for some great work now at hand, as the calling of the Jews."

Unfortunately for Mistress Hutchinson, what has since been known as "the emancipation of woman" had not in the first half of the seventeenth century been formulated among political issues, and the more conservative soon began to look upon her much as Governor Winthrop subsequently looked on crazy Mistress Ann Hopkins,— "a godly young woman and of special parts," who had lost her understanding "by occasion of her giving herself wholly to reading and writing;" whereas, "if she had attended her household affairs, and such things as belong to women, and not gone out of her way and calling to meddle in such things as are proper for men, whose minds are stronger, etc., she had kept her wits, and might have improved them usefully and honorably in the place God had set her."

But at first Mrs. Hutchinson was encouraged. In modern language, she was even fashionable; her *séances* were in vogue. Not only did the thoughtful and the half-crazed, but the very parasites flocked to them. Side by side with young Harry Vane were Richard Gridley, "an honest, poore man, but very apt to meddle in publike affaires, beyond his calling or skill," and canny Jane Hawkins, "notorious for familiarity with the Devil."¹ Indeed, there have not come down to us from those times many touches of nature more life-like than Wheelwright's description of the grounds of "goodwife Hawkins's" Antinomianism. The Rev. Thomas Weld had accused her, in the language just quoted, of being a witch; whereupon Wheelwright very sensibly replied that she was —

"A poore, silly woman, yet having so much wit as, perceiving Mrs. Hutchinson ambitious of proselytes, to supply her wants she attended on her weekly lecture (as it is called), where, when Mrs. Hutchinson broached any new doctrine, she would be the first would taste of it: And being demanded whether it were not clear to her, though she understood it not, yet would say, *Oh yes, very clear*. By which means she got, through Mrs. Hutchinson's affection to her, some good victuals, insomuch that some said she followed Christ for loaves. Now seeing those things were so, me thinks our Author need not have been so rigid in his opinion of her . . . when, as it appears, she complied with her patroness, not so much out of love to her positions as possets, — being guilty, I think, of no other sorcery, unless it were conjuring the spirit of Error into a Cordial."²

¹ Weld, *Short Story*, 31. The unfortunate Jane Hawkins' proclivities to the Evil One gave Governor Winthrop much trouble; for "she grew into great suspicion to be a witch" (Winthrop, i. *263). Where no other sources of information are cited, Winthrop's *History*, and Weld's *Short Story* are the authorities for the narrative.

² Bell, *John Wheelwright*, 198.

For the severe old theocrats it was a serious matter to have a school of criticism — a *vivâ voce* weekly religious review, as it were — thus spring into life, under the very eaves of the meeting-house. They had been accustomed to have their teachings accepted as oracles; but those teachings now no longer passed unchallenged, nor were the voices of the critics hushed even at the gates of the tabernacle. On the contrary both Mrs. Hutchinson and her disciples audaciously carried their war into Africa. She herself publicly left the congregation when the pastor, Wilson, rose to preach. Others followed her example, contemptuously turning their backs on their ministers; while it was plaintively observed that "the most of them were women, and they pretended many excuses for their going out, which it was not easy to convince of falsehood in them, or of their contempt" of the pastor.¹ Yet others boldly and in open meeting challenged the minister's words almost before they had passed his lips. So that the Rev. Thomas Weld was driven lugubriously to exclaim, with a degree of feeling which speaks volumes as to his own individual experiences in that kind, —

"Now, after our sermons were ended at our public lectures, you might have seen half a dozen pistols discharged at the face of the preacher (I mean) so many objections made by the opinionists in the open assembly against our doctrine delivered, if it suited not their new fancies, to the marvellous weakening of holy truths delivered. . . . Now the faithful ministers of Christ must have dung cast on their faces, and be no better than legal preachers, Baal's priests, Popish factors, Scribes, Pharisees, and opposers of Christ himself! Now they must be pointed at, as it were with the finger, and reproached by name."

¹ Cotton, *Way Cleared*, 81.

The cup was indeed a bitter one. Yet, bitter at best, it was administered with a perverse ingenuity which distilled it to gall. Mistress Hutchinson professed what was called, in the theological parlance of the time, the Covenant of Grace, as distinguished from the Covenant of Works. Without going into any detailed explanation of long-forgotten seventeenth century theology, it is sufficient for present purposes to say that the relations of the Creator with mankind seem in it to have been largely based on the analogy of a human landlord and tenant. To mankind the earth had been given; not outright, but on certain terms and conditions, all of which were expressed in the Hebrew Bible. These terms, as primarily set forth, had been violated by Adam, and the original covenant between Creator and created, known as the Covenant of Works, had then ceased to be binding, and been terminated by one party to it. Under this covenant all of the seed of Adam would have been saved, and enjoyed after mundane death an eternity of heavenly life. When the original Covenant of Works was thus cancelled, the Creator, instead of, so to speak, ejecting and destroying Adam, made, out of a spirit of pure mercy, a new covenant with him and his seed, under which not all of the sons of man would be saved, but only such of them as the Creator might see fit to spare, — the Lord's elect. And this was known as the Covenant of Grace.¹

¹ "To open and clear this matter the following *Positions* may be laid down.

1. " *It has pleased God all along from the beginning of the World to transact with man in a Covenant way.* This is an effect of God's good pleasure towards him. God could be no debtor to his creature, till he made himself so by his own *promise*. He might, if he had so pleas'd, stood upon his Sovereignty, and challenged the Obedience

Originally, therefore, for one to be under a Covenant of Works meant to be of those left under the original and violated compact, and consequently not included among those admitted to the benefits of the new compact, or Covenant of Grace. In other words, those under a Covenant of Works were the unregenerate seed of Adam, — not the Lord's elect; those under a Covenant of Grace were the regenerate seed. The whole question went back to the third chapter of the book of Genesis, — the garden, the serpent, original sin and the fall of man.

The theory of the two covenants, starting from this far-away origin, underwent during the fierce religious controversies of the reformation an outward change at from him that was due to him, without engaging any reward for it. But to shew his *goodness* and bounty to man, he has been pleas'd to bind himself to him by Covenant.

2. "GOD never has made but two Covenants with man: which are ordinarily distinguish'd into, the *Covenant of Works*, and the *Covenant of Grace*. The *Covenant of Works*, was that which God made with Adam in a state of Innocence; in which all his seed were comprehended with him: and under which, he as their *Head* stood a probationer for life, upon the condition of perfect obedience. Of this *Covenant* we have an account in many places of Scripture. The *Covenant of Grace* is with man fallen: the first revelation whereof was made presently after God had past sentence upon him; and the first account we have of it is in that promise, Gen. 3. 15. And was more and more explain'd as God saw fit at divers times, and in divers ways to the fathers by the *Prophets*: but especially to Abraham and the Church of Israel; as the writings of the *Prophets* fully shew." Williams, *Essay to Prove the Interest of the Children of Believers in the Covenant* (1727), 5-6.

Winthrop says that Mrs. Hutchinson "brought over with her two dangerous errors: 1. That the person of the Holy Ghost dwells in a justified person. 2. That no sanctification can help to evidence to us our justification. From these two grew many branches; as, 1, Our union with the Holy Ghost, so as a Christian remains dead to every spiritual action, and hath no gifts nor graces, other than such as are in hypocrites, nor any other sanctification but the Holy Ghost himself." (i. *200.) This is Winthrop's first mention of Mrs. Hutchinson.

the hands of Luther. It was, indeed, a necessary part of the reaction against mediæval Romanism that heart-piety and spiritual exaltation, or justification by faith as it was termed, should be opposed to the tests of confession, penance, pilgrimages, legacies to the church, masses, Ave Marias, etc., all constituting justification by works. In the theological parlance of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, therefore, neither grace nor works, as applied to the two covenants, signified what they signified in the beginning, or what they signify now. Grace was no longer an act of supreme mercy, as at first, nor was it conscientious carriage in life, as now; but it implied a certain vague and mystic exaltation and serenity of soul arising from the consciousness of a Heaven-directed heart, — a serenity not to be attained by the most exact observance of the formalities of religion; the word works, on the other hand, did not imply, as now it would, the idea of a life devoted to good deeds, as distinguished from one of mere empty professions, but it meant simply a rigid and exact compliance with the forms of pietism, — its fastings, its prayers, its sanctimoniousness and harsh discipline, — in a word, with all external observances involving continuous mortification of soul as well as body.¹ Viewed from a modern point of view the seventeenth century Covenant of Grace was as mystic, indefinable and delusive as its Covenant of Works was harsh, material and repulsive.

Nevertheless, there the two covenants were, the very corner-stones of theology, — recorded and set forth from the beginning of the world, accepted by all. The single question was as to the elect, — which among

¹ This difficult subject is fully discussed by Dr. G. E. Ellis in his *Puritan Age in Massachusetts*, 300-362.

the living seed of Adam were, through the Covenant of Grace, to enjoy life everlasting? — and which, walking under the Covenant of Works, were damned to an eternity of Hell fire? When, dead in the flesh, the immortal soul of the believer appeared before God's judgment seat, how justify the life which had been lived? What pleas for salvation would be listened to? And one class of religionists insisted that a record of faithfully observed rules of conduct, a careful regard for the decalogue, alms, fasts, Sabbath attendance, — all this was but to claim the advantage of the abrogated Covenant of Works. Hell yawned for such. On the other hand was infinite faith, a love of Christ unlimited, an inward sweetness and light, — and these, in their case they proclaimed, meant a justification through Grace.

The only certain elements in the awful problem were death and the judgment. The situation, accordingly, is not one conceivable now; but it was very real among those dwelling in Massachusetts in 1636, when Mistress Anne Hutchinson proceeded to draw the line. With her it may be said to have been a question of *afflatus*, for she contended that the divine spirit dwelt in every true believer; but that the fact of any single person — even though such person might be a minister of the gospel, of extraordinary gifts — being a true believer, could not with any certainty be inferred either from a demeanor of sanctity or from conduct in life. Mrs. Hutchinson's Covenant of Grace is, perhaps, most nearly expressed in modern religious cant as a "condition of true inwardness." But with her it further implied the actual indwelling of the Spirit of the Lord. He in whom that Spirit dwelt was of the elect. He in whom it did not dwell might be a very worthy

man, and what we would call a good conventional minister ; but God's seal was not on his lips.

The conclusion to be drawn from all this was painfully apparent. To say that a grave divine was under a Covenant of Works was a gentle paraphrase for calling him a "whited sepulchre." This certainly was bold enough ; but Mrs. Hutchinson did not stop here. With great cunningness of aggravation — with an almost unsurpassed faculty of making herself innocently offensive — she then proceeded, not to designate particular divines as being under a Covenant of Works, but to single out two of their whole order as walking in a Covenant of Grace. These two were John Cotton, and, after his arrival, John Wheelwright. The others were necessarily left to make the best of an obvious inference.

Looked at even after the lapse of two centuries and a half, and in the cold perspective of history, it must be conceded that this was more than the meekest of human flesh could be expected quietly to endure ; but the early clergy were not conspicuous for meekness. Nor had they come to New England with this end in view. On the contrary, they had come expecting God's people to be there ruled by God's Word ; and that Word God's ministers were to interpret. And now, on the very threshold of this theocracy, the sanctity of His mouthpiece was disputed. They loved controversy dearly ; but this was no case for controversy. God's kingdom was threatened from within ; the serpent was among them. The head of the serpent must be crushed. So they sternly girded themselves for the fray : and opposed to them was one woman only ; but her tongue was as a sword, and she had her sex for a shield.

CHAPTER III.

A QUARREL IN A VESTRY.

IT was not until it reached its later stages that what has passed into New England's history as the Antinomian controversy involved the whole province of Massachusetts. At first it was confined to the church in Boston, — a family affair, so to speak. Mrs. Hutchinson, like many other women before and since, did not fancy her minister. He failed to appeal to her. The cause of her dislike is not known. Most probably it lay upon the surface and was of a personal character; for the Rev. John Wilson, though doubtless in his way a worthy, well-intentioned man of the commonplace, conventional kind, had about him little that was either sympathetic or attractive. Harsh in feature and thick of utterance,¹ he was coarse of fibre, — hard, matter-of-fact, unimaginative. In his home and church life he is reputed to have been a not unkindly man, and a “devoted friend and helper to those who needed his love and care;” while in his pulpit he was more remarkable for his strength of faith and zeal for ordinances than for his talents as a preacher. On the other hand, he was by nature stern, unrelenting, bigoted; a man “than whom orthodoxy in New England had no champion more cruel and more ungenerous.”² Of his conduct and bearing in the Antinomian con-

¹ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 40.

² J. A. Doyle, *English in America: The Puritan Colonies*, i. 419.

troversy of 1637 much will need to be said in these pages, while in the Baptist persecution of twenty years later his zeal and passion led him to revile and even strike prisoners being led away from the judgment seat;¹ and, in 1659, when the two Quakers, William Robinson and Marmaduke Stevenson, were hanged on Boston Common, the aged pastor of the First Church not only denounced them fiercely from his pulpit, but he even railed at them from the foot of the gallows.²

¹ "Upon the pronouncing of [my sentence] as I went from the Bar, I express myself in these words: 'I blesse God I am counted worthy to suffer for the name of Iesus;' whereupon Iohn Wilson (their Pastor as they call him) strook me before the Iudgment Seat, and cursed me, saying, 'The Curse of God, or Iesus, goe with thee;' so we were carried to the Prison." Letter from Obadiah Holmes in *Illl Newses from New England*, iv. *Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.* ii. 47.

² With these two was Mary Dyer, who will be often referred to in this narrative. She was reprieved, and, when the others were hanged, sat on the steps of the scaffold. The story is most characteristic of the time and people under discussion, but can only be told in the quaint language of the original chronicle:—

"Then Mary Dyar was called, and your Governour said to her, to this effect, — Mary Dyar, you shall go to the place whence you came, and from thence to the place of Execution, and be hanged there until you are Dead: — To which she replied, The Will of the Lord be done. — Then your Governour said, Take her away, Marshal: She Answered, Yea, joyfully shall I go. — So she was brought to the House of Correction again, and there continued, with her other two Friends, in Prison, till the 27th of the same Month; . . . And on the 27th of the 8th Month, aforesaid, ye cans'd the Drums to beat, to gather your Soldiers together for the Execution; and after your Worship was ended, your Drums beat again, and your Captain, James Oliver, came with his Band of Men, and the Marshal, and some others, to the Prison, and the Doors were opened, and your Marshal and Jaylor call'd for W. Robinson and M. Stevenson, and had them out of the Prison, and Mary Dyar out of the House of Correction, . . . and your Captain, with his Band of Men, led them the back way (it seems you were afraid of the fore-way, lest it should affect the People too much) to the Place of Execution, and caused the Drums to beat, when they attempted to speak (hard Work) and plac'd them near the Drums, for that purpose, that when they spake, the People might not hear them,

In such a man as this, however useful he might be for much of the coarser though necessary work of life, there was little to attract a person of delicate perception who in great Multitudes flock'd about them. . . . I say, your Captain caused his Drums to Beat, when they sought to speak; and his Drums he would not cease beating, tho' they spake to him, whilst they were speaking. (A Barbarous Inhumanity never heard of before in the English Nation, to be used to suffering People.) And as he led them to the place of Execution, your old bloody Priest, Wilson, your High-Priest of Boston (who was so old in Blood, that he would have had Samuel Gorton, and those with him, long ago to be put to Death, for their Differing in Religion; and when but one Vote parted it, was so Mad, that he openly inveighed against them who did it, saying in the Pulpit, Because thou hast let go the Man, whom I have appointed to Destruction, Thy Life shall go for his Life, and thy People for his People; Preaching from that Text, who said, — He would carry Fire in one Hand, and Faggots in the other, to Burn all the Quakers in the World. — Who having some of those Peoples Books in his Hand, as they were burning the Books of Friends by your Order, threw them in the Fire, saying, — From the Devil they came, (Blasphemous Wretch!) and to the Devil let them go. — He who said to ye, when ye sat on the Blood of these Men, — Hang them,¹ or else (drawing his Finger athwart his Throat, so making Signs for it to be cut, if ye did it not) I say, this your bloody old High-Priest, with others of his Brethren in Iniquity, and in persecuting the Just, met them in your Train-Field; and, instead of having a sense upon him suitable to such an Occasion, and as is usual with Men of any Tenderness, he fell Taunting at W. Robinson, and shaking his Hand in a light Scoffing manner, said, — Shall such Jacks as you come in before Authority with your Hats on? — with many other taunting words. To which W. Robinson replied, — Mind you, mind you, It is for the not putting off the Hat, we are put to Death. — And when W. Robinson went cheerfully up the Ladder, to the topmost round above the Gallows, and spake to the People, — That they suffered not as evil Doers, but as those who testified and manifested the Truth, and that this was the Day of their Visitation, and therefore desired them to mind the Light

¹ "This is that Priest Wilson, whom C. Mather, in his late History of New England, so much commends, and with his Brother in Iniquity, John Norton (of whom more hereafter) ranks with John Cotton (a Man of a better Spirit, in his Day) under the Title of Reverend and Renowned Ministers of the Gospel, comparing him to David and John the Apostle; and calls, That Great Saint and Worthy Man, that was such an irreverent, unworthy and blood-thirsty Persecutor of the People of God: But, let him know, That Sinners are no Saints; nor, no Murderer hath Eternal Life abiding in him, 1 John 3. 15."

tion like Mistress Hutchinson, — nay, more, there must have been in him much that was absolutely repulsive to her. The antipathy clearly was not on the pastor's side. Indeed, at first, in his heavy, mannish way, he seems to have been disposed to patronize his female parishioner, so much his intellectual superior. He encouraged her meetings, manifesting his goodwill whenever occasion offered, and bearing cheerful witness to the ways of free grace. He was not a man to entertain a secret, instinctive distrust; for, though compounded of a clay less fine, he was by nature frank, open and outspoken. Presently his suspicions were aroused. He was human, too, and undoubtedly he began to feel jealous. To the pastor, this constant and public adulation of the teacher could not be altogether grateful. Indeed, it was plainly meant to be otherwise than grateful to him. To bear and forbear was not in the man's nature; so by degrees he passed from open approval to silent disapproval, and then it was not long before he began to speak out. So far as his side of the case was concerned, this did

that was in them, the Light of Christ, of which he Testified, and was now going to Seal it with his Blood. — This old Priest in much Wickedness said, — Hold thy Tongue, be silent, Thou art going to Dye with a Lye in thy Mouth. . . . So, being come to the place of Execution, Hand in Hand, all three of them, as to a Wedding day, with great cheerfulness of Heart; and having taken leave of each other, with the dear Embraces of one another, in the Love of the Lord, your Executioner put W. Robinson to Death, and after him M. Stevenson . . . and, to make up all, when they were thus Martyr'd by your Order, your said Priest, Wilson, made a Ballad of those whom ye had Martyr'd. . . . Three also of Priest Wilson's Grand-Children died within a short time after ye had put these two Servants of the Lord to Death, as something upon his Head, who cared not how he bereaved the Mother, of her Son, and the Children, of their Father, and the Wife, of her Husband. The Judgment of the Lord in . . . which, is to be taken Notice of." *New England Judged* (1661,) pp. 122-5, 126, 136.

not mend matters ; for as an antagonist — in what might be called the socio-parochial fence of that day — John Wilson was wholly at the mercy of Anne Hutchinson. She was as quick as he was clumsy, and his grave censure was met with a contempt which was at once ingenious and studied. Presently she found that he stood in her way. In Boston there was but one church ; and clearly that church was not large enough for both. Cotton was Mrs. Hutchinson's favorite preacher. At his feet she had sat at home ; when he came to New England she soon followed. Next to Cotton's, she set most store on the teachings of her husband's kinsman, Wheelwright ; and when Wheelwright landed in Boston her influence was at its height.

The church was already split into factions. On the one side was the pastor, supported by Winthrop — then deputy — and a few others ; on the other side was Mrs. Hutchinson, carrying with her the whole body of the members, with the governor, Vane, at their head. The teacher, Cotton, also notoriously inclined to her. The young sap was moving in the tree, and Boston, at least, was ripe for revolt against the old order of men and of things ; but hostilities had not yet begun.

The coming of Wheelwright brought on a crisis. It was Mrs. Hutchinson, doubtless, who now conceived the idea — if indeed she had not already for some time been entertaining it — of having Wheelwright installed as an assistant teacher by Cotton's side. This could not, of course, be agreeable to Wilson, who for some time must have had cause to realize that his own religious influence was on the wane ; just as he had seen the political influence of his life-long friend and patron, Winthrop, wane before. He and his friends

accordingly, if they did not actually oppose the suggestion, received it with coldness. Then Mrs. Hutchinson seems to have begun hostilities. She struck; and she struck none the less hard because the blow was given in a woman's way. She intimated that the pastor of the church was, after all, not an able minister of the New Testament; he was not sealed with the spirit; he was under a Covenant of Works. The conflict now began to rage fiercely all through the little town. Wilson was struggling for what to him was worth more than life, — a minister, he was struggling to sustain himself in his pulpit and before his people. With him was Winthrop. Opposed to him was all Boston. Indeed, the members of his parish seem even now to have been as men infatuated; they acted as those might act who were subject to the wiles of a sorceress.

Meanwhile, outside of Boston all was comparatively quiet. The contagion of the new opinions had, indeed, spread to Roxbury and a few other of the neighboring towns, church-members of which had doubtless attended Mrs. Hutchinson's gatherings; but, as a whole, the rest of the province pursued the even tenor of its way, though the air was full of rumors as to the strange uproar going on in Boston, — the new ideas advanced there, the dissensions in the church, the quarrel between Mr. Wilson and his people, the dubious attitude of Cotton. The sympathies of the other ministers were wholly with Wilson. Not only was he a member of their order of the regular, conventional type, but he was receiving harsh treatment; for the course of Mrs. Hutchinson and those who followed her was as unprovoked and cruel as it was ingenious and feminine.

Presently, therefore, the ministers of the outlying towns determined to intervene, in their brother's behalf, and endeavor to restore peace to his distracted church. A meeting of the General Court was to take place in October, and it was arranged that the ministers should then come to Boston and hold a conference on these matters among themselves and with the members of the Court. They did so Tuesday, the 25th, and, Cotton and Wheelwright both taking part with the rest, some progress into the incomprehensible was made. They agreed on the point of sanctification, "so as they all did hold that sanctification did help to evidence justification;" but they were not all of a mind as to the "indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost;" and none of the ministers were disposed to go the length of asserting "a union of the person of the Holy Ghost, so as to amount to a personal union;" though it was understood that Mrs. Hutchinson and Governor Vane held even this advanced tenet. However unintelligible the discussion might be in other respects, one thing was clear, — if the last proposition was admitted, inspiration followed. The way was open for the appearance of a brood of God's prophets in New England.

The conference resulted in nothing, and the open move, already referred to, was made in favor of Wheelwright as an assistant teacher. This had already been proposed at the meeting of the Boston church held after the services of the previous Sabbath; and now on Sunday, the 30th, five days after the conference of the clergy, the proposal was brought up for final action. The meeting was one of far more than ordinary interest, for it was felt that something decisive was at hand; and presently, when the ser-

voices were ended, the calling of Wheelwright was formally propounded. It is easy to imagine the silence which for a brief space prevailed in the crowded meeting-house. It was at last broken by Winthrop, who rose and said that he could not give his assent to the thing proposed. He spoke with much feeling, and referred to the fact that the church was already well provided with able ministers, "whose spirits they knew, and whose labors God had blessed in much love and sweet peace;" while he objected to Wheelwright, as being a man "whose spirit they knew not, and one who seemed to dissent in judgment." He then proceeded to specify certain questionable doctrines supposed to be entertained by the new candidate, having reference to a distinction between "creatures" and "believers," and the relations of either, or both, with the Holy Ghost. Vane immediately followed on the other side, and "marvelled" at the point just made; quoting the high authority of Cotton in support of the doctrine in question. This reference naturally brought Cotton to his feet, who proceeded to demur and define; and in closing called upon Wheelwright to explain himself on a few controverted points of theology. This the latter then proceeded to do. When he had finished, Winthrop closed the debate, for the time being, by declaring that, although he personally felt the utmost respect for Mr. Wheelwright, yet he could not consent to choose him an associate teacher, "seeing he was apt to raise doubtful disputations."

The matter was taken up again the next day. In the little village community, anything which affected the church affected every member of it. The proposal to make Mr. Wheelwright an associate teacher, and

the discussion to which it had given rise, had all that Sunday evening and the next morning been the one subject talked about in every household and at each street corner. A good deal of feeling was evinced also over the position taken by Winthrop; and more yet at the warmth with which he had maintained it. For the last, when the debate was renewed, he made an ample apology. He then went on to state at considerable length his views upon certain "words and phrases, which were of human invention, and tended to doubtful disputation rather than to edification."

When he had finished, a profound silence seems to have pervaded the grave, well-ordered assembly. No one rose to reply to him, or to continue the discussion; and here the whole matter was allowed to drop. No factious spirit was shown. According to the rule of the Boston church, it was sufficient that grave opposition had been expressed. The selection of Wheelwright was urged no further. /

But Wheelwright was too active and able a man to remain long without a call, and a large and very influential portion of the Boston church was in close sympathy with him. Among these were Coddington, Hutchinson, Hough and others, who held the large allotments, which have been referred to, at the Mount. Those dwelling in that region, though few in number, had for some time been complaining of the hardships their remote and isolated position imposed upon them. They were mainly poor men with families. Ten or twelve miles from the meeting-house, this distance they had to traverse each Sabbath, or else fail to participate in worship. Accordingly the gathering of a new church at the Mount had been for some time under discussion. The chief objection was that such

action would apparently defeat the very end for which Boston had received "enlargement," — the upholding of the town and the original church, — for the loss of so many leading members of both, as would move away if a new society was gathered, could not but be severely felt. To meet this objection it had been arranged in the September previous that those dwelling at the Mount should pay a yearly town and church rate to Boston of sixpence an acre for such lands as lay within a mile of the water, and threepence an acre for such as lay inland. It was a species of non-resident commutation tax. This arrangement imposed in turn on the Boston church a well-understood obligation to make adequate provision for the spiritual well-fare of those thus tributary to it. In the days of sparse settlement the situation could not but occur, and the natural way of meeting it was to establish branch churches, or "chappels of ease," as they were termed in the English church, for the accommodation of the outlying precincts.¹ Some elder, or gifted brother, was wont to hold forth, or to prophesy, as it was phrased, at these each ordinary Sabbath, while the sacrament was administered at ~~str.~~^{str.} periods in the mother church.

As soon as Winthrop's dissent had put a final stop to the plan of choosing Wheelwright associate teacher, the friends of the latter from the Mount had recourse to this plan. At the very meeting at which Winthrop insisted on his objection, the records of the First Church show that "Our brother, Mr. John Wheelwright, was granted unto for the preparing for a church gathering at Mount Woollystone, upon a petition from some of them that were resident there."

¹ III. *Mass. Hist. Coll.* iii. 75.

This vote was passed on the 30th of October. On the 20th of February following, an allotment of two hundred and fifty acres of land at the Mount was made to the new pastor, to be located "where may be most convenient, without prejudice to setting up a towne there." Wheelwright seems to have ministered faithfully and acceptably to those settled immediately beyond the Neponset, during a period of almost exactly one year.

Chosen to his ministry, if such it might be called, in what are now the earlier days of November, the new pastor may, during the winter's inclemency, have ministered at the homes of his little congregation, and the following spring and summer preached "abroad under a tree," like Phillips and Wilson at Charlestown seven years before; but in all probability during the succeeding summer of 1637, for John Wheelwright and under his supervision, the rude meeting-house was built, which afterwards stood for years in Braintree "over the old Bridge" and just south of it, on the rising ground where the road, or trail rather as it then was, between Boston and Plymouth crossed the little streamlet subsequently known as the town brook.¹

¹ Wilson, *250th Commemorative Services*, 26, 41; *Braintree Records*, 2, 9; Pattee, *Old Braintree and Quincy*, 228; Lnnt. *200th Anniversary Discourses*, 121-2; Adama, *Address in Braintree* (1853), 74.

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CHAPTER IV.

A PROVINCE IN A TURMOIL.

THE settlement of Wheelwright at the Mount did not serve to restore theological tranquillity either to the Boston church or to the province. On the contrary, the action of the ministers at their October conference, and the sympathy they had then shown for their brother Wilson, only stimulated Mrs. Hutchinson. Her tongue was more active than ever, and her followers more noisily aggressive. So far from being overawed by authority, she met authority with what sounded very like defiance; for now she declared that his brethren were no better than Wilson. None of them were sealed; none of them were able ministers of the New Testament. They, as well as he, were all under a Covenant of Works; they were Legalists, to a man.

During the month of November, 1636, a long controversy was carried on between Vane and Winthrop, arising out of the discussion at the time of Wheelwright's proposed appointment. Vane, it has been seen, went with Mrs. Hutchinson the full length of maintaining "a personal union with the Holy Ghost." He was not content with Cotton's belief in "the indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost in a believer." He was apparently disposed to contend that a believer, truly justified, was himself the Holy Ghost. The discussion turned on a metaphysical abstraction,

which the disputants sought to solve by quoting at each other the English rendering of Hebrew or Greek texts, and scraps of Patristic learning. Conducted in writing "for the peace sake of the church, which all were tender of," it covered the first "three hundred years after Christ" and was, of necessity, absolutely sterile. Both parties to it agreed that the Holy Ghost was God, and that it dwelt in believers; but in what way nowhere appeared, "seeing the Scripture doth not declare it." Winthrop, therefore, earnestly entreated Vane that in the phrase "indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost" the "word 'person' might be forborn, being a term of human invention and tending to doubtful disputation in this case."

As the rumors of this controversy, and of Vane's ardent support of the new opinions, spread through the province, Winthrop's popularity underwent a sudden revival. He was recognized as the champion of the old theocracy, the defender of the true faith, the clergy and the ancient order of things. His too great leniency was forgotten. He was the opponent of Vane; he alone in Boston had been faithful found among the faithless many. Vane, on the other hand, was rapidly getting his first lesson in realities, and he did not relish it. From being the umpire in all disputes, — the blessed peacemaker, — he was now, everywhere outside of Boston, looked at askance, as the great sower of the seeds of dissension in God's vineyard. The most scandalous motives were freely imputed to him; these troubles were all to promote his selfish ends. Conscious of the purest purpose only, young Sir Harry was of a sensitive nature, easily wrought upon. He probably felt his intellectual superiority to those about him; he knew that his views

were broader than theirs, that he had a larger and firmer grasp of principle. But, after all, a callow youth, he had yet to learn how to bear up successfully against the hard, practical tests to which, fortunately, day-dreams of human progress are wont to be subjected. His nerves, therefore, soon completely got the better of his judgment; and in December, receiving letters from England, he informed his brother magistrates that his immediate return was necessary. At once the General Court was called together to arrange for his departure.

The magistrates and deputies being assembled at Boston, on the 7th of December, the Governor made known his intentions. The nature of the urgent demands upon him from England were not publicly stated, but certain of the magistrates to whom the letters had been shown agreed that they were imperative, "though not fit to be imparted to the whole court." Accordingly the members of the Court, after looking at one another for some time in grave perplexity, decided to hold the matter under advisement overnight; and so adjourned. When they met the next morning, one of the magistrates rose and made a speech expressive of the deep regret felt by all at losing such a governor in a time of so great peril, referring more particularly to the Pequot troubles then impending. This either proved too much for the excitable and overwrought Vane, or it afforded him the opportunity for which he was waiting. Suddenly, bursting into a flood of tears before the astonished assembly, he blurted out the true facts in the case, declaring that the causes assigned for his departure were not the real causes, — that even though they involved his whole worldly ruin, they would not have

induced him then to depart, if it were not for the wicked accusations advanced against him, as if he were the cause of the dissensions and differences which rent the colony, and which he feared must soon bring down a judgment of God upon them all. This singular confession naturally changed the aspect of the case. Urgent private business in England might afford a governor sufficient reason for vacating his office; a conviction on his part of impending public disaster was wholly another thing. Accordingly, when Vane had calmed himself and wiped away his tears, the deputies very properly said that if such were his reasons for going, they did not feel bound to give their assent. Vane then went on to protest that what had escaped from him during his recent outburst had been dictated rather by feeling than judgment, — that the private reasons contained in his letters seemed to him imperative, and that he must insist upon receiving leave to depart.

There can be little question that a large majority of the Court were quite willing events should take this course, and, indeed, would have been only too glad to be thus rid of their too impressionable governor. Accordingly a general and respectful silence indicated that assent which it would have been awkward, at least, formally to announce. After some further debate it was then decided to choose a new governor in Vane's place, instead of having the deputy succeed him, and that day week was fixed for holding the court of elections. The matter seemed to be disposed of, and the way was open for the conservatives quietly to resume political control. Winthrop was to replace Vane.

This arrangement wholly failed to meet the views

of the friends of Mrs. Hutchinson. No sooner, therefore, were the tidings generally known in Boston, than the town was alive with excitement. A meeting of certain of the more prominent among the church-members was at once held, and it was decided that Vane must not be permitted to go, — that they did not apprehend the necessity of his departure upon the reasons alleged; and a committee was appointed to wait upon the Court, and present this view of the case. Whereupon Vane, whether quietly or with more tears and passion does not appear, “expressed himself to be an obedient child to the church, and therefore, notwithstanding the license of the court, yet, without the leave of the church, he durst not go away.” But the fact would seem to be, that Vane’s somewhat transparent *coup de théâtre* failed. The deputies evinced an unanticipated readiness to take him* at his word; and so his friends of the church had to help him out of an awkward predicament.

When the day fixed for the new election came, it was merely voted not to proceed, and the election was deferred until the regular time in May. Meanwhile Vane’s troubles were by no means lessened by his vacillating and puerile course. The clergy whom he had offended might be narrow-minded bigots; but they were none the less men, stern and determined. A number of them had come to Boston, at the time the new election was to have taken place, to advise with Winthrop and their other friends in the Court as to what course should now be pursued to put an end to the dissensions. They were especially anxious to win Cotton over from the Opinionists, as the followers of Mrs. Hutchinson were called. They were anxious to win him over for two reasons: not only was he the

most eminent man of their order, and as such respected and even revered by them all, but his great name and authority were a tower of strength to their opponents, making their cause respectable and shielding it from attack. So Weld, Peters and the rest now drew up under specific heads the points on which it was understood Cotton differed from them, and submitted the paper to him, asking for a direct answer of assent or dissent on every point. Cotton took the paper and promised a speedy reply.

When Vane heard of this meeting he was deeply offended, for it had been held without his knowledge. A day or two later the ministers and the Court met to consider the situation. The Governor of course presided, and opened the proceedings by stating in a general way why they were there gathered. Then Dudley and others, after the usual practice, exhorted all to speak freely; whereupon Vane pointedly remarked, from his place at the head of the table, that, for his part, he would be content to do so, but that he understood the ministers were already settling matters in private and in a church way, among themselves. Then another scene took place. Hugh Peters stood up and proceeded sternly to rebuke the Governor. In language of the utmost plainness he told Vane that, with all due reverence, it "saddened the ministers' spirits" to see him jealous of their meetings, or apparently seeking to restrain their liberty. As the loud-voiced fanatic began to warm in his exhortation, the unfortunate young Governor realized the mistake he had made and tried to avert the gathering tempest; he explained that he had spoken unadvisedly and under a mistake. Peters could not thus be stopped, and what ensued was intensely characteristic of the Pres-

byterian and Puritan times. It vividly recalls to mind those parallel scenes, which only a few years before had been so common between the ministers of the Scottish Kirk and the son of Mary Stuart, when they were wont to scold him from their pulpits, and bid him "to his knees;" so that once when — as Vane had now done — James complained of some meeting of theirs as being without warrant, "Mr. Andrew Melville could not abide it, but broke off upon the King in so zealous, powerful and irresistible a manner that, howbeit the King used his authority in most crabbed and choleric manner, yet Mr. Andrew bore him down, and uttered the commission as from the mighty God, calling the King but 'God's silly vassal;'" and, taking him by the sleeve, told him that there were "two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland. There is Christ Jesus the King, and his kingdom the kirk, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member." And all this he had said to him "divers times before." So now in New England, Hugh Peters — speaking, it may safely be assumed, after his wont, with much vehemency — plainly told Governor Vane that until he came, less than two years before, the now troubled churches were at peace. Again the Governor broke in with the text that the light of the gospel brings a sword. In reply Peters besought him "humbly to consider his youth and short experience in the things of God, and to beware of peremptory conclusions, which he perceived him to be very apt unto." Then the Salem minister launched into a long discourse on the causes of the new opinions and divisions, leaving the discomfited chief magis-

trate of Massachusetts to meditate on the consequences of juvenile indiscretion.¹

Later in the proceedings Wilson rose and seems to have relieved his feelings by what Winthrop describes as "a very sad speech." It would appear indeed to have been a veritable jeremiad. The pastor of the church of Boston deplored the condition of things, and predicted the disintegration of the settlement unless existing troubles were speedily settled. He touched upon doctrinal points, and took direct issue with Cotton, who only that very day had, in a sermon before the Court, laid down the principle that "sanctification was an evidence of justification." Wilson now denied this, — though apparently the metaphysical issues involved became at this point too subtle to be grasped by Winthrop, who alone has given an account of the debate; and it is obvious that in this regard the ordained theological combatants were quite as much in the dark as those of the laity who strove to follow them. While one learned divine asserted a thesis beyond human intelligence to comprehend, another denied it; and the lay members of the congregation listened, and tried to look wise over the spiritual issues involved. As to the practical issues, no illumination was needed and, in regard to them, all were sufficiently in earnest; for, when it came to trouble in the churches, Mr. Wilson had ground to stand upon. That did exist; especially, as his listeners knew, in his own church. And he attributed it all to the "new opinions risen up amongst us." At the conclusion of this diatribe, which evidently

¹ Subsequently in England, during the time of the Commonwealth, Vane and Peters would seem to have sustained very friendly relations towards each other. (Yonge, *Life of Peters*, 5.)

called forth marks of decided approval from the audience, some expression of opinion was taken, and it was found that all the magistrates excepting Vane, Coddington and Hough, and all the ministers excepting Cotton and Wheelwright, were in sympathy with the Boston pastor.

In the way of conferences this month of December, 1636, was a busy time in Boston. Not content with dealing first with Cotton and then with Vane, the visiting clergy appear to have gone to the fountain-head of the trouble, seeking an exchange of views with Mrs. Hutchinson herself.¹ She was nothing loath, and the occasion could not have been otherwise than edifying in the extreme. Being summoned to the place where the ministers were already met, she there found Wilson, Peters, Weld and others of those opposed to her; and of her friends, Cotton, Wheelwright, Leverett (the elder of the Boston church) and a few more. Peters acted as spokesman for the ministers, while Wilson busied himself with taking notes. Addressing Mrs. Hutchinson "with much vehemency and intreaty," Peters urged her, as the source from which all difference had arisen, to explain why she conceived that he and his brethren were different from Cotton

¹ This must have been the time of the meeting, though the date of it nowhere appears. Peters, however, in his evidence, says: — "We did address ourselves to the teacher of the church [Cotton] and the court then assembled . . . our desire to the teacher was to tell us wherein the difference lay between him and us. . . . He said that he thought it not according to God to commend this to the magistrates, but to take some other course, and so . . . we thought it good to send for this gentlewoman." (Hutchinson, ii. 490.) Here is a very distinct reference to the conference between his brother ministers and Cotton, which took place, as appears in the text, on December 11 or 12, 1636, and was followed immediately by the interview, described at the trial, between them and Mrs. Hutchinson.

in their ministry, and why she so openly asserted that they taught a Covenant of Works. At first Mrs. Hutchinson would seem, as well she might, to have been somewhat appalled at the presence in which she found herself, and the directness of her arraignment. She was even disposed to deny what was charged. But, when they offered proof, she presently recovered her courage, and even assumed her rôle of prophetess, exclaiming, — "The fear of man is a snare; why should I be afraid?" Then, in reply to Peters' questions, she asserted that there was indeed a wide and broad difference between Cotton and the others, that he preached a Covenant of Grace, and they a Covenant of Works; and, moreover, that they could not preach a Covenant of Grace, because they were not sealed, and were no more able ministers of the gospel than were the disciples before the resurrection of Christ. Cotton, in whose presence all this was said, found his position becoming uncomfortable, and accordingly broke in, objecting to the comparison. But she insisted upon it. Then she instanced Shepard of Cambridge and Weld of Roxbury, as neither of them preaching a Covenant of Grace clearly. The former, she said, was not sealed. "Why do you say that?" he asked. "Because," she replied, "you put love for an evidence." Presently Mr. Phillips of Watertown, observing how reckless her criticisms were, and bethinking himself that she had never heard him preach, asked her in what his ministry differed from that of Cotton. She apparently asserted that he too was not sealed. As Peters afterwards remarked: — "There was a double seal found out that day," — a broad seal and a little seal, — "which never was." Then the discussion seems to have run off into the unintelligible;

and, when at last they parted, all were not quite clear whether what had taken place tended, as a whole, to allay exasperation or to increase it.

But no such doubt rested on Wilson's speech before the General Court. That had amounted to nothing less than an angry arraignment of almost the whole body of his own people, including both Cotton and Vane. It excited, therefore, great anger among them, and at once the contest was transferred back from the General Court to the Boston church. It was there proposed to admonish him. Again Winthrop came to his defence, claiming that, whatever the pastor might have said before the Court, it was general in its application, and of a privileged nature. When called upon to explain what he meant by his statements, and to name those he referred to in them, Wilson did not appear well. He equivocated, in fact, most barefacedly, professing that he had not intended to reflect on the Boston church or its members, any more than upon others. Every one who listened to him knew that this was not so. Vane and Mrs. Hutchinson were members of his church. It was they to whom he had referred; and what he now said was not true.

X It was at last determined to proceed against him publicly, and on Tuesday, the ^{31st}/_{10th} of ^{January}/_{February}, the Boston pastor was arraigned before his flock and in his own meeting-house. Vane led the attack; and, after his nature at that time, he did it violently. Then the whole congregation followed, pouring bitter and reproachful words upon their minister's head. Winthrop and one or two others alone said anything in the pastor's behalf, and in his journal Winthrop remarked that "it was strange to see how the common

people were led by example to condemn him in that which, it was very probable, divers of them did not understand, nor the rule which he was supposed to have broken ; and that such as had known him so long, and what good he had done for the church, should fall upon him with such bitterness for justifying himself in a good cause." Wilson bore the ordeal meekly, answering as best he could, but to little purpose. The great majority were in favor of immediately passing a vote of censure. Throughout Cotton had sympathized with the church, expressing himself with a good deal of feeling ; but he had not failed to preserve a certain judgment and moderation. He now intervened, saying that he could not at that time proceed to censure, as the usage of the Boston church required unanimity, and some were opposed to it ; nevertheless he did administer a grave exhortation. That the teacher should thus rebuke the pastor, in the presence of the whole congregation, was probably a thing un-
X
exampled, and a picture at once suggests itself, of a venerable man standing up, with white hair uncovered before his people, to be reprimanded by his junior. It is, therefore, well to bear in mind that the facts were quite otherwise. Though Wilson was pastor and Cotton teacher, the former was a man not yet fifty, and with a large share of health and vigor ; while the latter was not only several years the older of the two, but recognized by all as much the more eminent. Nevertheless, the proceeding was outrageous and unjustifiable. Deeply mortified as he must have been, Wilson bore himself with manly dignity. He took his scolding before his flock in silence, and, going quietly on in his duties, he bided his time. And his time came.

Throughout the next forty days the storm continued to rage with ever-increasing violence. Winthrop and Cotton engaged in a written controversy over the proceedings in Wilson's case, which correspondence Winthrop says was loving and gentle, though in it he "dealt very plainly" with the teacher. A whole brood of new heresies was meanwhile currently alleged to be cropping out in Boston. It was even asserted that such opinions were publicly expressed, "as that the Holy Ghost dwelt in a believer as he is in heaven; that a man is justified before he believes; and that faith is no cause for justification." That heresies such as these should be tolerated in any well-ordered Christian community was looked upon by the body of the clergy as wholly out of the question. After due consultation among themselves, therefore, they determined to labor with Cotton once more. He himself afterwards asserted that, through all these times, Mrs. Hutchinson seldom resorted to him, and was never in Vane's confidence or in his. Indeed, he added, probably with a good deal of insight into the woman's character, even when Mistress Hutchinson "did come to me, it was seldom or never, that I can tell of, that she tarried long. I rather think she was loath to resort much to me, or to confer long with me, lest she might seem to learn somewhat from me."¹ But the general report was otherwise; and so his brethren drew up another schedule of differences, this time under sixteen heads: —

This they "gave to him, entreating him to deliver his judgment directly [on the sixteen points;] which accordingly he did, and many copies thereof were dispersed about. Some doubts he well cleared, but in some things he gave

¹ *Way Cleared*, 88.

not satisfaction. The rest of the ministers replied to these answers, and at large showed their dissent, and the grounds thereof; and, at the next General Court, held 9th of the 1st, they all assembled at Boston, and agreed to put off all lectures for three weeks, that they might bring things to some issue."

CHAPTER V.

THE FAST-DAY SERMON.

SUCH was the condition of affairs in Boston and in the province of Massachusetts when the year 1637 opened. "Every occasion," says Winthrop, "increased the contention, and caused great alienation of minds; and the members of Boston [church], frequenting the lectures of other ministers, did make much disturbance by public questions, and objections to their doctrines, which did any way disagree from their opinions; and it began to be as common here to distinguish between men, by being under a Covenant of Grace or a Covenant of Works, as in other countries between Protestants and Papists."

From the depths of one of the now forgotten controversies in which Luther was a chief participant, the Orthodox faction had exhumed a term of opprobrium to be applied to their opponents; for then to say that a man was an Antinomian or an Anabaptist was even more offensive and injurious than it would be in the present day to speak of him as a communist or a free-lover. It was merely another way of calling him a lawless libertine or a ferocious revolutionist. It would be mere waste of space to go into the history of a religious sect which seems to have existed from the earliest days of the Christian era; suffice it to say that the name Antinomian was coined by Luther and applied to the adherents of John Agricola. It meant,

as its derivation implies, that those designated by it set themselves against and above law and denied its restricting force, — though law, it should be added, meant in the religious disputations of the days of Luther the Mosaic code as revealed in the Old Testament, and more especially set forth in the decalogue. In other words, Antinomianism was merely another phase of the same old dispute over the one true and only path to salvation. The idea of the arraignment at the bar of final judgment, universally accepted in those days and that community, has already been alluded to. It was in no way vague, remote or mystical as it has now become. The doctrine that a pure, straightforward, conscientious performance of duty in this life is the best preparation for the life to come, which, under these conditions, may safely be left to take care of itself, — this modern doctrine of justification and salvation had then no vogue. On the contrary the judgment seat was a sternly realistic, matter-of-fact tribunal, fashioned on human models, but never absent from thought, — a living, abiding terror. It was, in the minds of the men and women who then lived, just as much an ordeal to be looked forward to and be prepared for as, with certain classes, the admission to an academy or college or a profession is looked forward to and prepared for now: only, in the former case the question at issue was all-important, and the decision was one from which there was no appeal; for behind the judgment seat were the gates of Heaven and Hell, — life everlasting or endless torments. As already has been said, — What plea in justification would be accepted at that tribunal? — The Church of Rome preached the doctrine of works, — obedience to the law as expounded by authority,

observance of ceremonies, conformity in life : — the Lutheran, on the other hand, abjuring all forms and ceremonials, put his trust in faith, implicit and unquestioning, and in divine grace.

So far all was simple. The issue was easy to comprehend. But the revealed Word now presented itself, and to it the pitiless logic of Calvin was applied. The biblical dogmas of creation, original sin and redemption through God's grace had to be brought into some accordance with the actualities of this life and the revelation as to the life to come ; omnipotence, omniscience, prevision and predestination were to be accepted and disposed of. Logic gave way under the strain, and human reason sought refuge in the inconceivable. What was right and good and just among men was, necessarily, neither just nor good nor right with God. He was a law unto himself.

Then followed the dogma of the elect. As prescience was a necessary, and so admitted, attribute of the omnipotent God, everything was ordained in advance, and consequently all men were predestined from the beginning, — many would be lost, a few would be saved ; — but, whether lost or saved, the decision had been reached from the beginning and could in no way be influenced. It is difficult to see how what was called Antinomianism did not follow of necessity from these premises. The elect were superior to the restraints of law ; and this Luther distinctly asserted. Antinomianism was therefore the refuge of the libertine : — if he was destined to be saved, he would be saved, all possible misdeeds to the contrary notwithstanding ; if he was doomed to be lost, the rectitude of a life of restraint would avail him nothing.

As applied to Anne Hutchinson, Henry Vane and John Wheelwright the term Antinomian was, therefore, an intentional misnomer.¹ About them there was no trace of license, no suggestion of immorality or hypocrisy; nor, it must be added, was there any disposition to protestantism, or even increased liberality in religion. They accepted both law and gospel. They denied none of the tenets of Calvin. They merely undertook to graft upon the stern, human logic of those tenets certain most illogical, spiritual offshoots of their own. In other words, they also, like their teacher and prototype the transcendentalists of that earlier day, were in their own estimation the elect of God. Conscious of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, they, and they only, could look forward with confidence to the inevitable time when, standing before the judgment seat, they should plead in justification the Covenant of Grace.

Such was New England Antinomianism and such was the spiritual issue the Antinomian presented, — an issue harmless enough in our days, though not so wholly devoid of harm then; an issue not easy now to comprehend, nor calculated to excite a feeling of sympathy. Ordinarily it would be dismissed as merely one more phase of religious exaltation. But in the case of Anne Hutchinson and her following, with the spiritual was combined a political issue, and with both yet other issues, social, parochial and individual, until together they made up a drama in which almost no element was wanting. The theological struggle was

¹ In his Fast-day sermon, now to be referred to, Wheelwright expressly enjoined his hearers and sympathizers "to have care that we give not occasion to others to say we are libertines or Antinomians." Bell, *Wheelwright*, 175.

X between Anne Hutchinson and John Wilson, and it was over Cotton; the political struggle was between Vane and Winthrop. Cotton, both factions hoped to secure. That he now sympathized with those who preached the new Covenant of Grace, or the Antinomians as their opponents designated them, was apparent; but his brother ministers looked upon him as a very precious brand which it might yet be given unto them to snatch from the burning. Anne Hutchinson, with whom the church-people of Boston were literally infatuated, outside of Boston was regarded with hate, — and a hate not of the mere conventional kind, but of that exquisitely rancorous description which has been set apart by itself and regularly classified as the *odium theologicum*. Though Wheelwright had moved to Mount Wollaston, and for several weeks been ministering to the scattered farmers thereabouts, his position in the controversy was well understood. Too sensible and cool-headed to go the whole length X Mrs. Hutchinson went, he did not believe in her misty transcendental revelations; but, as regards the dogmas of sanctification and the personal presence of the Holy Ghost in the true believer, he stood in advance probably of Cotton, and by the side of Vane. None the less, by classing him with Cotton, as alone being sealed and preaching a Covenant of Grace, his sister-in-law had conferred on the minister at the Mount a dangerous prominence. His position was not like that of Cotton. He did not enjoy the same reputation or equal authority. He did not even have a distinct settlement of his own. He rested moreover under the imputation of inclining to novel and questionable doctrines. Everything combined, therefore, to centre upon Wheelwright the angry eyes of his brethren.

He was the representative, the kinsman, the favored preacher of her whom they called the "virago," the "she-Gamaliel," the "American Jezebel." She was a woman, and her sex could not but shield her somewhat. He was a man, and a contentious one; and as such he invited assault. So over his head the clouds began to gather, black and ominous. An occasion for their bursting only was needed; and for that his enemies had not long to wait.

On the ^{19th}/_{22d} of January a solemn fast was held, because of "the miserable estate of the churches in Germany" and in England, the growing Pequot troubles, and the dissensions nearer home. Wheelwright may have preached to his own people at Mount Wollaston on the morning of that day; but later he seems to have gone to Boston, where in the afternoon he attended church services and listened to a discourse from Cotton. After Cotton had finished, Wheelwright was called upon "to exercise as a private brother;" and he improved the occasion by delivering his famous sermon.¹ There is strong presumptive evidence that, even on this day of penitential humiliation, certain of God's unworthy prophets were cunningly lying in wait one for another; for, as he held forth, some one among those who listened to him was rapidly taking down a verbatim report of all that he uttered.

Once hostilities are decided upon, a pretext for open war is never far to seek. In itself there was assuredly nothing in that Fast-day sermon which would have attracted any general public notice. It had a very direct bearing on things then exercising the public mind; but this is usual in occasional discourses. As a matter of taste, so sharp an arraignment of those

¹ Bell, *Wheelwright*, 13, 15, notes 21 and 25.

walking in a Covenant of Works was at that time decidedly out of place, especially when preached from Mr. Wilson's pulpit. Though the congregation, with less than half a dozen exceptions, entirely sympathized in it, yet they all knew, and Mr. Wilson knew, that he, the minister of the church, was receiving an exhortation. It was this apparently which gave the affair what zest it had. In fact the whole thing would seem to have been arranged beforehand between Mrs. Hutchinson and Wheelwright. It bore on its face traits highly suggestive of her handiwork. The Lord, it was seen, might be made to deliver Wilson into the hands of his enemies on the Fast-day; and so Wheelwright stood ready to smite, and spare not.

In common with most writers of his time, and especially theological writers, Wheelwright was always involved and obscure in expression. How, in fact, the congregations of those days understood and followed the pulpit utterances is incomprehensible now. Possibly there was an inspiration of fanaticism then about, which has since passed away; but, more probably, much that was said was not taken in at all, and religious fervor supplied the place of comprehension. The Fast-day sermon is no better calculated for easy comprehension by an audience, or for that matter by a reader even, than are the other productions of Wheelwright's pen. Couched in that peculiar scriptural language in which the Puritan and the Covenanter delighted, and of which the most familiar specimen — *plus Arabe que l'Arabie* — is the address of Ephraim McBriar after the skirmish at Drumclog, it is, except in parts, a very dull performance; and, if delivered to a modern congregation, would hardly excite in those composing it any sensations except curiosity,

soon followed by drowsiness and impatience. But, so far as phraseology and the corresponding delivery of the speaker are concerned, the following extracts from Wheelwright's discourse might well have been the original which inspired the more brilliant imitation of Scott: —

“The way we must take, if so be we will not have the Lord Jesus Christ taken from us, is this, — We must all prepare for a spiritual combat, — we must put on the whole armor of God, and must have our loins girt and be ready to fight. Behold the bed that is Solomon's; there is threescore valiant men about it, — valiant men of Israel. Every one hath his sword in his hand and, being expert in war, hath his sword girt on his thigh, because of fear in the night. If we will not fight for the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ may come to be surprised. Solomon lyeth in his bed; and there is such men about the bed of Solomon; and they watch over Solomon, and will not suffer Solomon to be taken away. And who is this Solomon but the Lord Jesus Christ; and what is the bed but the church of true believers; and who are those valiant men of Israel but all the children of God! They ought to show themselves valiant; they should have their swords ready; they must fight, and fight with spiritual weapons, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual. And, therefore, wheresoever we live, if we would have the Lord Jesus Christ to be abundantly present with us, we must all of us prepare for battle, and come out against the enemies of the Lord; and, if we do not strive, those under a Covenant of Works will prevail. We must have a special care, therefore, to show ourselves courageous. All the valiant men of David and all the men of Israel, — Barak, and Deborah, and Jael, — all must out and fight for Christ. Curse ye Meroz, because they came not out to help the Lord against the mighty! — Therefore, if we will keep the Lord Jesus Christ and his presence and power amongst us, we must fight. . . .

“When Christ is thus holden forth to be all in all, — all in the root, all in the branch, all in all, — this is the gospel. This is that fountain open for the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness; and this is the well, of which the wells under the old testament were certain types. This same well must be kept open. If the Philistines fill it with earth, with the earth of their own inventions, those that are the servants of Isaak, — true believers, — the servants of the Lord, — must open the wells again. This is the light that holdeth forth a great light, that lighteth every one that cometh into the world. And if we mean to keep Christ, we must hold forth this light.

“The second action we must perform and the second way we must take is, — When enemies to the truth oppose the ways of God, we must lay hold upon them, we must kill them with the Word of the Lord. The Lord hath given true believers power over the nations, and they shall break them in pieces as shivered with a rod of iron. And what rod of iron is this but the word of the Lord; — and such honor have all his saints. The Lord hath made us as threshing instruments with teeth, and we must beat the hills as chaff. Therefore, in the fear of God handle the sword of the spirit, the word of God; — for it is a two-edged sword, and this word of God cutteth men to the heart.”¹

¹ In his references to Wheelwright and the Fast-day discourse, Dr. Palfrey, in his *History*, evinces even more than his usual spirit of reverence for the fathers of New England, and less than his usual accuracy. He speaks of the sermon as “a composition of that character which is common to skilful agitators. Along with disclaimers of the purpose to excite to physical violence, it abounds in language suited to bring about that result. . . . Another art of demagogues Wheelwright perfectly understood. By exhorting his hearers to prepare themselves to be martyrs, he gave them to understand that they were in danger of being so, and that, if they preferred not to be, they must take their measures accordingly.” (i. 479, n.) He also remarks that “it was perhaps well that this sermon was delivered at Braintree, and

Though at the time of their delivery these utterances do not seem to have excited any particular remark, they did soon after afford a pretext for open strife between the factions into which the province was divided. As the weeks passed on, it became apparent that a struggle was to take place in the next General Court. This met on the $\frac{9th}{19th}$ of March, nearly seven weeks after the fast, and was attended by an advisory council of clergymen. It has been seen that all lectures were then deferred for three weeks, that

that the angry men whom it stimulated did not pass Winthrop's house in returning to their homes."

The fact is, the sermon was delivered, not at Braintree, but in Boston, and within a stone's throw of Winthrop's house; while there can be very little doubt that Winthrop was himself among the audience which listened to it. In their anxiety to justify the subsequent proceedings of the magistrates and clergy, the New England historians have imagined a condition of affairs existing in Massachusetts in 1635-7 which the evidence does not warrant. They have transformed the self-contained little New England community into something very like a French or German mob. The Wheelwright discourse neither led, nor was intended to lead, to any outbreak of "angry men." Indeed, it did not at the moment excite enough remark to cause Winthrop, after listening to it, to make any mention of it in his journal. It dealt in no rhetoric or figures of speech which were not usual in the pulpit oratory of those days.

That Wheelwright was a strong-willed and ambitious divine, prone to controversy and eager for notoriety, is evident enough; but the record of his earlier no less than of his later life stamps him as a thoroughly pure and conscientious man. Every believing controversialist is of necessity an agitator; but "demagogues" rarely enjoy convictions for the sake of which they suffer, as did Wheelwright and his friends, persecution and banishment. In the Antinomian controversy the record of Wheelwright is far more creditable to him than those of Cotton and Winthrop are to them. Finally, there is no reason whatever to question the judgment of Mather, pronounced long after the controversy had subsided, that Wheelwright "was a man of the most unspotted morals and unblemished reputation;" and that "his worst enemies never looked on him as chargeable with the least ill practices."

nothing might hinder the ministers from giving their exclusive attention, during the sessions of the Court, to the one subject uppermost in the minds of all.

X Although the opponents of Mrs. Hutchinson controlled every church, and consequently every town in the province outside of Boston, yet the legislature — as then organized under the governorship of Vane — was not unequally divided. A preliminary struggle between the two parties took place over the case of one Stephen Greensmith, who had ventured to express, somewhere and at some time, the opinion that all the ministers, with the exception of Cotton, Wheelwright, “and, as he thought, Mr. Hooker,” were under a Covenant of Works, — in other words, were “whited sepulchres.” Being adjudged guilty of this sweeping criticism, Greensmith was fined £40, and required to give sureties of £100 for the payment thereof. Who the man was, or why he was thus utilized for example’s sake, does not appear. The Court, having in this way indicated its disapproval of the new doctrines, next went on to emphasize its approval of the old. The proceedings of the Boston church against Wilson, because of his jeremiad before the December Court, were reviewed. Winthrop says that they “could not fasten upon such as had prejudiced him,” and would seem to imply that it was for this reason — because they could not be fastened upon — that these persons escaped punishment with Greensmith. Yet Winthrop had himself recorded how, on the 31st of December at the church-meeting, “the governor [young Harry Vane] pressed it violently” against the pastor. The chief offender in the case happened, therefore, to be the presiding officer of the Court which thus failed to “fasten upon” him.

Nevertheless the subject was discussed and evidently with warmth, for the ministers were called on to advise upon it. They took the correct ground, laying down the principle that no member of a court, and consequently no person by request advising a court, could be publicly questioned elsewhere for anything said to it. The spirit and tenor of Wilson's speech were then approved by an emphatic majority, this action being, of course, intended as a pointed rebuke to Vane.

So far it was mere skirmishing. The parties were measuring strength before they grappled over the real issue. It had probably now been determined among the ministers that Wheelwright was to be called to a sharp account. His position invited attack; and his utterances in private, there is every reason to suppose, as well as in public, afforded ready pretext for it. He was the man set up against Wilson, by Wilson's own people, in his own meeting-house. Wilson had there been called to account for a speech made before the Court; and now the Court proposed to call Wheelwright to like account for a sermon delivered before Wilson's church. No sooner, therefore, had the Court approved of what Wilson had said in December, than it went on to consider what Wheelwright had said in January. The matter of the Fast-day sermon was brought up. In answer to a summons Wheelwright presently appeared, the notes of his discourse, taken at the time of its delivery, were produced, and he was asked if he admitted their correctness. In reply he laid before the Court his own manuscript, and was then dismissed. The next day he was again summoned.

Less than twenty-four hours had elapsed, but dur-

ing that brief space of time the Court had received a very distinct intimation that the course upon which it seemed to be entering was not to pass unchallenged. It came in the form of a petition, signed by nearly all the members of the Boston church, praying that proceedings in judicial cases should be conducted publicly, and that matters of conscience might be left for the church to deal with. The Court was, in other words, respectfully invited to attend to the matters which properly concerned it, and not to meddle in the affairs of the Boston church. This paper was at once ordered to be returned to those from whom it came, with an indorsement upon it to the effect that the Court considered it presumptuous. The examination of Wheelwright was then proceeded with behind closed doors. His sermon being produced he justified it, and asked to be informed of what, and by whom, he was accused. He was answered that, the sermon being acknowledged by him, the Court would proceed *ex officio*, as it was termed. In other words, it would examine him inquisitorially under oath. This proposal immediately called forth loud expressions of disapproval from those of the members who were friendly to the accused. Voices were heard exclaiming that these were but the methods of the High Commission, and as such were associated in the minds of all with the worst measures of that persecution which had harried them and their brethren out of England. Wheelwright thereupon declined to answer any further questions, and the proceedings for the moment came to a standstill.

The anti-clerical party in the Court now carried their point, in so far that what more was to be done was ordered to be done in public. This decided,

Wheelwright, later in the day, was again summoned. The room was now thronged, nearly all the clergy of the colony being among those present, and, his Fast-day discourse having been again produced, Wheelwright proceeded to justify it, — declaring that he meant to include in his animadversions “all who walked in such a way” as he had described to be a Covenant of Works. The matter was then referred to the ministers of the other churches, who were called upon to state whether “they in their ministry did walk in such a way.” As a method of securing at once evidence, and a verdict upon it, this was ingenious, and worked most satisfactorily. There was little room for doubt what the answer would be, and when the Court met the next morning it was ready. One and all, — Cotton only excepted, — the ministers replied, they did consider they walked in such a way.

The verdict was thus rendered. But the record was not to be made up without a further struggle. It yet remained to declare the judgment of the Court that Wheelwright was guilty of contempt and sedition. The doors were again closed, and behind them a debate which lasted two entire days was entered upon. Nothing is known of its details, except that Winthrop and Vane were the leaders of the opposing forces, and the result hung long in the balance. For a time it seemed as if the extremists would be thwarted by a small preponderance of voices; but at last, to quote the words of one most active in the struggle, “the priests got two of the magistrates on their side,” and so secured a majority.¹

The judgment of the Court was announced. But not even then did Vane abandon the struggle. He

¹ Coddington to Fretwell; cited in Felt's *Eccles. Hist.* ii. 611.

tendered a protest against the action just taken. This protest the Court refused to spread upon its record, on the ground that in it the proceedings were condemned and the convicted divine wholly justified. Another petition from the church of Boston was now presented, which, at a later stage of the struggle, came into sinister prominence. It was a singularly well-drawn paper. Respectful in tone, it was simple, brief, direct and logical. It was, of course, an earnest protest against the action of the Court, and breathed a deep sympathy with the condemned; but at the time no exception was taken to its tone. It seems to have been received as a matter of course, and was placed upon the files of the Court. To it were appended above threescore names.

The conservatives had carried their point. None the less, the struggle had been so severe, the resistance at every point so obstinate and the majorities so small, that the victors were not in a position to follow up their success. Accordingly the sentence upon Wheelwright was deferred to the next General Court, before which he was ordered to appear. So far as he was concerned, therefore, it only remained to decide whether he should, during the interim, be silenced as a preacher. This, also, being a question of church discipline, the magistrates referred to the ministers for their advice; and they naturally hesitated to have recourse to a proceeding so irresistibly suggestive of bitter English memories. Though angry and bigoted, they were honest; and they could not at once, even with Hugh Peters and Thomas Weld as their leaders, introduce into this, their place of refuge from Laud's pursuivants, the most odious features of Laud's ecclesiastical machinery. Weld himself, in-

deed, had good cause to know what it was to be silenced. Six years before, in company with Thomas Shepard who now again sat by his side, he had stood before the hated Archbishop, even as Wheelwright now stood before them. With what face could they now measure out to him as "that lion" had then meted out to them? Accordingly the magistrates were advised not to silence Wheelwright, but to commend his case to the church of Boston, to be dealt with spiritually. In view of the remonstrance from members of that church which had just been presented, this course certainly was a forbearing one. It opened a door to conciliation. X

As was the custom, the sessions of the Court had been held in Boston. But Boston swarmed like an angry ant-hill with the adherents of those who professed the Covenant of Grace. The influence of an intense local, though outside, public opinion, all setting strongly one way, had made itself unmistakably felt throughout the recent stormy sittings, and had greatly modified the conclusions arrived at by the deputies. Action taken behind closed doors had been met within a few hours by earnest protests over long lists of well-known names. The conservative party, though in the majority, was none the less the opposition, so long as Vane remained governor. Naturally, therefore, those composing it felt anxious to have all further operations conducted amid less uncongenial surroundings. If it was necessary to proceed to extremities, it would be expedient, at least, to secure the removal of the seat of government from Boston to some other place, at any rate for a time. Accordingly, when all other business was disposed of, the final move of that session on the part of the con- X

X servatives was made in the form of a proposition that the next General Court should meet at Cambridge, or Newetowne as it was then called.

Though the suggestion was unprecedented, it was by no means unjustifiable. It was fairly open to question whether, under the circumstances of intense excitement then prevailing, the action of the Court could be looked upon as wholly free from outside restraint so long as its sittings were in Boston. It was true there had been no tumult as yet, and the law-abiding habits of the people made tumults improbable. But the province, though made up of a tolerably compact body of settlements, was without any system of mails or public conveyance, — without newspaper, newsletter, or printing-press. The only means of communication was by word-of-mouth, or by letter sent through chance occasion. The boat, the saddle and the farm-wagon were the forms of carriage; and he who could command none of these might either find his way on foot or stay at home. This was an important fact, not to be disregarded in any attempt to forecast the result of an impending election. It was true, the charter-officers of the company were no longer chosen by those only of the freemen who were present and actually voting in the general assembly which elected them. Heretofore this had been the practice; but, naturally, the inconvenience incident to such a system had made itself more and more felt as the settlements spread over a wider territorial surface, and this inconvenience had been temporarily met by the passage of a recent law permitting the freemen to send in their votes by proxy, which law was now to go into operation for the first time. Still the votes were not to be cast in the towns where

the freemen dwelt, and then canvassed. They were simply held in the form of proxies to be used in the case of formal balloting by a deliberative body. That the coming election would be hotly contested was well known. It was to take place, as before, in a general assembly of the freemen; and, in the course of a contested election held in this way, it was inevitable that points of order and procedure would arise. These points, as they arose, would have to be decided by those actually present, voting *vivâ voce*, or by count of uplifted hands. If the election was held in Boston, every Boston freeman would assuredly be present, and his vote would count. The freemen from the other towns would be in a strange place; they would be overawed and silenced by the unanimity of those who felt themselves at home. If riot or violence should occur, the case would be yet worse, for every advantage would be on one side; all the disadvantages on the other. Then, after the magistrates were chosen, the sessions of the Court were to be held. At these sessions matters were to be discussed and issues were to be decided in regard to which intense feeling existed. Under such circumstances, a legislative assembly, which was supreme, could hardly be expected to hold its sittings in a place where the whole public sentiment was bitterly opposed to those composing a majority of that assembly, and where the local church constituted itself a sort of board of revision over any action taken.

Though all this was obvious enough, Vane declined to see it. He was the presiding officer of the Court, and he met a formal motion for a change of the place in which its next sessions were to be held, not as a governor and presiding officer should, but again with

the angry petulance of a displeased boy. He flatly refused to entertain it. Apparently he had not yet learned that those with whom he was dealing were men,—and men quite as decided as he, and a good deal more mature. They were of the class which produced Eliot and Pym, Hampden and Cromwell; and it was not likely they would now be turned from their course by childish opposition: so, when Winthrop, the deputy-governor, hesitated to usurp the presiding officer's functions, upon the ground that he was himself also an inhabitant of Boston, the stern X Endicott was equal to the occasion. He submitted the question to a vote, and declared it carried. The Court then adjourned.

CHAPTER VI.

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

THE charter-election was this year to be held on the ^{7th}/_{7th} of May, and the time which intervened between the adjournment of the Court in March and that day was one of great excitement. Not only was each party to the theological dispute striving to secure the control of the government, but the fear of an impending war with the dreaded Pequot tribe was in every mind. So far as the church of Boston was concerned, there were no signs whatever that the dissensions which rent it were subsiding. Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Hutchinson could not be brought together. They were separated by something far more insuperable than even theological tenets,—by an extreme personal antipathy.

As the election day drew near, Winthrop and Vane were put forward as opposing candidates, and the adherents of neither neglected any precaution likely to influence the result; while the deep interest felt in that result of itself insured not only a full vote, but a large personal attendance. Though recorded as of May 17, 1637, it is to be borne in mind that the events now to be described really took place on what is with us the 27th of the month, so that, as spring was merging into early summer, the verdure was far advanced. The day was clear and warm, when at one o'clock the freemen gathered in groups about a large

oak-tree which stood on the north side of what is now Cambridge Common, where Governor Vane, in English fashion and beneath the open sky, announced the purpose of the meeting, — the annual charter-election. Most of the notabilities of the province, whether magistrates or clergy, were among the large number present. As soon as the meeting was declared ready for business, a parliamentary contest was opened over a petition offered on behalf of many inhabitants of Boston. It was in effect an appeal, in the case of Wheelwright, taken from the deputies to the body of freemen themselves, in General Court assembled. As such, its presentation at that time was clearly not in order; for, as the day was specially set apart for the choice of magistrates, the choice of magistrates took precedence over everything. If other business could be thrust on the meeting first, it was obvious an election might in this way be defeated, and the colony left without a government. Vane took advantage of his place as presiding officer to insist upon having the paper read. To this Winthrop objected, contending very properly that the special business of the day should first of all be disposed of. As Vane stood firm, an angry debate ensued, and the significance of the change in locality became at once apparent. Had the Court met in Boston, there can be little doubt that Vane, who had forgotten the magistrate in the party leader, would have been sustained in his arbitrary rulings by the voices of those actually present. The position assumed by the youthful governor was striking and dramatic enough; but it was also suggestive of memories connected with that greater and more turbulent forum, in which Gracchus and Sulpicius appealed directly from the senate to the

people of Rome. That, under the strain to which the eager and too zealous patrician now subjected it, the meeting did not break into riot, was due only to the self-control and respect for law and form — the inherited political habit — of those who composed it.

Separated as the two places were by a broad arm of the sea, and the adjoining flats and marshes, Boston was then a long way from Cambridge. Indeed, it is not easy to realize that the two cities — now so closely connected by direct, broad thoroughfares, running between continuous rows of buildings — could, even two centuries and a half ago, have been so far apart that the passage from one to the other was not only long and tedious, but at times fraught with peril. Yet such was the fact. Only a few months after the election of 1637, Winthrop recorded how a young man, coming alone from Cambridge to Boston in a storm, perished, and was found dead in his boat; and, more than sixty years later, the wife of the president of the college, having her children with her, was in great danger while making the same passage, and found her way to Boston at last over Roxbury neck, after being driven ashore on the Brookline marshes.¹ On the 4th of July, 1711, Judge Sewall noted down that he “went to Commencement by Water in a sloop,” and in May, 1637, the most direct way of going to New-towne from the vicinity of Mr. Wilson’s church, at the head of State Street in Boston, was unquestionably by boat, taken probably at Long Wharf. In a good shallop, with a favoring breeze and a flood tide, it was a pleasant sail; but if the journey was to be made by land, it would be necessary to cross over to Charlestown, or go many miles about by way of Bos-

¹ Sewall, *Diary*, ii. 74.

X ton neck, through Roxbury and Watertown, for there was as yet no ferry from the foot of the hill below William Blackstone's house. Accordingly, as had doubtless been intended when the place was chosen, it had proved much easier for the freemen of Roxbury, Watertown, Charlestown and the northern towns to assemble on Cambridge Common than for those of Boston; and it speedily became manifest that the larger number of those present sided with Winthrop. This fact held in check the friends of Vane. None the less, threatening speeches drew forth angry words, and a few of the more hot-headed were on the verge of coming to blows; some, indeed, did lay hands upon each other. In the midst of the tumult the pastor Wilson — his gravity of calling, the stoutness of his person and his fifty years of age notwithstanding — clambered up against the trunk of the spreading oak, and, clinging to one of its branches, began vehemently to harangue the meeting, exhorting the freemen there present to look to their charter, and to consider of the present work of the day, which was therein set apart for the choosing their magistrates. In reply to this sudden appeal, a loud cry was raised of "Election! Election!!" in response to which Winthrop, as deputy-governor, cut the knot by declaring that the greater number should decide on the course to be pursued. He then put the question himself. The response did not admit of doubt. The majority were clearly in favor of proceeding to an immediate election.

Vane still refused to comply. Then, at last, Winthrop flatly told him that, if he would not go on, they would go on without him. Remembering how Endicott had dealt with him under very similar circum-

stances only two months before, Vane now gave way to the inevitable, and the election was allowed to proceed. It resulted in the complete defeat of his party. He was himself left out of the magistracy, as also were Wheelwright's two parishioners at the Mount, Coddington and Hough. The conservative party resumed complete political control under Winthrop as governor, with the stern and intolerant Dudley as his deputy. As if also to indicate in a special way their approval of Endicott's decided course throughout these proceedings, the deputies, among their first acts when they met, chose him a member of the standing council for the term of his life, — an honor which a year before, in plain defiance of the charter, had been conferred upon Winthrop and Dudley, the governor and deputy now elected, and which never was conferred on any except these three. The reaction was complete.

The freemen of Boston meanwhile had anxiously watched the election, intentionally deferring the choice of their own delegates to the new Court, in order that they might be free to act as events should seem to make expedient. They now at once, on the morning of the day after the election, chose as their representatives the defeated candidates for the magistracy, — Vane, Coddington and Hough. The Court saw fit to look upon this action as an affront, and, declaring the election "undue," ordered a new one to be had. A pretext for this foolish course was found in an alleged failure to notify two of the Boston freemen of the meeting to elect. A new warrant was immediately issued, and notice then given by "private and particular warning from house to house," as a result of which the contumacious town returned the same three

men. And now the Court, "not finding how they might reject them," admitted them to their seats. This was on the ^{19th}/_{29th} of May, two days after the general election, — so simple and prompt was the early procedure.

X The Massachusetts General Court of 1637 consisted of eleven magistrates elected by the freemen of the colony at large, and thirty-two deputies chosen by the fourteen towns, and representing them. Magistrates and deputies sat and voted together, — the separation into two chambers, as the result of the controversy between Goodwife Sherman and Captain Keayne over the slaughtered hog of the latter, not taking place until five years later, in 1642. Of this body, consisting, all told, of forty-three members, the opponents of Mrs. Hutchinson had complete control; might was wholly on their side, for the opposition was limited to the three Boston representatives. At first the dominant party used their power sparingly, and an earnest attempt seems even to have been made to put an end to strife. It came, too, from influential quarters. The clergy was not wholly made up of fanatics like Peters, or of bigots like Weld, or of those by nature contentious, like Wheelwright, and the better class of them, men like Shepard and Cotton, now evinced a real desire to reach some common ground. There was no printing-press in the land, and it was only through sermons, lectures, disputations, and manuscript writings circulating from hand to hand, that the discussion could be carried on; but, by the industrious use of these means, the subtle questions in dispute were reduced to so fine a point that Winthrop, tolerably versed as he was in the metaphysico-theologies of the time, very distinctly intimated that the issues involved

were beyond his comprehension. "Except men of good understanding," said he, "and such as knew the bottom of the tenets of those of the other party, few could see where the difference was." Wheelwright even, stubborn as he was, showed some signs of yielding. And thus the stumbling-block, the single obstacle which apparently stood in the way of complete reconciliation, was reduced to this curious thesis,—to the average modern reader, pure foolishness,—“Whether the first assurance be by an absolute promise always, and not by a conditional also; and whether a man could have any true assurance, without sight of some such work in his soul as no hypocrite could attain unto.” Translated into modern speech this meant simply that, Vane and Cotton, representing the Boston church, accepted the Calvinistic tenet of predestination, and denied that conduct in life, or works, could be a plea for salvation. In other words, in the elect, salvation was not conditional; such were born to be saved, else Omnipotence was not prescient. From this logic there seemed, humanly speaking, no escape, and Antinomianism apparently followed; but it was then added that, practically, no one could be of the elect, or have any real assurance of salvation, without such genuine moral elevation as was wholly inconsistent with hypocrisy or licentiousness in life.

There would seem to be nothing in metaphysical subtleties of this description calculated of necessity to render those who saw fit to indulge in them an element of civil danger in the state. Winthrop seems to have reached some such common-sense conclusion, and at first his councils prevailed. So presently when, in the order of legislative business, Wheelwright's case was taken up, and he again presented himself before

the Court, he was merely dismissed until its next session; though with a significant admonition that in the interval it would be well for him to bethink himself of retracting and reforming his error, if he hoped to receive favor. His answer was thoroughly characteristic of the man and of the times. He boldly declared that if he had been guilty of sedition he ought to be put to death; but that, if the Court meant to proceed against him, he should take his appeal to the King. As for retraction, he had nothing to retract.

Although the more moderate portion of the dominant party were reluctant to go to extremes, and still hoped that some way would open itself to peace and reconciliation, they were not disposed to run any risk of letting the fruits of their victory escape them. They held the magistracy, and they did not propose to be driven from it. The franchise, it has already been mentioned, was an incident to church-membership; and all the churches in the province, save one only, could safely be counted upon. Though such a condition of affairs would seem to have afforded assurance enough, it did not satisfy the dominant party; so it was determined to make assurance doubly sure. With this end in view the General Court now passed an alien law, which may safely be set down as one of the most curious of the many curiosities of partisan legislation.

As is usually the case with legislation of this nature, the alien law of 1637 was intended to meet a particular case. Framed as a general law, it was designed for special application. The tide of immigration to New England was then at its flood. With the rest, Wheelwright and his friends were looking for a large addition to their number in the speedy arrival of a

portion of the church of a Mr. Brierly in England, who possibly may have been Wheelwright's successor at Bilsby. One party was already on its way; for, while the Court sat in June, in July, only a month later, some of Hutchinson's kinsfolk landed with others at Boston. Not improbably they were of the Brierly church. Had they been permitted to remain within the limits of the patent, there can hardly be any question these people would have settled at the Mount, where Wheelwright ministered and where William Hutchinson's farm lay. In the existing state of public opinion they could not, indeed, have very well settled anywhere else. It was with a view to this reinforcement of the minority that the General Court in May passed that alien law of 1637, which imposed heavy penalties in case strangers were harbored or allowed to remain in the province above three weeks without a magistrate's permission. The peculiar point and hardship of the law lay, of course, in the fact that all the magistrates, without exception, belonged to one party in the state, and were wholly devoted to it.¹

¹ The original germ of this law is found in the entry of 30th November, 1635, of the Boston records (*Second Report of Boston Record Commissioners*, 5). But the act passed by the General Court of 1637 is so singular, and so large a body of Massachusetts town legislation seems to have originated from it, that it is here printed in full. Its passage led at the time to a series of papers, attacking and defending it, from the pens of Vane and Winthrop. These are included in the Hutchinson Papers. There is an abstract of the discussion in Upham's *Life of Vane* in Sparks' *American Biography* (N. S. vol. iv.). The text of the law (*Records*, i. 196) reads as follows: —

“It is ordered, that no towne or person shall receive any stranger, resorting hither with intent in this jurisdiction, nor shall allow any lot or habitation to any, or entertain any such above three weeks, except such person shall have allowance under the hands of some one of the council, or of two other of the magistrates, upon pain that every town that shall give or sell any lot or habitation to any

When the body of immigrants from the Brierly church landed, they were confronted with this new ordinance. So far as appeared, they were all God-fearing, well disposed, English men and women, and in Boston their friends were in a large majority; yet their friends could not entertain them above three weeks, nor could Boston give or sell them a lot or habitation, under a heavy and recurring penalty. Presently others came, and among them Mrs. Hutchinson's brother.¹ A delay of four months only in the enforcement of the law could be obtained for them from Winthrop. At the expiration of that time they must be without the jurisdiction. They submitted, for they could not help themselves; nor is it now known where they went, though probably they settled in Exeter, in New Hampshire.

Party feeling already ran dangerously high, evincing itself in ways not to be mistaken. The debates in the General Court had been violent and angry; as Winthrop says, even insolent speeches had been delivered. When the result of the election at Cam-

such, not so allowed, shall forfeit £100 for every offence, and every person receiving any such, for longer time than is here expressed, (or than shall be allowed in some special cases, as before, or in case of entertainment of friends resorting from some other parts of this country for a convenient time,) shall forfeit for every offence £40; and for every month after such person shall there continue £20; provided, that if any inhabitant shall not consent to the entertainment of any such person, and shall give notice thereof to any of the magistrates within one month after, such inhabitant shall not be liable to any part of this penalty. This order to continue till the end of the next Court of Elections, and no longer, except it be then confirmed."

¹ Winthrop speaks of "a brother of Mrs. Hutchinson" (i. 278), but he probably meant a brother-in-law. It was apparently Samuel Hutchinson, who received permission to remain in Boston through the winter of 1637 (*Records*, i. 207), and who the next spring accompanied Wheelwright to New Hampshire. (Bell, *Wheelwright*, 34.)

bridge was declared, the sergeants who, as was then the custom, were in official attendance upon Vane, armed with swords and halberds, refused to escort his successor. They were all Boston men, and their conduct is the best possible evidence of the unanimity as well as the intensity of the feeling there. Laying down their halberds they went home, leaving Winthrop, the newly elected governor, to do the same, unattended. When at this time, also, Boston was called upon to supply her portion of the levy for service in the Pequot campaign, not a church-member would consent to be mustered; and the refusal was based on the fact that their own pastor, selected from among the clergy by lot as the chaplain to accompany the contingent, walked in a Covenant of Works. Military service, especially of a somewhat desperate character in savage warfare, is not usually coveted, and in this case a prudent regard for their own scalps may at the same time have dulled martial ardor and quickened conscientious doubts in the minds of the church-members in question; but none the less this holding back made at the time a deep impression throughout the other towns of the province, giving "great discouragement to the service," and the apologists for the subsequent persecution have not failed to put due emphasis on it since.¹

As the June days passed away, the alien law was under discussion at Cambridge, and the excitement in Boston increased rather than grew less. From the time of his first coming, Vane had always occupied at church a seat of honor among the magistrates, whether he was one of them or not. But on the Sabbath after the election, instead of taking his usual place, he

¹ Palfrey, i. 492.

and Coddington went and sat with the deacons, in a way calculated to excite the utmost possible public notice; and when Winthrop, noticing this, courteously sent to them to resume their old places, they pointedly declined to do so. As governor, Vane had walked to church in state, accompanied by four of the town's sergeants. They now refused to attend Winthrop, alleging that their attendance on his predecessor had been merely out of personal devotion to him. This could not but have been deeply mortifying to Winthrop; and it occasioned so much scandal that the colony took notice of it, and offered to furnish men, from the neighboring towns in turn, to carry the halberds as usual. Upon this Boston professed itself willing to furnish halberd-bearers, though not the sergeants, and the Governor at last was fain to use two of his own servants, and so settle the matter. Nor were Vane's discourtesies to Winthrop confined to official acts or questions of church etiquette. They touched social relations also. It has already been seen how in June the Governor undertook to give a dinner party to young Lord Ley, and among others sent an invitation to Vane; and how Vane declined to come on the extraordinary ground that "his conscience withheld him;" but, at the time named for the entertainment, "went over to Noddle's Island to dine with Mr. Maverick, and carried the Lord Ley with him." Besides being the recognized leader of the opposition, Vane was a defeated candidate for office; and, as such, it was peculiarly incumbent upon him to behave with dignity and self-restraint. Winthrop had already set him a lofty example in this respect: but Winthrop never appeared to such advantage as when bearing up against political defeat,

while Vane now demeaned himself rather like an angry, sulking schoolboy than like the head of a party in the state; and his followers undoubtedly imitated him. Consequently, all through the summer of 1637 Winthrop's position must have been most trying. Wilson, who had he been there would have shared the general opprobrium with him, was absent with the soldiers of the Pequot expedition. Hence the Governor found himself in Boston — Boston, his home and the town he had founded — with the whole community as one man against him. Vane would not go to his house. The town officers refused to attend upon him. A bitter controversy was going on over the alien law, which excited so much feeling that Cotton seriously thought of moving out of the province, while not even the relief and exultation over the triumphant close of the Pequot war drew men's thoughts away from it. Nor was this to be wondered at. The news of Mason's victories in Connecticut and the storming of the Pequot fort reached Boston at the very time when Winthrop, acting under that alien law, refused to permit Samuel Hutchinson to remain in the province. In the hour of common triumph, therefore, the people of Boston saw their friends, relatives and sympathizers, who had just finished the weary voyage which joined them in exile, refused even a resting-place, much more an asylum, — and refused it, also, merely on the ground that they were the friends, relatives and sympathizers of the people of Boston. Such a stretch of government authority not only must have seemed an outrage, but it was an outrage. It compelled a denial of those rights of common hospitality which even savages respect, and as persecution it was not less bitter than any prac-

tised in England. Looked at even now, after the lapse of two hundred years and more, to be forced to send one's brother or sister, at their first coming into a new land, out into the wilderness — even as Abraham sent Hagar — was a sore test of patience. The minority in Boston would have been either more or less than human had they meekly submitted to it. They did not meekly submit to it; and so, when mid-summer was come, there were “many hot speeches given forth,” and angry threats were freely made.

Early in August the posture of the opposing factions underwent a change; Wheelwright lost a potent friend and ally, and the party of the clericals gained one. On the $\frac{24}{1788}$ Vane sailed for England, and his friends took advantage of his departure to make a political demonstration. The ship he was to go in lay at anchor well down the harbor, opposite Long Island. As the hour for embarking drew near, his political adherents and those who sympathized in his theological views collected together, and formally accompanied their departing leader to his boat. They were under arms, and some cannon had been brought out; and, as the barges bearing him and a company of friends were rowed out into the stream, they were saluted again and again by volleys of small arms and ordnance. Winthrop was not there to bid his rival farewell; nor, in view of Vane's studied discourtesies to him, was he to be blamed for his absence. None the less he was mindful of the occasion and what was due to it, and, as the party swept by Castle Island, the salute from the town was taken up by the fort and repeated.

Vane never came back to Boston; nor, judging by his course while there, is the fact greatly to be

regretted. Doubtless he improved, and, as he grew older, he became more self-restrained; none the less he was born an agitator and always remained one, and it is of men of this description that new countries stand in least need. Unquestionably as respects the issues involved in the so-called Antinomian controversy, Vane was, in the abstract, more — much more — nearly right than Winthrop. But, while his mind was destructive in its temper, that of Winthrop was constructive. In new countries everything is to be built up, and there is little to pull down. In the Massachusetts of 1637, there was nothing but the clergy. Vane was the popular leader in the first movement against their supremacy, and the fight he made showed he possessed parliamentary qualities of a high order; but, as was apparent in the result of it, the movement itself was premature. After the failure of that movement its leader would have proved wholly out of place in New England, while in England he found ample field for the exercise of all his powers. In the world's advance every one cannot be on the skirmish line; nor is the sharp-shooter necessarily a more useful soldier than he who advances only just in front of the solid line of battle, — even though the latter be less keen of sight and wide of vision. As compared with Winthrop, the younger Vane was a man of larger and more active mind, of more varied and brilliant qualities. What is now known as an advanced thinker, he instinctively looked deeper into the heart of his subject. Winthrop, it is true, shared in the darkness and the superstition, and even — in his calm, moderate way — in the intolerance of his time; but it was just that sharing in the weakness as well as the strength — the superstitions as well as the faith — of

his time which made him so valuable in the place chance called upon him to fill. He was in sympathy with his surroundings, — just enough in the advance, and not too much. In 1637 — persecution or no persecution, momentarily right or momentarily wrong — Massachusetts could far better spare Henry Vane from its councils than it could have spared John Winthrop.

X Vane's departure was none the less an irreparable loss, almost a fatal blow, to John Wheelwright, for by it he was deprived of his protector, and left, naked and bound, in the hands of his enemies. Nor did they long delay over the course they would take with him. The Pequot war was ended; for in July the last remnant of the doomed tribe had been destroyed in the swamp fight at New Haven, and now grave magistrates and elders were bringing to Boston from the Connecticut the skins and the scalps of Sassacus and his sachems, ghastly trophies of the savage fight. They arrived on the $\frac{5th}{16th}$ of August, Vane having sailed on the $\frac{3d}{13th}$, and the same day the party of the clericals was reinforced by the return of Mr. Wilson. Having been absent some seven weeks, with the Massachusetts contingent under Stoughton's command, he had been sent for to return at once. In response to the summons Stoughton — then at New London, and preparing to cross over to Block Island — immediately dismissed his chaplain, "albeit," he wrote, "we conceived we had special interest in him, and count ourselves naked without him;" but he bethought himself that "we could enjoy him but one Sabbath more." And so Wilson returned by way of Providence, in company with the Rev. Thomas Hooker and the Rev. Samuel Stone, respectively the minister and the

teacher of the church at Hartford, both close disputants as well as famous divines. All the clergy of the province and neighboring settlements were in fact now directing their steps towards Boston; and the spirit of theological controversy aroused itself, quickened and refreshed by two months of thought diverted to carnal warfare. A synod was to be held.

X

CHAPTER VII.

VÆ VICTIS.

X
SYNODS and convocations are the last recourse of perplexed theologians. A high authority in matters connected with Puritan history and theology, after referring to them as "the bane and scourge of Christendom," adds that, while "called to promote harmony and uniformity, they have invariably resulted in variance, discord and a widening of previous breaches."¹ The synod of 1637 was the first thing of the sort attempted in America; and, under the circumstances, and in the absence of all the usual machinery for carrying on discussion, it was perhaps as good a method of bringing opposing parties together as could have been devised. When brought together, even if no agreement could be reached, they might at least find out each where the other stood; and, if the chances were that in its results a synod would embitter rather than allay strife, this risk had to be taken. The meeting was fixed for the ^{30th}/₂₄ of ^{August}/_{September} and a busy three weeks, crowded with meetings and lectures, Days of Humiliation and Days of Thanksgiving, preceded. Some of the elders, evidently much troubled at the gravity of the situation, busied themselves to bring about an understanding between Wilson and Wheelwright and Cotton. So far as Cotton was concerned they were not unsuc-

¹ Ellis, *The Puritan Age*, 219; Savage, *Winthrop*, i. *240, n.

cessful, for, now that Vane was gone, the eloquent teacher of the Boston church began to find his position a trying one. He had, indeed, seriously thought of turning his back on the dust and turmoil of Boston, — political as well as theological, — and seeking refuge and quiet elsewhere; but the idea did not commend itself to him. He was no longer young, and, perhaps, his nerves gave way before the prospect of again facing the wilderness, a banished man; perhaps also he was over-persuaded by the members of his church. Accordingly a sensation was excited in the Boston meeting-house when, on the Sunday following Wilson's return, Cotton announced to the congregation that the minister had explained certain words, used by him in his discourse before the Court in the previous October, as applying not to any pulpit doctrines uttered by the teacher himself or by his brother Wheelwright, but to some opinions "privately carried." As it was quite well known that Mr. Wilson had long before made this very equivocal concession, the sudden change in his own mind, indicated by Cotton's announcement, excited no little comment. He was evidently opening a way for retreat.

The following Thursday Mr. Davenport delivered the lecture at Boston. He was a famous controversialist, and had in Holland borne earnest witness against what he termed "promiscuous baptism," holding rigidly to the tenet that children of communicants only should be admitted to that holy institution. Having only recently come to New England, Mr. Davenport had no settlement within the patent; but, nevertheless, out of deference to his great fame, he had been urged to attend the Synod, and he now lectured on the nature and danger of divisions, while at the

same time he "clearly discovered his judgment against the new opinions." It was another indication of the set of the tide. The 24th of the month was kept as a Fast-day in all the churches; and on the 26th, amidst much rejoicing, Stoughton and his soldiers returned from their Pequot campaign and were feasted. Then came ^{August 30th} ~~September 9th~~, and the Synod.

X It met at Cambridge, and was composed of some twenty-five ministers, being "all the teaching elders through the country," with whom were Davenport and others freshly arrived. When to these were added the lay members and the body of the magistrates, it will be seen that the attendance was large. The deliberations were in public. Among those present were some few of Shepard's conciliatory temper, but the majority and the leaders were men of the type of Ward, Weld and Peters. They were there to stamp a heresy out; and they proposed to do it just as effectually in New England as Archbishop Laud, at that same time, was proposing to do it in the mother country. From the first, a well-developed spirit of theological hate showed itself in easy control of everything. Mather says that "at the beginning of the assembly, after much discourse against the unscriptural enthusiasms and revelations then by some contended for, Mr. Wilson proposed: 'You that are against these things, and that are for the spirit and the word together, hold up your hands!' And the multitude of hands then held up was a comfortable and encouraging introduction unto the other proceedings." The other proceedings were in perfect keeping with the introduction. There was in them no trace of wisdom, of conciliation or of charity, — nothing but priestly intolerance, stimulated by blind zeal.

No sooner was it organized and ready for business than the Synod proceeded to throw out a sort of general drag-net designed to sweep up all conceivable heretical opinions. The work was thoroughly done, and soon there were spread upon the record no less than eighty-two "opinions, some blasphemous, others erroneous, and all unsafe," besides nine "unwholesome expressions."¹ As all the twenty-five ministers — with one exception, or possibly two — were of the same way of thinking, the proceedings were reasonably harmonious. Certain of the lay members from among the Boston delegates were indeed outspoken in their expressions of disgust that such a huge body of heresies should be paraded without any pretence of their being entertained by any one; but Wheelwright seems discreetly to have held his peace, taking the ground that, as they were not imputed to him, they were none of his concern. Consequently, when the indignant Bostonians got up and left the assembly, he remained behind, nor jarred upon the spirit of unbroken harmony which for a time followed their departure. After every conceivable abstract opinion and expression had been raked up, the entire pile was most appropriately disposed of by the Rev. Mr. Wilson with one sweep of the theological dung-fork. In reply to the gasping inquiry of one of his brethren as to what should be done with such a dispensation of

¹ As the term "unwholesome expressions" hardly conveys a clear idea to modern readers, a statement of one of those now spread upon the record, and of its synodical confutation, may not be out of place:—

"S. Peter more leaned to a Covenant of Works than Paul, Pauls doctrine does more for free grace than Peters.

"ANSW. To oppose these persons and the doctrine of these two Apostles of Christ, who were guided by one and the same Spirit in preaching and penning thereof, in such a point as the Covenant of workes and grace, is little lesse than blasphemy."

heterodoxies, the pastor of the Boston church exclaimed, no less vigorously than conclusively: — “Let them go to the devil of hell, from whence they came!”

X Having in this way very comfortably disposed of preliminaries, the Synod settled itself down to real business. The work in hand was to devise some form of words which Cotton and Wheelwright on the one side, and the body of their brethren on the other, would assent to as an expression of common belief. There were five points nominally in question, which were subsequently reduced to three. To appreciate the whole absurdity of the jargon, in which metaphysics lent confusion to theology, these must be stated in full: —

“1. That the new creature is not the person of a believer, but a body of saving graces in such a one; and that Christ, as a head, doth enliven or quicken, preserve or act the same, but Christ himself is no part of this new creature.

X “2. That though, in effectual calling (in which the answer of the soul is by active faith, wrought at the same instant by the Spirit,) justification and sanctification be all together in them; yet God doth not justify a man, before he be effectually called, and so a believer.

“3. That Christ and his benefits may be offered and exhibited to a man under a Covenant of Works, but not in or by a Covenant of Works.”

It is not easy to realize now that strong, matter-of-fact, reasoning men could ever have been educated to the point of inflicting — and, what is far more curious, of enduring — persecution, banishment and torture in the propagation or in the defence of such incomprehensible formulas. They furnish in themselves at once the strongest evidence and the most striking illustration of the singular condition of religious and

theological craze in which early New England existed. As the modern investigator puzzles over these articles of a once living faith, in vain trying to find out in what lay their importance, — even conceding their truth, — the Synod, and the outcome of its wrestlings, calls to mind nothing so much as that passage from the poem of the greatest of its co-religionists, wherein, with bitter mockery, one portion of "the host of Hell" is represented as sitting on a hill apart, where they

"reason'd high
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute;
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost."

The difference between Milton's devils and the early New England divines seems to have been that, while the one and the other lost themselves in the same mazes of the unknowable, the former evinced much the more Christian spirit of the two in their methods of conducting the debate. Both were suffering banishment from their former homes; but, while the Synod of the fallen angels in their place of exile amicably discussed points of abstract difference, the similar Synod of New England ministers betrayed, throughout their proceedings, all "the exquisite rancor of theological hate."

After much discussion, written as well as oral, of the controverted points, Cotton, with a degree of worldly wisdom which did credit to his head, declared at last that he saw light. Whether he really did so or not is of little consequence. It is clear that no one in the assembly had any distinct conception of what they were talking about; and it was certainly nothing against any one that he professed to see the nebulous idealities, at which they were all gazing through the

dense mist of words, in the same way that the majority saw them. Wheelwright was of a less accommodating spirit. To him the cloud looked neither like a whale nor like a weasel. He would not say that it did. So far as he was concerned, therefore, the Synod resulted exactly as his enemies desired. He was now completely isolated; he had lost Cotton as well as Vane.

The sessions continued through twenty-four days. At first arguments were delivered in writing and read in the assembly, and answers followed in the same way; but as this method of procedure occupied too much time, recourse was had to oral disputation. Then the questions at issue were speedily determined. Finally, all other business being disposed of, Mrs. Hutchinson's female symposiums were voted a nuisance, or, in the language of the day, "agreed to be disorderly and without rule;" and then, on the ²⁴/₂₁ of ~~September~~
October, the convocation broke up amid general congratulations "that matters had been carried on so peaceably, and concluded so comfortably in all love." The result of it all was that "Mr. Cotton and they agreed, but Mr. Wheelwright did not."

From the day of adjournment onward, therefore, Wheelwright was to confront his opponents alone; and in the number of his opponents were included the whole body of the clergy and the whole body of the magistracy. The Synod had done its work in two ways; not only was Cotton saved, but, the efforts at conciliation having failed, it only remained to leave the refractory to be dealt with by the arm of the civil authority. The General Court, elected at the time of the stormy Cambridge gathering in May, had shown little disposition to grapple in earnest with the Antinomian issue. As often as that issue presented itself

it was postponed; and the course of the deputies would seem to warrant an inference that, elected as they had been while the parties were not unevenly divided, the Court contained a representation of each side sufficient to hold the other side in check. Whether this was so or not, on the $\frac{29th}{5th}$ of ~~September~~ ^{October} — just four days after the adjournment of the Synod — the Court, which had been elected for the entire year, was suddenly dissolved, and a new election ordered. X

The cause of so unusual a proceeding can only be inferred; yet it would seem but reasonable to suppose that the legislature, as then made up, was not considered equal to doing the work in hand; and, certainly, the new Court was a very different body from the old one. Of the twenty-seven delegates who met at Cambridge on the day the May Court was dissolved, twelve only were reelected; and of the thirty-three members of the Court chosen in October, no less than twenty-one were new men. Among those left out was Wheelwright's staunch friend and parishioner, Atherton Hough; but Coddington, Aspinwall and Coggeshall were returned by Boston, and constituted at least a nucleus of opposition. X

The new Court met on the $\frac{3d}{12th}$ of November. Those composing it found both Wheelwright and Mrs. Hutchinson still obdurate. The former, just as if no Synod had ascertained the whole everlasting truth and expressed it in plain language, was preaching the Covenant of Grace to all who would hear him at the Mount; while the latter continued her weekly female gatherings, and put no bridle on her tongue. With the clouds lowering heavily over them, they maintained a bold front. They did more than this, — they even went out to meet the danger, openly rejecting all X

thought of compromise, with a loud assertion that the difference between them and their opponents was as that between heaven and hell, — a gulf too deep to fill, too wide to bridge. In later days, under similar circumstances, persons feeling in this way would quietly have been permitted to set up a conventicle of their own, at which they could have mouthed their rubbish until they wearied. A schism in the church would have restored quiet to the community. But this was not the rule of primitive New England. That rule was one of rigid conformity, — the rule of the “lord-brethren” in place of the rule of the “lord-bishops.” So, as Winthrop expressed it, those in the majority, “finding, upon consultation, that two so opposite parties could not continue in the same body without apparent hazard of ruin to the whole, agreed to send away some of the principal.” A somewhat similar conclusion had previously been reached in regard to Spain and the Netherlands by Philip II., and was subsequently reached in regard to France by Louis XIV.

X
Having decided upon extreme measures the leaders of the dominant party now proceeded in a business-like manner. Those composing the minority were to be thoroughly disciplined. There was no difficulty in dealing with Wheelwright and Mrs. Hutchinson. They were doomed. But the men who were in the ascendant — the Welds, the Peters, the Bulkleys and the Symmes of the colonial pulpit — had no idea of contenting themselves with that small measure of atonement. The heresy was to be extirpated, root and branch. “Thorough” was then the word at Whitehall; and “Thorough” was the idea, if not the word, in Massachusetts. But a species of sweep-net

was now needed which should bring the followers no less than the leaders under the ban of the law. The successful prosecution of Wheelwright afforded the necessary hint. Wheelwright had been brought within the clutches of the civil authorities by a species of *ex post facto* legal chicanery. Even his most bitter opponents did not pretend to allege that he had preached his Fast-day sermon with the intent to bring about any disturbance of the peace. They only claimed that his utterances tended to make such a result probable, and that his own observation ought to have convinced him of the fact.¹ Therefore, they argued, although it was true that no breach of the peace had actually taken place, and although the preacher had no intent to excite to a breach of the peace, yet he was none the less guilty of constructive sedition. Constructive sedition was now made to do the same work in New England which constructive treason, both before and after, was made to do elsewhere. It was a most excellent device; and a pretext, or "fair opportunity," as Winthrop expresses it, for its application was found in that remonstrance of the 9th of the previous March, which, signed by sixty of the leading inhabitants of Boston, had now quietly reposed among the records of the colony through four sessions of two separate legislatures. The paper speaks for itself.² The single passage in it to which even a theologian's acuteness could give a color of

¹ This point is of importance, and Winthrop's language is explicit in regard to it:—"If his intent were not to stirre up to open force and armes (neither do we suspect him of any such purpose, otherwise than by consequent) yet his reading and experience might have told him, how dangerous it is to heat people's affections against their opposites." *Short Story*, 53.

² See Appendix to Savage's *Winthrop* (ed. 1853), i. 481-3.

sedition was couched in these words: — “Thirdly, if you look at the effects of his Doctrine upon the hearers, it hath not stirred up sedition in us, not so much as by accident; we have not drawn the sword, as sometime Peter did, rashly, neither have we rescued our innocent brother, as sometime the Israelites did Jonathan, and yet they did not seditiously.” The last six words are those which Governor Winthrop, and the subsequent apologists of what now took place,¹ dwell upon as in themselves sufficient to make the drawing up or signing of this paper an offence for which banishment was a mild and hardly adequate penalty; and this, too, in face of the fact that the remonstrance immediately went on as follows: — “The covenant of free grace held forth by our brother hath taught us rather to become humble suppliants to your Worship, and if we should not prevail, we would rather with patience give our cheeks to the smiters.”

Even had this paper been of a seditious character, it was presented to a former Court, and not to the one which now passed judgment upon it. The Court elected in November, 1637, had no more to do with the Boston remonstrance of the preceding March than with any other paper, the character of which, as it slept among the dusty archives, some deputy might chance not to fancy. Those to whom it was addressed had considered it a respectful and proper document; and it was reserved for a body to which it was not addressed to hunt it up on the files, in order to declare it a contempt and make it the basis of a proscription.

The Court met on the ²¹/_{13th} of November. No sooner was it organized than it became apparent it was to be

¹ Palfrey, i. 492.

purged; in it the elements of opposition were few, but those few were to be weeded out. It has already been mentioned that Coddington, Aspinwall and Coggeshall were the deputies from Boston. They were all three adherents of the Covenant of Grace, friends of Mrs. Hutchinson and supporters of Wheelwright; while Coddington's name stood first among those affixed to the remonstrance now pronounced seditious. Coddington was a magistrate, an old and honored official, — a man classed, in popular estimation, with Winthrop and Endicott as one of the founders of the colony. Him they did not like to attack; and there is also reason to believe that Winthrop exerted himself to shield his old associate. No such safeguards surrounded Aspinwall and Coggeshall. The record of the Court shows that it was at once demanded of the former whether he still adhered to the sentiments expressed in the remonstrance. He replied that he did. A vote expelling him from his seat was immediately passed. Indignant at the expulsion of his colleague, Coggeshall then rose in his place and declared his approbation of the remonstrance, though his name was not among those signed to it; and he added that, if the course taken with Aspinwall was to be followed towards others, they "had best make one work of all." He was taken at his word, and forthwith expelled. Other deputies had then to be elected. The freemen of Boston would have been indeed devoid of any feelings of manliness, much more of pride, had such treatment of their representatives not excited indignation among them, and at first they proposed to return to the Court the same deputies to whom seats had just been refused. This action must at once have brought on the crisis, and Cotton prevented it; for he was

still looked upon as friendly to the defeated party, — indeed, in heart, he was so, — and among the church-members, who alone were freeholders, their teacher's influence was great. Instead of Coggeshall and Aspinwall, accordingly, William Colburn and John X Oliver were chosen, and the next day appeared to take their seats. But an examination of the remonstrance revealed Oliver's name upon it; and, when questioned, he justified the paper. Permission to take his seat was consequently refused him, and the election of another in his place ordered. The free-men of Boston took no notice of the new warrant.

X The Court being now purged of all his friends, Coddington only excepted, Wheelwright's case was taken up. He appeared in answer to the summons; but, when asked if he was yet prepared to confess his errors, he stubbornly refused so to do, protesting his entire innocence of what was charged against him. He could not be induced to admit that he had been guilty either of sedition or of contempt, and he asserted that the doctrine preached by him in his Fast-day discourse was sound; while, as to any individual application which had been made of it, he was not accountable. Then followed a long wrangle, reaching far into the night and continued the next day, during which the natural obstinacy of Wheelwright's temper must have been sorely tried. At his door was laid the responsibility for all the internal dissensions of the province. He was the fruitful source of those village and parish ills; and every ground of complaint was gone over, from the lax response of Boston to the call for men for the Pequot war to the slight put by his church upon Wilson, and by the halberdiers upon Winthrop. To such an indictment de-

fence was impossible ; and so, in due time, the Court proceeded to its sentence. It was disfranchisement and exile. As it was already what is the middle of our November, the date of the exile's departure was at first postponed until March, when the severity of the winter would be over ; in the mean time, as a preacher, he was to be silenced. From this sentence Wheelwright took an appeal to the King, which the Court at once refused to allow. Twenty-four hours later, after a night of reflection, he withdrew his appeal, offering to accept a sentence of simple banishment, but refusing absolutely to be silenced. He was then at last permitted to return to his own house at Mt. Wollaston, and his sentence stands recorded as follows : —

“Mr. John Wheelwright, being formally convicted of contempt and sedition, and now justifying himself and his former practice, being to the disturbance of the civil peace, he is by the Court disfranchised and banished, having fourteen days to settle his affairs ; and, if within that time he depart not the patent, he promiseth to render himself to Mr. Stoughton, at his house, to be kept till he be disposed of ; and Mr. Hough undertook to satisfy any charge that he, Mr. Stoughton, or the country should be at.”

Unlike Mrs. Hutchinson and the body of those who were to follow him into banishment, Wheelwright did not direct his steps towards Rhode Island. On the contrary, after preaching a farewell sermon to his little congregation, in which there was no word of retraction, he turned his face to the northward, and with all the courage and tenacity of purpose which throughout had marked his action, in spite of the inclement season and the impending winter, within his allotted fourteen days he was on his way to the

X Piscataqua. He went alone through the deepening snow, which that winter lay from November to the end of March "a yard deep," according to Winthrop, beyond the Merrimac, and "the more north the deeper," while the mercury ranged so low that the exile himself, with a grim effort at humor, drearily remarked that he believed had he been filled with "the very extracted spirits of sedition and contempt, they would have been frozen up and indisposed for action."¹ Not until April did his wife, bringing with her his mother-in-law and their children, undertake to follow him to the spot where he and a few others had founded what has since become the academic town of Exeter. It is merely curious now to reflect on the intense bitterness, and sense of wrong and of unending persecution which must have nerved the steps of the former vicar of Bilsby, when, at forty-five years of age, he turned his back on Mt. Wollaston, and sternly sought refuge from his brethren in Christ amid the snow and ice of bleak, unfertile New Hampshire.

¹ *Mercurius Americanus*, Bell, 228.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRIAL OF A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PROPHETESS.

HAVING disposed of Wheelwright's case the General Court, without stopping to take breath, at once proceeded to that of Mistress Hutchinson, — "the breeder and nourisher of all these distempers." In the language of the time, she was "convented for traducing the ministers and their ministry in this country;" and these words most happily set forth her offence. It could not be charged against her that she had signed the remonstrance, for her name was not among those appended to it; she had preached no sedition; being a woman, she could bear no hand in any apprehended tumult. She had criticised the clergy; and for that she was now arraigned.

Though, as will presently appear, the proceedings were in no way lacking in interest, there was about them nothing either solemn or imposing. Indeed, all the external surroundings, as well as the physical conditions, were so very matter-of-fact and harsh, that any attempt at pomp or state would have been quite out of keeping; everything, without as well as within, was dreary and repellent, — in a word, New England wintry. The Court was still sitting at Newetowne, as it was called; for the name was not changed to Cambridge until a year later, though the college was at this very session ordered to be fixed there. It was a crude, straggling settlement,

made up of some sixty or seventy log-cabins, or poor frame-houses, which only eighteen months before had been mainly abandoned by their occupants, who, under the lead of their pastor, Thomas Hooker, had then migrated in a body to the banks of the Connecticut. The Rev. Thomas Shepard, with those who had just come over with him, had bought the empty tenements and moved into them. An inscription cut in the granite foundation wall of a modern bake-house, on the busy Mt. Auburn thoroughfare, now marks the spot where the church, or meeting-house rather, stood on the upland, not far from the narrow fringe of marshes which there skirted the devious channel of the Charles. In front of it ran the main village street, ending in a foot-bridge leading down to low-water mark at the ferry, while a ladder was secured to the steep further bank of the river for "convenience of landing." Close to the meeting-house, but nearer to the ferry, was the dwelling built for himself by Governor Dudley in 1630, and in which, at the breaking-up of the sharp winter of 1631, he wrote his letter to Bridget, Countess of Lincoln, "having got no table, or other room to write in than by the fireside upon my knee." Laid out with some regard for symmetry and orderly arrangement, Newtowne was looked upon as "one of the neatest and best compacted towns in New England, having many fair structures, with many handsome contrived streets." The river being to the south, on the northern side of the village there stretched away a comparatively broad and level plain, covering many hundred acres, then used as a common pasture-ground and fenced in by a paling of a mile and a half in length. A year or two later, the college build-

ing was erected on the southern limit of this plain; while a third of a mile or so to the north stood the great oak under which had been held that May election which resulted in the defeat of Vane, and in Winthrop's return to office.¹

Of the meeting-house itself no description has been preserved. It seems to have been a rude frame building, built of rough-hewn boards, the crevices of which were sealed with mud. Its roof, sloping down from a long ridge-pole, on which was perched a bell, had, it is supposed, at first been thatched, but was now covered with slate or boards; and the narrow dimensions of the primitive edifice may be inferred from the fact that when, a dozen years afterwards, it no longer sufficed for a prospering community, the new and more commodious one which succeeded it was but forty feet square. Such as it was, the meeting-house was the single building of a public sort in the place, and within it the sessions of the Court were now held, as those of the Synod had been held there shortly before.

The season was one of unusual severity, and the days among the shortest of the year. Though November, according to the calendar then in use, was not yet half over, there had nearly a week before been a considerable fall of snow, which still whitened the ground, while the ice had begun to make, piling itself up along the river's bank.² No pretence even was made of warming the barrack-like edifice; and, dark at best in the November day, it could not be

¹ Higginson, *250th Ann. of Cambridge*, 48; Mackenzie, *First Church in Cambridge*, Lect. II.; Paige, *Cambridge*, 18, 37; Young, *Chron. of Mass.* 402.

² Winthrop, i. *243-4, *264.

lighted at all after dusk. Its furniture consisted only of rude wooden benches, on which the deputies and those in attendance sat, and a table and chairs for the Governor and the magistrates. All told, the Court consisted of some forty members, nine of whom were magistrates; but the little church was thronged, for the outside attendance was large, almost every person of note in the province being there. Indeed, nothing in the history of Massachusetts, up to this time, had ever excited so great an interest. The clergy, in point of fact not only the prosecutors in the case but also the witnesses against the accused, were necessarily present in full ranks. Wilson and Cotton both were there from Boston: the former bent on the utter destruction of her who, sowing dissension between his people and himself, had, with feminine ingenuity, strewed his path with thorns; the latter not yet terrified into a complete abandonment of those who looked to him as their mentor. The fanatical Peters had come from Salem; and he and Thomas Weld of Roxbury, having been the most active promoters of the prosecution, were now to appear as chief witnesses against the accused. With the pastor, Weld, had come Eliot, the teacher at Roxbury, — now only thirty-four, and not for nine years yet to begin those labors among the Indians which were to earn for his name the prefix of “the Apostle.” He too was unrelenting in his hostility to the new opinions. There also were George Phillips of Watertown, “one of the first saints of New England;”¹ Zachariah

¹ George Phillips was the common ancestor of that Phillips family subsequently so prominent in the history of Boston. Cotton Mather, with even more than his usual quaintness, says of him that “he laboured under many bodily infirmities: but was especially liable to the cholick; the extremity of one fit whereof, was the wind which

Symmes of Charlestown, who himself knew what it was to suffer for "conscientious nonconformity;" and finally Thomas Shepard of Cambridge, "a poore, weake, pale-complectioned man" of thirty-four, but yet "holy, heavenly, sweet-affecting and soul-ravishing." And indeed Shepard alone of them all seems to have borne in mind, in the proceedings which were to follow, that charity, long-suffering and forgiveness entered into the Master's precepts. Winthrop presided over the deliberations of the Court, acting at once as judge and prosecuting attorney. At his side, foremost among the magistrates, sat Dudley and Endicott, — men whose rough English nature had been narrowed and hardened by a Puritan education.

Such was the Court. The culprit before it for trial was a woman of some thirty-six or seven years of age. Slight of frame, and now in manifestly delicate health, there was in her bearing nothing masculine or defiant; though, seemingly, she faced a tribunal — in which, so far as now appears, she could have found but two friendly faces — with calmness and self-possession. She had no counsel, nor was the trial conducted according to any established rules of procedure. It was a mere hearing in open legislative session. Of its details, one — himself an eminent New England clergyman not versed in legal technicalities or familiar with rules of evidence or the methods of courts — has said that the treatment which the accused then underwent "deserves the severest epithets of censure," and that "the united civil wisdom and Christian piety of the fathers of Massachusetts make but a sorry fig-

carried him afore it, into the haven of eternal rest, on July 1, in the year 1644, much desired and lamented by his church at Watertown." *Magnalia*, B. III. ch. iv. § 9.

ure.”¹ Certainly, if what there took place had taken place in England at the trial of some patriot or non-conformer before the courts — ecclesiastical, civil or criminal — of any of the Stuarts, the historians of New England would not have been sparing in their denunciations. But the record best speaks for itself. From that record it will appear that the accused, unprovided with counsel, was not only examined and cross-examined by the magistrates, her judges, but badgered, insulted and sneered at, and made to give evidence against herself. The witnesses in her behalf were browbeaten and silenced in careless disregard both of decency and a manly sense of fair play. Her few advocates among the members of the court were rudely rebuked, and listened to with an impatience which it was not attempted to conceal; while, throughout, the so-called trial was, in fact, no trial at all, but a mockery of justice rather, — a bare-faced inquisitorial proceeding. And all this will appear from the record.

The Court met, and presently the accused, in obedience to its summons, appeared before it. At first, though it must have been manifest she was shortly to become a mother, she was not even bidden to sit down, but soon “her countenance discovered some bodily infirmity,” and a chair was provided for her.

¹ Dr. George E. Ellis, in the biography of Anne Hutchinson. (Sparks' *American Biography*, N. S. vi. 277.) Dr. Ellis' life of Mrs. Hutchinson was written in 1845; in 1888, after an interval of over forty years, he reviewed the whole subject of the Antinomian Controversy in his work entitled *The Puritan Age in Massachusetts* (300-62). He there says (336): — “We have to fall back upon our profound impressions of the deep sincerity and integrity of [Winthrop's] character . . . to read without some faltering or misgiving of approval, not to say with regret and reproach, the method with which he conducted the examination of this gifted and troublesome woman.”

The offence of which she had been really guilty, — the breeding of a faction in the Boston church against the pastor, Wilson, and, when his brethren came to his aid, not hesitating to criticise them also, — this offence it was somewhat embarrassing to formulate in fitting words. It could not well be bluntly charged. Winthrop therefore began with a general arraignment, in which he more particularly accused the prisoner of having meetings at her house, “a thing not tolerable nor comely in the sight of God nor fitting for [her] sex;” and, further, with justifying Mr. Wheelwright’s Fast-day sermon and the Boston petition. Mrs. Hutchinson now showed herself quite able to hold her own in the casuistical fence of the time, and this part of the case resulted disastrously for the prosecution. Indeed, the logic made use of by Winthrop was of a kind which exposed him badly. He contended that the accused had transgressed the law of God commanding her to honor her father and mother. The magistrates were the fathers of the commonwealth; and therefore, in adhering to those who signed the remonstrance, even though she did not sign it herself, she dishonored the magistrates, and was justly punishable. Coming from the mouth of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1637 this would be pronounced sophistical rubbish; it was equally sophistical rubbish when uttered by the Governor of Massachusetts Bay for the same year. Mrs. Hutchinson disposed of the allegation with dignity and point in these words: — “I do acknowledge no such thing; neither do I think that I ever put any dishonor upon you.”

The next count in the indictment pressed upon her related to the meetings of women held at her house.

X Here, too, the prosecution fared badly. Mrs. Hutchinson was asked by what warrant she held such meetings; she cited in reply the usage which she found prevailing in Boston at her coming, and the Scriptural rule in the second chapter of Titus, that the elder women should instruct the younger. The following altercation then ensued:—

“GOVERNOR WINTHROP. You know that there is no rule [in the Scriptures] which crosses another; but this rule [in Titus] crosses that in the Corinthians. You must therefore take [the rule in Titus] in this sense, that the elder women must instruct the younger about their business, and to love their husbands, and not to make them to clash.

“MRS. HUTCHINSON. I do not conceive but that it is meant also for some public times.

“GOVERNOR. Well, have you no more to say but this?

“MRS. H. I have said sufficient for my practice.

“GOVERNOR. Your course is not to be suffered; for, besides that we find such a course as this greatly prejudicial to the State, . . . we see not that any should have authority to set up any other exercises besides what authority hath already set up; and so what hurt comes of this you will be guilty of, and we for suffering you.

“MRS. H. Sir, I do not believe that to be so.

“GOVERNOR. Well, we see how it is. We must therefore put it away from you; or restrain you from maintaining this course.

“MRS. H. If you have a rule for it from God's Word, you may.

“GOVERNOR. We are your judges, and not you ours. And we must compel you to it.

“MRS. H. If it please you by authority to put it down, I will freely let you. For I am subject to your authority.”

For a moment, these words as Winthrop uttered them must have jarred with a strange and yet famil-

iar sound on the ears of the listening clergy, hardly one of whom had in England escaped being silenced by the prelates; and now they heard the same principles of rigid conformity laid down in their place of refuge, — freedom of conscience was once for all there denied. The preliminaries were now brought to a close, and the trial proceeded to the real issue involved. The charge was explicit. Mrs. Hutchinson, it was alleged, had publicly said that Mr. Cotton alone of the ministers preached a Covenant of Grace; the others, not having received the seal of the Spirit, were consequently not able ministers of the New Testament, and preached a Covenant of Works. To this count in the indictment against her she was at first invited to plead guilty; which she declined to do. Governor Winthrop then permitted himself to indulge in a sneer, which was met with a prompt and dignified rejoinder. Both sneer and rejoinder stand thus recorded: —

“GOVERNOR WINTHROP. It is well discerned to the Court that Mrs. Hutchinson can tell when to speak and when to hold her tongue. Upon the answering of a question which we desire her to tell her thoughts of, she desires to be pardoned.

“MRS. HUTCHINSON. It is one thing for me to come before a public magistracy, and there to speak what they would have me to speak; and another when a man comes to me in a way of friendship, privately. There is a difference in that.”

Possibly it was at this point in the trial that, stung by Winthrop's slur, the anger of the accused flashed up and found expression in hot words; for Weld tells us that once, “her reputation being a little touched, . . . she vented her impatience with so fierce speech

and countenance, as one would hardly have guessed her to have been an Antitype of Daniel, but rather of the lions, after they were let loose." However this may be, the witnesses for the prosecution, Peters, Weld, Eliot, Symmes and the others, who up to this time had been watching the case in grim silence, were now called upon, and, one after another, gave their evidence. Though the question at issue was sufficiently plain, the discussion then soon passed into the unintelligible. It has been seen that, at a certain point in the growth of differences in the Boston church, the ministers of the adjoining towns had been called upon to interpose, and a conference had then taken place between the two sides, — the visiting elders and Mr. Wilson representing one, and Mrs. Hutchinson, Cotton and Wheelwright the other.¹ The evidence now given related to what had then taken place. The ministers all asserted that the conference was a formal one of a public nature, and so understood at the time. This Mrs. Hutchinson denied, — thus making the point that she had been guilty of no open disparagement of the clergy, but that, whatever she had said, had been drawn from her in private discourse by those now seeking to persecute her for it. As to the Covenant of Works, while they asserted that she had charged them with being under such a covenant, she insisted that she had done nothing of the sort; though she admitted that she probably had said that they "preached a covenant of works, as did the apostles before the Ascension. But to preach a covenant of works, and to be under a covenant of works, are two different things." She did not deny that she had singled out Mr. Cotton from among them all as alone

¹ *Supra*, 426-8.

being sealed with the seal of the Spirit, and therefore preaching a Covenant of Grace, which bit of jargon was explained as meaning that one so sealed enjoyed a full assurance of God's favor by the Holy Ghost. Here at last, in this special assurance attributed to Cotton, was the rock of offence from which flowed those waters of bitterness, the cup of which Wilson and Weld and Peters and the rest had been forced to drain to the last drop. A woman's preference among preachers was somehow to be transmuted into a crime against the state. X

It would be neither easy nor profitable to attempt to follow the trial into the metaphysico-theological stage to which it now passed. Cotton Mather says that "the mother opinion of the [Antinomian heresy] was, that a Christian should not fetch any evidence of his good state before God, from the sight of any inherent qualification in him; or from any conditional promise made unto such a qualification."¹ This being the mother opinion, and itself not translucent, all the parties to the proceedings now began to obscure it by talking about "witnesses of the spirit" and "the seal of the spirit," and "a broad seal" and "a little seal," and the "assurance of God's favor" and "the graces wanting to evidence it," and "the difference between the state of the apostles before the Ascension, and their state after it." The real difficulty lay in the fact that the words and phrases to which they attached an all-important significance did not admit of definition, and, consequently, were devoid of exact meaning. They were simply engaged in hot wrangling over the unknowable: but, while Court and clergy and accused wallowed and floundered in the mire of their own

¹ *Magnalia*, B. III. P. II. ch. v. § 12.

learning, belaboring each other with contradictory texts and with shadowy distinctions, under it all there lay the hard substratum of injured pride and personal hate; and on that, as on the rock of ages, their firm feet rested secure.

Six of the ministers testified in succession, Hugh Peters first. Their evidence was tolerably concurrent that Mrs. Hutchinson had at the Boston church conference spoken freely, saying that they all taught a Covenant of Works, — that they were not able ministers of the New Testament, not being sealed, — and, finally, that Mr. Cotton alone among them preached a Covenant of Grace. This testimony, and the subsequent wrangle, occupied what remained of the first day of the trial, before the growing dusk compelled an adjournment. The next morning, as soon as Governor Winthrop had opened the hearing, Mrs. Hutchinson stated that, since the night before, she had looked over certain notes which had been taken at the time of the conference, and that she did “find things not to be as hath been alleged,” and accordingly she now demanded that, as the ministers were testifying in their own cause, they should do so under oath. This demand caused much excitement in the Court, and was looked upon as a fresh insult heaped upon the clergy. Winthrop held that, the case not being one for a jury, the evidence need not be under oath; while other of the magistrates thought that, in a cause exciting so much interest, sworn testimony would better satisfy the country. The accused insisted. “An oath, sir,” she exclaimed to Stoughton, “is an end of all strife; and it is God’s ordinance.” Then Endicott broke in sneeringly: — “A sign it is what respect she has to [the ministers’] words;” and

presently again:—"You lifted up your eyes as if you took God to witness you came to entrap none,—and yet you will have them swear!" Finally, Winthrop, that all might be satisfied, expressed himself as willing to administer the oath if the elders would take it; though, said he, "I see no necessity of an oath in this thing, seeing it is true and the substance of the matter confirmed by divers." The deputy-governor, Dudley, then turned the discussion off by crying out:—"Mark what a flourish Mrs. Hutchinson puts upon the business that she had witnesses to disprove what was said; and here is no man in Court!" To which bit of characteristic brutality the accused seems quietly to have rejoined by saying:—"If you will not call them in, that is nothing to me."

The ministers now professed themselves as ready to be sworn. At this point Mr. Coggeshall, the dismissed delegate from Boston, apparently with a view to preventing a conflict of evidence, ventured to suggest to the Court that the ministers should confer with Cotton before testifying. The suggestion was not well received, and Mr. Coggeshall found himself summarily suppressed; indeed, three of the judges did not hesitate to deliver themselves in respect to him and the accused as follows:—

"GOVERNOR WINTHROP. Shall we not believe so many godly elders, in a cause wherein we know the mind of the party without their testimony?"

"MR. ENDICOTT (addressing Mr. Coggeshall). I will tell you what I say. I think that this carriage of yours tends to further casting dirt upon the face of the judges.

"MR. HARLAKENDEN. Her carriage doth the same. For she doth not object an essential thing; but she goes upon circumstances,—and yet would have them sworn!"

But before the elders were again called on to testify, Mrs. Hutchinson was told to produce her own witnesses. Of these Mr. Coggeshall was one. He rose when his name was called, and his examination is reported in full and as follows :—

“GOVERNOR WINTHROP. Mr. Coggeshall was not present [at the conference between Mrs. Hutchinson and the elders].

“MR. COGGESHALL. Yes, but I was. Only I desired to be silent till I should be called [to testify].

“GOVERNOR. Will you, Mr. Coggeshall, say that she did not say [what has been testified to]?”

“MR. COGGESHALL. Yes. I dare say that she did not say all that which they lay against her.

“MR. PETERS (interrupting). How dare you look into [the face of] the Court to say such a word.

“MR. COGGESHALL. Mr. Peters takes upon him to forbid me. I shall be silent.”

The first witness for the defence having been thus effectually disposed of, the second, Mr. Leverett, was called. He testified that he was present at the discussion between the ministers and Mrs. Hutchinson; that Mr. Peters had then, “with much vehemency and intreaty,” urged the accused to specify the difference between his own teachings and those of Mr. Cotton; and, in reply, she had stated the difference to be in the fact that, just as the Apostles themselves before the Ascension had not received the seal of the Spirit, so Peters and his brethren, not having the same assurance of God’s favor as Mr. Cotton, could not preach a Covenant of Grace so clearly as he. When he had finished his statement a brief altercation took place between Weld and Mrs. Hutchinson, at the close of which Governor Winthrop called on

Mr. Cotton to give his recollection of what had taken place.

Mrs. Hutchinson had been less fortunate in her management of the latter than of the earlier portions of her case. Since the question had turned on what took place at the conference, she had found herself pressed by evidence, and beyond her depth. As is apt to be the case with voluble persons under such circumstances, she had then had recourse to small points, — making issues over the order in which events occurred, or the exact words used, and pressing meaningless distinctions, — cavilling even, and equivocating. By so doing she had injured her case, giving Peters a chance to exclaim: — “We do not desire to be so narrow to the Court and the gentleman about times and seasons, whether first or last;” while Harlakenden had, as it has been seen, broken out in disgust: — “She doth not object any essential thing, but she goes upon circumstances.” The demand that the ministers should be sworn was another mistake. It was an affront to the elders, the most revered class in the community, and it both angered them and shocked the audience. A blasphemy would hardly have angered or shocked them more. Not only did it excite sympathy for the prosecutors and prejudice against the accused, but there was nothing to be gained by it. The ministers had not given false testimony; and she knew it. The only result, therefore, of her demand of an oath was that they gave their testimony twice instead of once, and insomuch impressed it the more on the minds and memories of all. Mrs. Hutchinson, consequently, was fast doing the work of the prosecution, and convicting herself.

But her cause now passed into far abler hands. Cotton's sympathies were strongly with her, and he seems to have been quite ready to show it. When called upon to listen to the evidence of his brethren, he had seated himself by Mrs. Hutchinson's side; and he now rose in answer to Winthrop's summons, and proceeded to give his account of what had passed at the conference. Silencing the accused and soothing the Court, he soon showed very clearly that the qualities which made him an eminent pulpit orator would also have made him an excellent jury lawyer. With no little ingenuity and skill he went on explaining things away, and putting a new gloss upon them, until, when he got through, the prosecution had very little left to work on. In summing up, he said that at the close of the conference it had not seemed to him "to be so ill taken as [now] it is. And our brethren did say, also, that they would not so easily believe reports as they had done; and, withal, mentioned that they would speak no more of it. And afterwards some of them did say they were less satisfied than before. And I must say that I did not find her saying they were under a Covenant of Works, nor that she said they did preach a Covenant of Works."

A discussion then ensued between Cotton and the other ministers, — calm in outward tone, but, on their part at least, full of suppressed feeling. Peters took the lead in it; but even he was not equal to an attempt at browbeating the renowned teacher of the Boston church from the witness-stand, as he had browbeaten Coggeshall from it a few minutes before. Finally Dudley put this direct question:— "They affirm that Mrs. Hutchinson did say they were not able ministers of the New Testament." It touched

the vital point in the accusation. The whole audience must have awaited the response in breathless silence. It came in these words: — "I do not remember it." X

The prosecution had broken down. It apparently only remained to let the accused go free, or to condemn and punish her on general principles, in utter disregard of law and evidence. Silence and discretion alone were now needed in the conduct of the defence. Then it was that, in the triumphant words of her bitterest enemy, "her own mouth" delivered Anne Hutchinson "into the power of the Court, as guilty of that which all suspected her for, but were not furnished with proof sufficient to proceed against her." But modern paraphrase cannot here equal the terse, quaint language of the original reports. Cotton had just sat down, after giving his answer to Dudley's question. Some among the audience were drawing a deep breath of relief, while others of the magistrates and clergy were looking at one another in surprise and dismay. The record then goes on as follows: — X

"Upon this she began to speak her mind, and to tell of the manner of God's dealing with her, and how he revealed himself to her, and made her know what she had to do. The Governor perceiving whereabouts she went, interrupted her, and would have kept her to the matter in hand; but, seeing her very unwilling to be taken off, he permitted her to proceed. Her speech was to this effect: —

"When I was in old England I was much troubled at the constitution of the churches there, — so far troubled, indeed, that I had liked to have turned Separatist. Whereupon I set apart a day of solemn humiliation by myself, that I might ponder of the thing and seek direction from God. And on that day God discovered unto me the un-

faithfulness of the churches, and the danger of them, and that none of those Ministers could preach the Lord Jesus aright; for he brought to my mind this scripture: — “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already it is in the world.” I marvelled what this should mean; and in considering I found that the Papists did not deny that Christ was come in the flesh, nor did we deny it. Who then was antichrist? Was it the Turk only? Now I had none to open scripture to me but the Lord. He must be the prophet. And it pleased the Lord then to bring to my mind another scripture: — “For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator;” and he that denies the testament denies the death of the testator. And in this the Lord did open unto me and give me to see that every one that did not preach the new covenant denies the death of the testator, and has the spirit of antichrist. And upon this it was revealed unto me that the ministers of England were these antichrists. But I knew not how to bear this; I did in my heart rise up against it. Then I begged of the Lord this atheism might not be in me. After I had begged for light a twelve-month together, the Lord at last let me see how I did oppose Christ Jesus, and he revealed to me that scripture in Isaiah: — “Hearken unto me ye that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry;” and from thence he showed me the atheism of my own heart, and how I did turn in upon a Covenant of Works, and did oppose Christ Jesus. And ever since I bless the Lord, — he hath let me see which was the clear ministry and which the wrong, and to know what voice I heard, — which was the voice of Moses, which of John Baptist, and which of Christ. The voice of my beloved I have distinguished from the voice of strangers. And thenceforth I was more choice whom I heard; for,

after our teacher, Mr. Cotton, and my brother Wheelwright were put down, there was none in England that I durst hear. Then it pleased God to reveal himself to me in that scripture of Isaiah: — "And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers." The Lord giving me this promise, and Mr. Cotton being gone to New England, I was much troubled. And it was revealed to me that I must go thither also, and that there I should be persecuted and suffer much trouble. I will give you another scripture: — "Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee;" and then the Lord did reveal himself to me, sitting upon a Throne of Justice, and all the world appearing before him, and, though I must come to New England, yet I must not fear nor be dismayed. And I could not be at rest but I must come hither. The Lord brought another scripture to me: — "For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people."

"I will give you one more place which the Lord brought to me by immediate revelations; and that doth concern you all. It is in the sixth chapter of Daniel. When the Presidents and Princes could find nothing against Daniel, because he was faithfull, they sought matter against him concerning the Law of his God, to cast him into the lions' den. So it was revealed to me that they should plot against me; the Lord bade me not to fear, for he that delivered Daniel and the three children, his hand was not shortened. And, behold! this scripture is fulfilled this day in my eyes. Therefore take heed what ye go about to do unto me. You have power over my body, but the Lord Jesus hath power over my body and soul; neither can you do me any harm, for I am in the hands of the eternal Jehovah, my Saviour.

I am at his appointment, for the bounds of my habitation are cast in Heaven, and no further do I esteem of any mortal man than creatures in his hand. I fear none but the great Jehovah, which hath foretold me of these things, and I do verily believe that he will deliver me out of your hands. Therefore take heed how you proceed against me; for I know that for this you go about to do to me, God will ruin you and your posterity, and this whole State.'

"MR. NOWELL. How do you know that it was God that did reveal these things to you, and not Satan?

"MRS. HUTCHINSON. How did Abraham know that it was God that bid him offer his son, being a breach of the sixth commandment?

"DEPUTY-GOVERNOR DUDLEY. By an immediate voice.

"MRS. HUTCHINSON. So to me by an immediate revelation.

"DEPUTY-GOVERNOR. How! an immediate revelation?

"MRS. HUTCHINSON. By the voice of his own spirit to my soul.

"GOVERNOR WINTHROP. Daniel was delivered by miracle; do you think to be delivered so too?

"MRS. HUTCHINSON. I do here speak it before the Court. I look that the Lord should deliver me by his providence."¹

At once, the current of the trial now took a new direction. The dangerous topics of special revelation and miraculous action had been opened up. The feeling which existed with respect to these in the Puritanic mind has already been referred to.² That

¹ The utterances of Mrs. Hutchinson as here given are taken from both reports of the trial. That in the *Short Story* is at this stage much the more detailed, and it is supplemented by that in Hutchinson's *History*. Though in this narrative the two reports have been woven into one, nothing has been interpolated, and the original phrases and forms of expression have all been carefully preserved. Some of the texts suggest doubts as to the accuracy of the reports.

² *Supra*, 387-9.

it was illogical did not matter. It was there. No one for an instant doubted the immediate presence of the Almighty, or his care of his Chosen People, or his Special Providences which they so much loved to note. In the minds of Winthrop or Dudley or Endicott, to question that He was there at that trial in the Cambridge meeting-house, guiding every detail of their proceedings, would have fallen but little short of blasphemy. Had it chanced to thunder during those November days, or had the Northern Lights flashed somewhat brighter than was their wont, His voice would have been heard therein, and His hand seen. They fully believed that in the ordinary events of daily life He shielded some, while on others He visited His wrath. But, when it came to revelations and miracles, they drew the line distinctly and deep. Special Providences? yes! Miracles?—no! Portents?—yes! Revelations?—no! Mrs. Hutchinson accordingly had now opened the vials of puritanic wrath, and they were freely emptied upon her head. Nor were they emptied on her head alone. Cotton himself was no longer spared. At first he took no part in the broken and heated discussion which followed the prophetic and defiant outpouring of the accused, but some allusion to him was soon made, and then Endicott called on “her reverend teacher . . . to speak freely whether he doth condescend to such speeches or revelations as have been here spoken of.”

Cotton in reply endeavored to discriminate between utterances which were “fantastical and leading to danger,” and those which came “flying upon the wings of the spirit.” As to miracles, he said that he was not sure that he understood Mrs. Hutchinson; but, he added:—“If she doth expect a deliverance

in a way of Providence, then I cannot deny it." Here Dudley interposed, exclaiming:—"No, sir, we did not speak of that." Cotton then added:—"If it be by way of miracle, then I would suspect it." Later on he again recurred to the subject, now speaking of miracles and "revelations without the Word" as things he could not assent to and looked upon as delusions; adding kindly, "and I think so doth she too, as I understand her." Then Dudley broke rudely in, remarking:—"Sir, you weary me and do not satisfy me." The current had now set strongly in one direction, and Cotton was not only powerless to stem it, but was indeed in some danger, as Dudley's remark showed, of himself being swept away by it. All pretence of an orderly conduct of proceedings was abandoned, and magistrates, clergy and deputies vied with each other in denunciation and invective, Winthrop himself setting the bad example.

"GOVERNOR WINTHROP. The case is altered and will not stand with us now, but I see a marvellous providence of God [it will be remembered that the offence of the accused was looking for a deliverance through a 'providence of God'] to bring things to this pass that they are. We have been hearkening about trial of this thing, and now the mercy of God by a providence hath answered our desires and made her to lay open herself and the ground of all these disturbances to be by revelations, . . . and this hath been the ground of all these tumults and troubles; and I would that those were all cut off from us that trouble us, for this is the thing that hath been the root of all the mischief. . . . Aye! it is the most desperate enthusiasm in the world, for nothing but a word comes to her mind, and then an application is made which is nothing to the purpose, and this is her revelations! . . .

"MR. NOWELL. I think it is a devilish delusion.

"GOVERNOR WINTHROP. Of all the revelations that ever I read of, I never read the like ground raised as is for this. The Enthusiasts and Anabaptists had never the like. . . .

"DEPUTY-GOVERNOR DUDLEY. I never saw such revelations as these among the Anabaptists; therefore am sorry that Mr. Cotton should stand to justify her.

"MR. PETERS. I can say the same, and this runs to enthusiasm, and I think that is very disputable which our brother Cotton hath spoken. . . .

"GOVERNOR WINTHROP. It overthrows all.

"DEPUTY-GOVERNOR DUDLEY. These disturbances that have come among the Germans have been all grounded upon revelations; and so they that have vented them have stirred up their hearers to take up arms against their prince and to cut the throats of one another; and these have been the fruits of them. And whether the devil may inspire the same into their hearts here I know not; for I am fully persuaded that Mrs. Hutchinson is deluded by the devil, because the spirit of God speaks truth in all his servants.

"GOVERNOR WINTHROP. I am persuaded that the revelation she brings forth is delusion.

"All the Court but some two or three ministers here cried out, — We all believe it! We all believe it!! . . .

"MR. BARTHOLOMEW. My wife hath said that Mr. Wheelwright was not acquainted with this way until that she imparted it unto him.

"MR. BROWN. . . . I think she deserves no less a censure than hath been already passed, but rather something more; for this is the foundation of all mischief; and of all those bastardly things which have been overthrown by that great meeting [the Synod]. They have all come out from this cursed fountain."

The Governor now forthwith proceeded to put the question. As he was in the midst of doing it, Mr. Coddington, who had hitherto preserved silence, arose and asked to be heard. Referring then to the meet-

ings at Mrs. Hutchinson's house, he asked whether, supposing those meetings to have been designed for the religious edification of her own family, no others might have been present? "If," replied Winthrop, "you have nothing else to say but that, it is pity, Mr. Coddington, that you should interrupt us in proceeding to censure." But Coddington on this occasion showed true courage; for, though in a hopeless minority, he went on — undeterred by Winthrop's rebuke, and regardless of the impatience of his weary and excited audience — to point out that absolutely nothing had been proved against Mrs. Hutchinson, except that she had asserted the other ministers did not teach a Covenant of Grace so clearly as Cotton, and that they were in the state of the apostles before the Ascension. "Why!" he added, "I hope this may not be offensive nor any wrong to them."

Then again Winthrop broke in, declaring that her own speech, just made in Court, afforded ample ground to proceed upon, even admitting that nothing had been proved. Coddington then closed with these forcible and eloquently plain words: —

"I beseech you do not speak so to force things along; for I do not for my own part see any equity in the Court in all your proceedings. Here is no law of God that she hath broken; nor any law of the country that she hath broken. Therefore she deserves no censure. Be it granted that Mrs. Hutchinson did say the elders preach as the apostles did, — why, they preached a Covenant of Grace. What wrong then is that to the elders? It is without question that the apostles did preach a Covenant of Grace before the Ascension, though not with that power they did after they received the manifestation of the spirit. Therefore, I pray consider what you do, for here is no law of God or man broken." —

The Court had now been many hours in unbroken session. The members of it were so exhausted and hungry that Dudley impatiently exclaimed:—“We shall all be sick with fasting!” Nevertheless the intervention of Coddington, and the scruples of one or two of the deputies, led to the swearing of two of the witnesses for the prosecution, and the colleagues, Weld and Eliot, were called upon by the Governor to take the oath. When they rose and held up their hands, Peters rose and held up his hand also. They testified again that at the meeting in Boston the accused had said there was a broad difference between Cotton and themselves,—that he preached a Covenant of Grace, and they of Works, and that they were not sealed; and, added Eliot, “I do further remember this also, that she said we were not able ministers of the gospel, because we were but like the apostles before the Ascension.” “This,” said Coddington, “was I hope no disparagement to you. Methinks the comparison is very good.” And Winthrop then interjected:—“Well, we see in the Court that she doth continually say and unsay things.”

The hesitating deputies now pronounced themselves fully satisfied, and Winthrop put the question. The record closes as follows:—

“GOVERNOR WINTHROP. The Court hath already declared themselves satisfied concerning the things you hear, and concerning the troublesomeness of her spirit, and the danger of her course amongst us, which is not to be suffered. Therefore if it be the mind of the Court that Mrs. Hutchinson, for these things that appear before us, is unfit for our society, — and if it be the mind of the Court that she shall be banished out of our liberties, and imprisoned till she be sent away, let them hold up their hands.

"All but three held up their hands.

"Those that are contrary minded hold up yours.

"Mr. Coddington and Mr. Colburn only.

"MR. JENNISON. I cannot hold up my hand one way or the other, and I shall give my reason if the Court require it.

"GOVERNOR WINTHROP. Mrs. Hutchinson, you hear the sentence of the Court. It is that you are banished from out our jurisdiction as being a woman not fit for our society. And you are to be imprisoned till the Court send you away.

"MRS. HUTCHINSON. I desire to know wherefore I am banished.

"GOVERNOR WINTHROP. Say no more. The Court knows wherefore, and is satisfied."

In the Colony Records of Massachusetts the sentence reads as follows:—

"Mrs. Hutchinson, (the wife of Mr. William Hutchinson,) being convented for traducing the ministers, and their ministry in this country, shee declared voluntarily her revelations for her ground, and that shee should bee delivred, and the Court ruined, with their posterity; and thereupon was banished, and the mean while was committed to Mr. Joseph Weld untill the Court shall dispose of her."

CHAPTER IX.

THE EXCOMMUNICATION.

THE case of Wheelwright had been disposed of by the Court on what was then the 4th and is now the 14th of the month, while that of Mrs. Hutchinson had occupied the 7th and 8th, now the 17th and 18th. During the proceedings in the latter case Wheelwright was at his home at the Mount, and it is small matter for surprise that when he heard of them he made haste to quit the soil of Massachusetts. Less able to face a winter in the wilderness, Mrs. Hutchinson was to wait until spring, not in Boston at her own house and among friends and sympathizers, but at Roxbury, under the watch and ward of Thomas Weld, in the house of his brother Joseph. The remaining events of the controversy can be quickly narrated.

Immediately after passing sentence on Mistress Hutchinson, the Court, worn out with excitement, long sessions, cold and fasting, seems to have indulged itself in a recess of several days. It met again on the ^{15th}~~25th~~, and, refreshed by the brief cessation from labor, took up its work vigorously at the point where it had been dropped. The sergeants, who in the previous May had laid down their halberds when Vane failed of his reelection, and had refused to attend Winthrop home, were "convented." The names of both were "on the seditious libel called a remonstrance or petition." They were discharged from

office, disfranchised, and fined respectively twenty and forty pounds. One of them, Edward Hutchinson, — he who was fined forty pounds, — turned himself contemptuously when his sentence was pronounced, telling the Court that if they took away his means they must support his family. He was promptly imprisoned; but, after a night's reflection, humbled himself and was released. William Balston, the other, was apparently a man of the outspoken English type, with the courage of his convictions. When confronted with his signature to the petition he at once acknowledged it, and bluntly told the Court "that he knew that if such a petition had been made in any other place in the world, there would have been no fault found with it." Subsequently the fines of both were remitted on condition they departed the province; and they were among those who the next March went to Rhode Island.

One after another the signers of the Boston remonstrance of the previous March were then summoned to the bar of the Court. The choice offered them was simple, — they could acknowledge themselves in fault and withdraw their names from the offensive document, or they could pass under the ban of the law. A few, some ten in number, recanted; some five or six of the more obdurate were at once disfranchised. Among these was John Underhill, then captain of the train-band and a salaried officer of the colony. The order now made by the Court in regard to him was terse and did not admit of misconstruction. It ran in these words, — "Capt. Underhill, being convicted for having his hand to the seditious writing, is disfranchised, and put from the captains place"; but ten months were yet to elapse before he was banished.

Throughout, Underhill's case was peculiar, and, as will presently be seen, the solemn way in which Winthrop recorded the man's religious buffoonery throws a gleam of genuine humor over one page at least of a dreary record.

Though not now banished, Underhill's name heads the list of the "opinionists" of Boston, fifty-eight in all, who were, at the same November session of the Court which banished Wheelwright and Mrs. Hutchinson, ordered within ten days to bring their arms to the house of Captain Robert Keayne, and there deliver them up to him. Besides the fifty-eight in Boston, seventeen others, in five different towns, — in all seventy-five persons, — the recognized leaders of the minority, were disarmed, and, under a heavy money penalty, forbidden to buy, to borrow or to have in their possession either weapon or ammunition, until the Court should take further action. The ground for this measure, in which the agitation culminated, was set forth in the order promulgating it. It was a "just cause of suspicion, that they, as others in Germany, in former times, may, upon some revelation, make some suddaine irruption upon those that differ from them in judgment." The decree, needless to say, excited deep indignation among those named in it. It was in fact a mild proscription. Those proscribed were powerless, and they proved themselves law-abiding. In the words of Winthrop, — "When they saw no remedy, they obeyed."

Plainly, also, there was "no remedy." Throughout all the proceedings which had taken place, the Boston church had been the stronghold of the secular faction in the state; and now even when generally disarmed and with its leading members disfranchised and

marked for exile, there were those in it who were earnest to have their brother Winthrop called to account and dealt with in a church way for his course as governor. Obviously, such an attempt would only have made matters worse, and those of the elders, to whom appeal had been made, showed no zeal in their action, — they were not forward in the matter. Then Winthrop, fully understanding the situation, wisely as well as boldly took the initiative, making a formal address to the congregation. In this he laid down the correct rule clearly and forcibly, with numerous scriptural references to chapter and verse in Luke and Matthew, and fortifying himself with precedents drawn from the action in similar circumstances of Uzzia and Asa and Salam: — if a magistrate, he said, acting in his private capacity, should take away the goods of another, or despoil his servant, the church could properly call him to account for so doing; yet if he was guilty of such conduct in his official character, he was not accountable to the church, no matter how unjust his action might be. In the present case, the Governór went on to declare, whatever he had done had been done by him with the advice and under the direction of Cotton and other of the church's elders, and he would now give but a single reason in his own justification, — that single reason was that the brethren singled out for exile were so divided from the rest of the country in their judgment and practice that their presence in the community was, in his opinion, not consistent with the public peace. "So, by the example of Lot in Abraham's family, and after Hagar and Ishmael, he saw they must be sent away."

This action and discourse of Winthrop's was not without importance, and it bore fruit; for it was the

theocratic period in Massachusetts, and the church was too much inclined to meddle in the affairs of state. The clergy were now supreme. They had converted the General Court into a mere machine for the civil enforcement of their own inquisitorial decrees; Mrs. Hutchinson had been banished for "traducing the ministers," and it was not proposed to allow further freedom of religious thought in Massachusetts. It was the clergy, not the churches, who constituted the power behind the throne. The principle that the magistrate was not amenable to the church for acts done in his official capacity was sound, and could be most appropriately asserted by one speaking with authority. The enunciation of the further principle, that the magistrate should be equally free from what may be called a politico-theological coercion, whether exercised by priests or ministers, was unfortunately deferred to a long subsequent period.

Mrs. Hutchinson meanwhile, separated from her family, was wearing away the long winter in semi-imprisonment at Roxbury. At first she labored under a good deal of mental depression, natural enough under the circumstances; for not only must the reaction from the excitement of the trial have been great, but she was soon to give birth to a child. Her despondency did not last long; and, indeed, she was now thoroughly in her element. Though secluded from the rest of the world for fear of the injury she might do in the way of spreading pernicious heresies, she was still the most noted woman in the province; and as such she was literally beset by the clergy, and by Mr. Thomas Weld in particular. They were far from being done with her yet. After the manner of their kind also, in every age and in all countries,

the Massachusetts ministers, having secured an absolute supremacy in the state, were now busy hunting out "foul errors" about inherent righteousness, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection, the sanctity of the Sabbath, etc., etc., such heresies being very rife; for, as Winthrop sagely observed, it could not be expected that "Satan would lose the opportunity of making choice of so fit an instrument [as Mistress Hutchinson], so long as any hope remained to attain his mischievous end in darkening the saving truth of the Lord Jesus, and disturbing the peace of his churches." It was now that Cotton not only abandoned his old allies to their fate, but became one of their leading persecutors. He probably knew his brethren. At the trial at Cambridge he had seen it wanted but little to cause Peters and Weld to throw off all restraint, and open the cry on him as they had upon Wheelwright. Indeed both Endicott and Dudley had there addressed him in a way he was little accustomed to, using language both insulting and brow-beating; while Winthrop, on one occasion at least, seemed to feel the necessity of diverting attention from him.¹ Having at the close of the Synod ceased from all antagonism to his brethren, Cotton had since sought to occupy a neutral attitude as peacemaker. He now realized that this was not enough. He had professed he was persuaded; he must furnish proof of it by works also. He made up his mind to do it. One feeble effort, as will be seen, he yet made in behalf of Mrs. Hutchinson, and it was creditable to him; in other respects, from this time onward, the position in the controversy held by the teacher of the Boston church was simply pitiable, — the ignominious

¹ Hutchinson, *Massachusetts*, i. 74.

page in an otherwise worthy life. He made haste to walk in a Covenant of Works, — and the walk was a very dirty one. None the less he trudged sturdily on in it, now declaring that he had been abused and made use of as a "stalking horse," and now bewailing his sloth and credulity. And thus "did [he] spend most of his time both publicly and privately," engaged in the inquisitor's work of unearthing heretics and heresies. A little later he even allowed himself to be put forward as the mouthpiece of his order, to pass judgment on his old associates and to pronounce filial sympathy a crime.

Mrs. Hutchinson was soon found to be the one root from whence had sprung the many heresies now unearthed; when traced, they all ran back to her. Hereupon the ministers "resorted to her many times, labouring to convince her, but in vain; yet they resorted to her still, to the end they might either reclaim her from her errors, or that they might bear witness against them if occasion were." For now a new ordeal awaited her. She was to undergo the discipline of the church in which she was a sister.

In careful preparation for this, a species of ecclesiastical indictment was drawn up by the brethren, setting forth the utterances of the prisoner, as taken down from her own lips. Containing some thirty several counts, it was altogether a formidable document.¹ A

¹ A few of these counts will suffice to give a general idea of the whole: —

"8. The Image of God wherein Adam was made [Mrs. Hutchinson] could see no Scripture to warrant that it consisteth in holiness, but conceived it to be in that he was made like to Christ's manhood."

"12. There is no evidence to be had of our good estate, either from absolute or conditional promises."

"15. There is first engrafting into Christ before union, from which a man might fall away."

copy of it was then sent to the church at Boston, and that church in due course applied to the magistrates to allow Mrs. Hutchinson to appear and answer to the accusation. Leave was of course granted, and at length, in what would now be the latter part of March, Joseph Weld's prisoner returned once more to her own house. But her husband was not there to meet her. He and her brother, and indeed all those whom she could look to for countenance and support, were away seeking out a new home, against their impending exile; nor did her opponents fail to attribute their absence to "the good providence of God," who thus removed opposition.

The proceedings were appointed for the $\frac{16th}{25th}$ of March. They excited the deepest interest throughout the colony, and as the day drew near, Boston was thronged with visitors. Not only all the members of the Boston church, but many others were there assembled; for the whole little community was agitated to its depths. The utter sameness of that provincial life — in which no new excitements followed one upon another, dividing attention and driving each other into forgetfulness — was for once broken. The church was the common family, and from that common family the elders were now to cast out the most prominent, —

"17. That Abraham was not in a saving estate till the 22 chap. of Gen. when hee offered Isaac, and saveing the firmeness of Gods election, he might have perished, notwithstanding any work of grace that was wrought in him till then."

"21. That an hypocrite may have Adams righteousness and periah, and by that righteousness he is bound to the Law, but in union with Christ, Christ comes into the man, and he retains the seed and dieth, and then all manner of grace in himselfe, but all in Christ."

"28. That so farre as a man is in union with Christ, he can doe no duties perfectly, and without the communion of the unregenerate part with the regenerate."

the best known of all the sisters. It is necessary to think of the domestic circle to enable men or women of to-day to bring home to themselves the intensity of interest then aroused. An excommunication in church or state, or even socially, is now a small matter comparatively. It causes scarcely a ripple in the great sea of life. The event of to-day, it is barely remembered to-morrow. It was not so then. It was as if with us a daughter, arraigned before brothers and sisters, were solemnly admonished by the venerated father and driven from the hearth at which her childhood had been passed. In that family the event would be the one subject of thought; from the minds and memories of those present no incident of the scene would ever fade. So it was in the Boston church. The members of that church felt and thought as the members of a modern family would think and feel of a similar episode in their home. It would be the event not of a day, but of a life,—the family tragedy.

When, therefore, "one Thursday Lecturer day after Sermon," the hour fixed for the proceedings to begin was come, the Boston meeting-house was crowded with a devout and expectant audience. The General Court was sitting still at Cambridge, and the time of the church meeting—ten o'clock in the morning—interfered with its sessions; leave nevertheless was specially granted to the governor and treasurer of the province, both members of the Boston church, to absent themselves. They were present with the rest of the church when, two hours earlier than usual, the services began; but she who would have been the observed of all was not there. The seat reserved for her was vacant. Sermon and prayer at length

ended, she came in, "pretending," as Winthrop expressed it, "bodily infirmity." When at last she had taken her place, one of the elders arose and broke the silence which prevailed. Calling the sister Anne Hutchinson forth by name, he stated the purpose for which she had been summoned, and read the indictment prepared against her. A copy of it, to which those who were to bear witness to the several counts had subscribed their names, had some days before been put in her hands.

The scene that ensued, though sufficiently interesting, was, from the religious point of view, far from edifying.¹ At first the woman at bay most pertinently asked by what precept of holy writ the elders of the church had come to her in her place of confinement, pretending that they sought light, when in reality they came to entrap and betray her. Then, presently, Wilson, her pastor, — the man she disliked of all men, and for whom even her dislike was probably exceeded by her contempt, — Wilson either took some part in the proceedings or was alluded to; and at once her anger flashed out in stinging words. She denounced him for what he had uttered against her before the Court at the time of her sentence. "For what am I banished?" — she demanded; declaring the heretical speeches, now attributed to her, the results of confinement. Presently the discussion of the articles was begun, and she was called upon to answer to the first; which was to the effect that "the souls of all men (in regard of generation) are mortall like the beasts." The debate then drifted into that region of barren

¹ A comparatively full report of the church proceedings in Mrs. Hutchinson's case was found in 1888 among the papers of President Stiles in the Yale library, and is printed in *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc. Series II. iv.* 159-91.

theological abstractions in which those composing the assembly believed themselves entirely at home. The accused cited texts and endeavored to draw distinctions; but in reply the elders—as was natural, she being one and they many—cited several texts, and drew an infinite variety of distinctions to each one of hers. "She could not give any answer to them, yet she stood to her opinion, till at length a stranger," the Rev. John Davenport, "being desired to speak to the point, and he opening to her the difference between the Soul and the Life,—the first being a spiritual substance, and the other the union of that with the body,—she then confessed she saw more light than before, and so with some difficulty was brought to confess her error in that point. Wherein," as Winthrop goes on to remark, "not it would appear without considerable insight as to Mrs. Hutchinson's foibles, "it was to be observed that, though this stranger spake to very good purpose, and so clearly convinced her as she could not gainsay, yet it was evident she was convinced before, but she could not give the honour of it to her own pastor or teacher, nor to any of the other elders, whom she had so much slighted."

It is not necessary to follow the discussion further. Three more of the articles were propounded; and still, in spite of the storm of texts pelted upon her, Mistress Hutchinson persisted in her errors. She even returned "forward speeches to some that spake to her." By this time the day was grown old, and the patience of the elders was exhausted. The single woman, quick of tongue though weak of body, seemed not only disposed to out-talk them all, but to out-endure them as well; for it was not without reason she had delayed coming into the assembly until ser-

mon and prayer were over. At length, as it grew towards evening and the fourth of the twenty-nine articles was not yet disposed of, the elders bethought themselves to hasten matters by administering to their erring and obstinate sister a formal admonition, the real purport of which apparently was that she should suffer herself to be convinced more readily. In the course of the proceedings one of her sons had ventured a natural inquiry as to the rule which should guide him in expressing his assent or dissent; and later on Thomas Savage, the husband of her daughter, Faith, did himself honor by rising in his place and saying, — “My mother not being accused of any heinous act, but only for opinion, and that wherein she desires information and light, rather than peremptorily to hold [to it], I cannot consent that the church should proceed yet to admonish her for this.” Thereupon Thomas Oliver, one of the ruling elders, after declaring that it was grief to his “spirit to see these two brethren to speak so much and to scruple the proceedings of the church,” propounded the following as a solution of the dilemma: — ✓

“Seeing that all the proceedings of the churches of Jesus Christ now should be according to the pattern of the primitive churches; and the primitive pattern was that all things in the church should be done with one heart and one soul and one consent, that any act and every act done by the church may be as the act of one man; — Therefore, whether it be not meet to lay these two brethren under an admonition with their mother, that so the church may proceed on without any further opposition.”

This novel though drastic parliamentary expedient for securing unanimity evidently commended itself strongly to the judgment of the Rev. John Wilson,

for he at once cried out from his place among the elders, — “I think you speak very well! It is very meet!” The motion was then put “and the whole church by their silence consented.” The admonition was pronounced by Cotton, with whom also it was left “to do as God should incline his heart” in the matter of including Mrs. Hutchinson’s “two sons or no with herself.” As, in the course of his subsequent deliverance, the eloquent teacher took occasion to address the “two sons,” saying among other things that “instead of loving and natural children, you have proved vipers, to eat through the very bowells of your mother, to her ruin, if God do not graciously prevent,” the inference would seem to be inevitable that when the moment came John Cotton found his heart inclined from above to include offspring as well as mother in his admonitory remarks. Winthrop says, and it may well be believed, that on this occasion the teacher spoke with great solemnity and “much zeal and detestation of her errors and pride of spirit.” He spake in this wise; and

“First to her son, laying it sadly upon him, that he would give such way to his natural affection, as for preserving her honor he should make a breach upon the honor of Christ, and upon his covenant with the church, and withal tear the very bowells of his soul, by hardening her in sin. Then to her, first, he remembered her of the good way she was in at her first coming, in helping to discover to divers the false bottom they stood upon in trusting to legal works without Christ; then he showed her how, by falling into these gross and fundamental errors, she had lost the honor of her former service, and done more wrong to Christ and his church than formerly she had done good, and so laid her sin to her conscience. He admonished her also of the height of spirit,

and charged her solemnly before the Lord, and his Angels, and Churches there assembled to return from the error of her way. Then he spake to the sisters of the church, and advised them to take heed of her opinions, and to withhold all countenance and respect from her, lest they should harden her in sin." ¹

"So she was dismissed, and appointed to appear again that day seven-night."

It was eight o'clock of the March evening when the hungry and wearied congregation at last broke up. Through ten consecutive hours those composing it had sat on the hard and crowded benches. Mrs. Hutchinson had been ordered to return at the close of the

¹ It may not be uninteresting to quote from the report of these proceedings and the admonitory remarks of Mr. Cotton so much as relates to one point at issue, if only to illustrate the singular logical intricacies into which the discussion wandered, as well as the character of the treatment to which the accused sister was subjected:—

"MRS. HUTCHINSON:—I desire you to speak to that place in I. Corinthians xv. 37, 44. For I do question whether the same body that dies shall rise again. . . .

"MR. BUCKLE:—I desire to know of Mrs. Hutchinson, whether you hold any other resurrection than that of . . . Union to Christ Jesus?—And whether you hold that foul, filthy and abominable opinion held by Familists of the community of women.

"MRS. HUTCHINSON:—I hold it not. . . .

"MR. DAVENPORT:—Avoid . . . Mr. Buckles question; for it is a right principle. For, if the resurrection be past, then marriage is past: for it is a weighty reason: after the resurrection is past, marriage is past. Then, if there be any union between man and woman, it is not by marriage, but in a way of community.

"MRS. HUTCHINSON:—If any such practice or conclusion be drawn from it, then I must leave it, for I abhor that practice." . . .

MR. COTTON in his admonition:— . . . "If the resurrection be past, then you cannot evade the argument that was pressed upon you by our brother Buckle and others, that filthy sin of the community of women; and all promiscuous and filthy coming together of men and women, without distinction or relation of marriage, will necessarily follow; and, though I have not heard, neither do I think, you have been unfaithful to your husband in his marriage covenant, yet that will follow upon it." . . .

meeting to her place of confinement at Roxbury ; but some intimation had been received from those supposed to know, that her courage was giving way under the tremendous pressure to which she had been subjected, and that, if properly labored with now, she might be made to yield. Accordingly, she was permitted to remain at Cotton's house. He probably had managed it, wishing to make one last effort to save, from what he looked upon as perdition, the most gifted of his parishioners. The Rev. John Davenport, that "stranger" to whose authority Mrs. Hutchinson had shown herself not indisposed to succumb in the congregation, was also Cotton's guest ; and, during the intervening week, the two divines did not, it would seem, strive with her in vain. Indeed, they so far prevailed that she acknowledged she had been wrong, and even brought herself to the point of agreeing publicly to recant. So, —

"When the day came, and she was called forth and the articles read again to her, she delivered in her answers in writing, which were also read ; and, being then willing to speak to the congregation for their further satisfaction, she did acknowledge that she had greatly erred, and that God had now withdrawn his countenance from her, because she had so much misprised his ordinances, both in slighting the magistrates at the Court, and also the elders of the Church. And she confessed that during her trial by the Court, she looked only at such failings as she apprehended in the magistrates' proceedings, without having regard to their position of authority ;¹ and that the language she then used

¹ "2. For these scriptures that I used at the Court in censuring the country, I confess I did it rashly and out of heat of spirit, and unadvisedly, and have cause to be sorry for my unreverent carriage to them ; and I am heartily sorry that any things I have said have drawn any from hearing any of the elders of the Bay."

about her revelations was rash and without ground; and she asked the church to pray for her."

"Thus far," says Winthrop, "she went on well, and the assembly conceived hope of her repentance." Indeed, it is not easy to see what more could have been asked of any one. A woman,—full of pride of intellect, and of insatiable ambition,—she had confessed herself in error, and, in the presence of her adherents and the face of the world, humbled herself in the dust before the enemies she despised. With all her feminine instinct in that way, she had herself never devised so bitter a humiliation even for John Wilson. But this was not enough. She was not so to elude the lord-brethren. It is apparent they meant to rid themselves wholly of her; nor was it any longer difficult for them to do so. Having at last found out her weak points they were more than a match for her, for they knew exactly how to go to work to convict her. They had but to provoke her to voluble speech, and she was sure to deliver herself into their hands; nor, indeed, could it well have been otherwise, seeing they were engaged discussing the unknowable, many against one, and that one a loquacious woman.

She read her recantation from a paper, speaking evidently with a subdued voice and bowed head. As soon as she finished Thomas Leverett, the ruling elder, rose, saying it was meet somebody should restate what she had said to the congregation, which had been unable to hear her; whereupon Cotton reiterated the heads of her "groce and fundamentall Errors," and her humiliating admission that "the Roote of all was the hight and Pride of her Spirit." Then presently Wilson, her pastor, stood up before the silent and spell-bound audience. His hour of

triumph and revenge had come; and, apparently, he proposed thoroughly to enjoy the first, and to make complete the last. At the meeting of the previous week Mrs. Hutchinson had made an issue with Shepard and Eliot. The former of these two divines, almost alone among his brethren, had in the November trial before the Court shown some degree of Christian spirit towards the accused, and afterwards he and Eliot had labored long and earnestly with her at the house of Joseph Weld in Roxbury. In the midst of Cotton's admonition of the week before, Mrs. Hutchinson had broken in upon him with an assertion that it was only since her imprisonment at Roxbury that she held any of the erroneous opinions attributed to her. No sooner had Cotton finished than Shepard rose to declare his "astonishment" at "what Mrs. Hutchinson did last speak, . . . that she should thus impudently affirm so horrible an untruth and falsehood in the midst of such a solemn ordinance of Jesus Christ and before such an assembly." And now, a week afterwards, the recantation being over, Wilson called attention to the fact of its incompleteness in that it left this question of veracity between the accused and the two ministers undisposed of. Speaking with great restraint and humility Mrs. Hutchinson replied that what she had said when she interrupted Cotton had been spoken "rashly and unadvisedly," adding, — "I do not allow the slighting of ministers, nor of the scriptures, nor anything that is set up by God: if Mr. Shepard doth conceive that I had any of these things in my mind then he is deceived." This response sounds to a modern reader sufficiently humble and subdued. It did not so sound to the Rev. Thomas Shepard when it was uttered in the

Boston meeting-house on what is now the 1st of April, 1638; on the contrary, that "sweet affecting and soul-ravishing" divine made haste to declare himself "unsatisfied," saying, — "If this day, when Mrs. Hutchinson should take shame and confusion to herself for her gross and damnable errors, she shall cast shame upon others, and say they are mistaken, and to turn off many of those gross errors with so slight an answer as 'your mistake,' I fear it doth not stand with true repentance."

The following colloquy then took place: —

"MR. COTTON: — Sister, was there not a time when once you did hold that there were no distinct graces inherent in us, but all was in Christ Jesus?"

"MRS. HUTCHINSON: — I did mistake the word 'inherent;' as Mr. Davenport can tell, who did cause me first to see my mistake in the word 'inherent.'"

"MR. ELIOT: — We are not satisfied with what she saith, that she should say now that she did never deny inherence of Grace in us, as in a subject; for she being by us pressed so with it, she denied that there was no Graces inherent in Christ himself.

"MR. SHEPARD: — She did not only deny the word 'inherent,' but denied the very thing itself; then I asked her if she did believe the spirit of God was in believers.

"MRS. HUTCHINSON: — I confess my expressions were that way, but it was never my judgment."

The theological issue involved was unintelligible, and the jargon in which the discussion was carried on completed the confusion. The nominal point in dispute was whether the sister on trial was not, or had not at some time previous been, "of that judgment that there is no inherent righteousness in the

saints, but those gifts and graces which are ascribed to them that are only in Christ as the subject." But, while this was the apparent issue, the efforts of the ministers were really directed towards extorting from Mrs. Hutchinson a full and unconditioned confession of error, — a recantation absolute and unequivocal. Her submission was to be complete. The audience composed of the members of the Boston church, — her former admirers and still in their hearts her adherents — were in mind. Before their wondering eyes and to their listening ears, the woman towards whom their hearts yet went out was to be broken down, discredited and humiliated; and she was to confess herself so without one syllable of reservation. X

That Mrs. Hutchinson now found herself beyond her depth, is obvious. It is stating the case none too strongly to say that all the disputants, — ministers, magistrates, elders and female transcendentalist — were hopelessly lost in a thick fog of indefinable ideas and meaningless phrases; but, while all groped their way angrily, numbers and the clatter of tongues were wholly on one side. Apparently, feeling herself hard pressed by men hateful to her, Mrs. Hutchinson could not bring herself to yield to them as she had yielded in public to Davenport, and in private to Cotton. So she adhered to her statement, — "My judgment is not altered though my expression alters." X

Then at once Wilson gave the signal and the onslaught began. In referring to the proceedings during Mrs. Hutchinson's trial by the General Court at Cambridge in November, 1637, and the treatment the accused then received, a high authority on matters of New England history has remarked that the reports of what took place "contain evidence that her

judges did not escape the contagion of her ill-temper.”¹ This criticism of those composing the Court in question certainly does not err on the side of harshness; and not impossibly the same sense of pious devotion to the fathers which manifestly inspired it might now see in the course of those controlling the action of the Boston church only another example of the contagious character of the victim’s perverse disposition: but to one endeavoring to look upon a scene of ecclesiastical persecution which occurred in Boston in 1638 with the same eyes with which he looks upon other scenes of the same general character which occurred at about that time in England, in France and in Spain, a wholly different impression is conveyed. In dealing with vexed questions of an historical character it is best always to speak with studied moderation, avoiding metaphor scarcely less than invective; yet it is difficult to read the report of the closing church proceedings in the case of Anne Hutchinson without the simile suggesting itself of some pack of savage hounds surrounding and mercilessly hunting down a frightened fox, driven from cover and crouching.

It was John Wilson’s voice which now seemed to raise the familiar view-hallo, and at once the kennel opened in full cry. Magistrates and ministers vied with each other in passionate terms of hatred, opprobrium and contempt. Dudley, the Deputy Governor, though neither a member of the Boston church nor an elder, — simply a stranger present from curiosity, — Dudley cried out, — “Her repentance is in a paper, . . . but sure her repentance is not in her countenance. None can see it there, I think.” Then Peters, the minister of the Salem church, exclaimed, —

¹ Palfrey, i. 486.

"I believe that she has vile thoughts of us, and thinks us to be nothing but a company of Jews;" and again, — "You have stept out of your place. You have rather been a husband than a wife; and a preacher than a hearer; and a magistrate than a subject; and so you have thought to carry all things in church and commonwealth as you would." After Peters, Shepard took up the refrain, saying to the congregation, — "You have not only to deal with a woman this day that holds divers erroneous opinions, but with one that never had any true grace in her heart, and that by her own tenet. Yea! this day she hath shown herself to be a notorious impostor." Wilson repeatedly broke in, — "One cause was . . . to set yourself in the room of God, above others, that you might be extolled and admired and followed after, that you might be a great prophetess; . . . therefore I believe your iniquity hath found you out; . . . it grieves me that you should so evince your dangerous, foul and damnable heresies." Then, after taking breath, he presently began again, — "I cannot but acknowledge the Lord is just in leaving our sister to pride and lying. . . . I look at her as a dangerous instrument of the Devil raised up by Satan amongst us. . . . Consider how we can, or whether we may longer suffer her to go on still in seducing to seduce, and in deceiving to deceive, and in lying to lie, and in condemning authority and magistrates, still to condemn. Therefore, we should sin against God if we should not put away from us so evil a woman, guilty of such foul evils." Then Eliot, "the Apostle," — "It is a wonderful wisdom of God . . . to let her fall into such lies as she hath done this day; for she hath carried on all her errors by lies." Finally Cot-

ton, turning at last fairly against his former disciple, announced that "God hath let her fall into a manifest lie, yea! to make a lie," and Shepard, eagerly catching up the phrase, exclaimed,—"But now for one not to drop a lie, but to make a lie, and to maintain a lie! . . . I would have this church consider, whether it will be for the honor of God and the honor of this church to bear with patience so gross an offender."

And so at last the pitiless chase drew to a close. Throughout all its latter stages, while it was exhausting itself by its own heat, the voice of the accused had not been heard,—evidently she sat there, mute, motionless, aghast. Once, after listening to a furious diatribe from Wilson, the hard-hunted creature seems to have tried to take refuge under Cotton's gown, exclaiming,—"Our teacher knows my judgment, for I never kept my judgment from him!"—but already Cotton, recognizing the inevitable and bowing to it, had abandoned her to her fate. Then she ceased to struggle, and the yelling pack rushed in upon her.

Long afterwards, in reply to the charge that he had contrived to transfer the odious duty of excommunicating his disciple from himself to Wilson, John Cotton asserted¹ that he stood ready to be the mouthpiece of the church in this matter,—no less than he had already been in the matter of admonishment,—had the task been put upon him; and there can be no doubt that, at the time, he gave his open assent before the whole congregation to the course which was pursued, and even silenced the scruples of the few who yet clung to their prophetess, by calling

¹ *Way Cleared*, 85.

to mind the precedents of "Ananias and Sapphira, and the incestuous Corinthian." The offence now charged against Mrs. Hutchinson was not heresy, but falsehood persistently adhered to. An impenitent liar was to be cast out. The matter was one touching morals, not doctrine; and accordingly, as Cotton claimed, lay rather within the province of the pastor than the teacher. It was for Mr. Wilson, therefore, to pronounce the sentence of excommunication; nor was there any reason for delay. A few voices were, indeed, heard timidly suggesting that the accused might be once more admonished, and time for repentance yet given her; but she herself sat silent, asking no respite. Then Wilson rose, and, in the hush of the crowded assembly, solemnly put the question whether all were of one mind that their sister should be cast out. The silence was broken by no reply; and, after the custom of that church, this betokened consent. Then the sentence of excommunication was pronounced; and Anne Hutchinson, no longer a sister, listened to these words rolled out in triumph from the mouth of John Wilson, the pastor, — "Therefore in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the name of the church I do not only pronounce you worthy to be cast out, but I do cast you out; and in the name of Christ I do deliver you up to Satan, that you may learn no more to blaspheme, to seduce and to lie; and I do account you from this time forth to be a Heathen and a Publican, and so to be held of all the Brethren and Sisters of this congregation and of others: therefore I command you in the name of Christ Jesus and of this church as a Leper to withdraw yourself out of the congregation."

When, in obedience to this mandate, Anne Hutch-

inson, the outcast, moved through the awe-stricken throng, her disciple and devoted friend, Mary Dyer,¹ rose up and walked by her side, and the two passed out together. As they went forth, one standing at the meeting-house door said to Mrs. Hutchinson, — “The Lord sanctify this unto you;” to whom she made answer, — “The Lord judgeth not as man judgeth. Better to be cast out of the church than to deny Christ.” At the same time another, a stranger in Boston, pointing with his finger at Mary Dyer, asked, — “Who is that young woman?” and he of whom he asked made answer, — “It is the woman which had the monster.”²

The records of the First Church of Boston contain the following entry:—

“The 22d of the 1st Month 1638. Anne, the wife of our brother, William Hutchinson, having on the 15th of this month been openly, in the public congregation, admonished of sundry errors held by her, was on the same 22d day cast out of the church for impenitently persisting in a manifest lie, then expressed by her in open congregation.”

¹ *Supra*, 408, n.

² Winthrop, i. *263; *supra*, 366.

THREE EPISODES OF MASSACHUSETTS HISTORY

THE SETTLEMENT OF BOSTON BAY
THE ANTINOMIAN CONTROVERSY
A STUDY OF CHURCH AND TOWN GOVERNMENT

BY

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS

VOLUME II



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CHAPTER X.

THE FATE OF THE OUTCASTS.

OF the subsequent fate of Anne Hutchinson and John Wheelwright, little need here be said; their stories, — and that of Mrs. Hutchinson is a sufficiently tragic one, — are told in the biographies which have been written of them. Before her excommunication was an accomplished fact, Winthrop says that Mrs. Hutchinson “seemed to be somewhat dejected.” She could hardly have been otherwise; for to her the action of the Boston church, when at the meeting of March 15th Cotton solemnly admonished her, must have been a complete surprise, — a revelation of changed public feeling. During the whole four months which preceded it she had been under restraint at Roxbury, and practically shut off from direct intercourse with the body of her fellow-communicants. When her trial before the Court closed in November she was still the central figure and the animating spirit of a formidable party, which in the town and church of Boston, at least, was wholly and even aggressively predominant. The Boston deputies to the legislature had been elected without opposition to sustain her; and they had sustained her to the extent of their power and to the very end. So strong indeed was the feeling locally that it has been seen how even Winthrop, the governor of the colony, had been in imminent danger of being called to account before the church after the trial, for

his course in connection with it; and had felt it necessary to forestall action by publicly telling the congregation, that as a magistrate he could not hold himself answerable to a congregation. The elders were on his side, and the malcontents abandoned their project; but that they entertained it, and that Winthrop should have taken such public action to anticipate them, is complete evidence of how strong and general the feeling was. During the winter which followed, a great change had occurred. In the first place the minority was completely vanquished; in the second place, a system of terrorism was established. People no more wanted to be sent into banishment to Rhode Island or New Hampshire then, than now they would want to be banished to New Mexico or to Wyoming. Yet banishment, prompt and perpetual, was the alternative to complete submission. The leaders, it was understood, were to go. So much was settled. Indeed, some of them had already gone, and others were soon to follow. Public meetings of the dissatisfied were not tolerated, and their most private utterances were laid hold of and repeated, in order to be heralded in public, and stamped out as heresies.¹ Moreover, the influence and example of Cotton were potent. After Vane left the colony, Cotton was the virtual leader of the minority, and those composing it had sought to shelter themselves under the authority of his name. But Cotton had now wholly accepted the situation. He had done even more than this, — he had, heart and soul, gone over to the other side. He was, indeed, inquisitor-in-chief, and, “finding how he had been abused, and made (as himself said) their stalking horse,” he spent most of his time discovering

¹ Cotton, *Way Cleared*, 58, 85.

errors and leading back such as were gone astray.¹ The clergy, therefore, were united as one man. So was the magistracy. To stand up in that community, against church and state combined, called for great moral courage. Not one in a hundred would dare do it. Under these circumstances, the fact that all opposition ceased calls for no explanation. The silence which prevailed may have been sullen, but it was complete. The minority surrendered their arms and held their tongues. Order reigned in Boston.

While Mrs. Hutchinson could have had little idea of all this when she was brought in from Roxbury to confront the church, a realizing sense of it must have come to her when she, whose utterances a few short months before had been received by all as those of a prophetess, found not one to oppose her public censure. The utter downfall of her faction and the collapse of her ambitious projects were apparent. For the moment her mind must have been crowded with very mundane misgivings. A wife and the mother of many children, she was under sentence of banishment; and even then her husband and brethren were seeking out a home in some uninhabited place. The marvel is how a woman in delicate health and of sensitive organization, burning with religious fervor and soon once more to become a mother,² bore up against such a sea of troubles.

¹ Winthrop, i. *258.

² The miscarriage of Mrs. Hutchinson, over the details of which Governor Winthrop and Messrs. Weld and Cotton all gloated with singular pleasure, seems to have occurred in Rhode Island in July or August, 1638, some four months after her excommunication. Six weeks before it occurred — that is, in June — she had been forced to consult a physician, perceiving "her body to be greatly distempered and her spirits failing, and in that regard doubtful of life." Winthrop, i. *271; *Short Story*, Preface, 12.

The ordeal fairly passed and the worst befallen, her spirits rose once more. Indeed she seems to have now worked herself into a state of exaltation, glorying in her trials and declaring that, next to Christ, they were the greatest happiness that ever befell her. At the time of her excommunication the snow still lay deep upon the ground, though it was our first of April, nor did the winter break up until some days later.¹ The exile could not, therefore, at once be driven forth; but until she could be, she was freed from her semi-imprisonment at Roxbury, and allowed to remain, though closely within doors, at her own house in Boston. At length, some days later, Governor Winthrop sent her a warrant to depart the jurisdiction, and in obedience thereto, on the $\frac{23}{12}$ of ^{March} ~~April~~, she left her home, and, going down to the shore, was conveyed in a boat across the bay to a landing near her husband's farm at the Mount.² It was the first stage of her journey. She was under injunction to leave the province before the close of the month. Her original plan was to join Wheelwright's family at Mt. Wollaston, and go with them by water to Portsmouth. Meanwhile her husband and his companions, after being refused an abiding-place within their limits by the Plymouth authorities, found a site for a plantation to their liking in the island of Aquidneck, near where Newport now is. Receiving tidings of this before she had started for New Hampshire, Mrs.

¹ Winthrop, *204.

² The precise site of William Hutchinson's house in what is now Quincy is not known, but his allotment (*supra*, 306, n.) covered the territory in the immediate neighborhood of the Wollaston Heights station on the Old Colony railroad, including what is known as Taylor's hill and a part of the large plain north thereof. Lechford's *Notes-Book*, [177], [214].

Hutchinson changed her plans, and, in the early days of April, journeyed by land to Providence, and to the island of Aquidneck in Narragansett Bay.

There she lived for a few troubled years, and there in March, 1640, she was visited by a formal delegation of the Boston church, whose mission was to require her companions in exile to explain "their unwarrantable practice in communicating with excommunicated persons." There are two accounts of what took place between those composing this delegation — one of whom was Major Gibbons — and Mistress Hutchinson. According to the more reliable of these accounts, the brief conference was brought to a close by her remarking that she would not acknowledge the Boston church to be any church of Christ; according to the other and less reliable account, the mere mention of "the church of Christ at Boston" brought on an expression of temper on her part, in which she coupled the name of that body with epithets common enough in Shakespeare's day, but which are now classed as archaic. That the mission was fruitless hardly needs to be said.¹

In 1642 William Hutchinson died; and, shortly after, his wife removed to a point on Manhattan Island, it would seem, "neare a place," as Mr. Weld took care to note down, "called by Seamen, and in the Map, Hell-gate." While the reason of this removal is not certainly known, a plan for bringing Rhode Island within the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts colony was under consideration at the time; and it has been surmised that the mere apprehension of such a thing led to her again going into exile. On the other hand,

¹ Arthur Ellis, *First Church of Boston*, 65; G. E. Ellis, *Puritan Age*, 351.

her old enemies in Massachusetts very pointedly insinuated that she found herself after a while no longer appreciated in her place of exile, and so moved away, "being weary of the Island, or rather the Island being weary of her." If the least charitable, the last explanation is, on its face, the more likely of the two. It was the woman's nature to crave excitement and notoriety. She could not be happy without it. As soon, therefore, as she found herself a sensation of yesterday, she grew restless and felt a call to go elsewhere. If such was, indeed, the true explanation of her removal to the Dutch settlement at the mouth of the Hudson, time was not given her to weary of her new and final place of abode, for she could have been there but a few months when, in August, 1642, "the Indians set upon them, and slew her and all her family, her daughter and her daughter's husband, and all their children" save one daughter that was carried into captivity. This child was then eight years old; in 1647 she was recovered by the General Court and brought back to Massachusetts. When the news of this terrible ending reached Boston, the people there were deeply moved. They called to mind the defiant words in which the would-be prophetess had told the Court that the Lord would surely deliver her from impending calamity, and would ruin them and their posterity and their whole State; and so bade them take heed how they proceeded against her. And now the clergy of Massachusetts Bay grimly pointed out to all their congregations that the Lord God of Israel — the God of Abraham and Isaac — had indeed and in his own good way shown himself to his chosen people. He had smote the American Jezebel a dreadful blow. Thus the Lord heard his servants' groans to

heaven, and freed them from this great and sore affliction; neither had he shown himself through the devilish delusion of miracles, but in the way of his wonderful providence he had picked out this woful woman, to make her and those belonging to her an unheard-of heavy example.

The subsequent fate of John Wheelwright, if less dramatic than that of Anne Hutchinson, was sufficiently checkered. He had, it will be remembered, made his way to Exeter during the severe winter of 1637-8. Joined there by his family the following spring, he once more settled down in the practice of his ministry. As would naturally have been expected, he was now pressed by his brother exiles to join them in Rhode Island. "They sent to him," Cotton says, "and urged him much to come to them, to a far richer soil, and richer company than where he lived: yet he constantly refused" upon the "ground of the corruption of their judgments: 'Professing often, whilst they pleaded for the Covenant of Grace, they took away the Grace of the Covenant.'" But Exeter was not destined to remain his home. Three years later only, in 1641, the New Hampshire towns voluntarily put themselves within the jurisdiction of Massachusetts Bay; and then Wheelwright, being brought again under the ban of the law, betook himself further east to Sir Ferdinando Gorges' province of Maine, where he sat down not far from Cape Porpoise, founding what is now the town of Wells. He was accompanied by his mother-in-law, the mother of the Hutchinsons, who, as she sat in the twilight of those later days, must often have thought regretfully of her early home at Alford in the fens of Lincolnshire, — and here, in dreariest exile, the poor, buffeted old Englishwoman

died. But as Wheelwright calmly meditated in this last place of refuge over his stormy career, its events gradually assumed a new character in his eyes, and he bethought to make his peace with his brethren. Not improbably he felt the more moved to this course when tidings of his sister Hutchinson's fate reached him, leading him to reflect on the real character of the issues upon which her life had been wrecked. In any event, a letter of reconciliation from Wheelwright to Winthrop followed hard upon the destruction of the Hutchinson family. It was a thoroughly manly effort, and its terse, pointed admissions gave evidence that it was the fruit of "an overruling conscience." He expressed his deep contrition for the part he had taken in "those sharp and vehement contentions," and intimated his more mature sense of the inanity of the points at issue. He confessed that, as he now saw it, he had then acted sinfully, and he humbly craved forgiveness. In reply a safe-conduct to Boston was sent him, and he was practically invited to go there and abase himself before the General Court. This he declined to do, taking the ground that, however willing he might be to confess himself wrong in respect to "justification and the evidencing thereof," yet he could not with a good conscience condemn himself for such "capital crimes, dangerous revelations and gross errors" as were charged upon him and had caused his sufferings. Some further correspondence followed, as the result of which the General Court in May, 1644, placed upon its records a vote remitting Wheelwright's sentence of banishment "upon particular, solemn and serious acknowledgment, and confession by letter, of his evil carriages and of the Courts justice upon him for them." It is to be hoped that Wiu-

throp did not draw up this entry as it stands recorded, for it was couched in a very different spirit from the letter which invited it. Wheelwright had made no such confession of guilt and of the justice of his civil sentence. He could not, nor would he, avail himself of a pardon, the acceptance of which bound him to so humiliating a confession.¹

Accordingly, for three years more, the former student at Cambridge and incumbent of Bilsby, now a man of over fifty, remained buried in the frontier wilderness of Maine. In 1647 he received a call from Hampton, near Exeter, and, removing thither, he there ministered for nearly eight years. At last, in May, 1654, in answer to some echo of the old Antinomian controversy, — for such echoes still from time to time came back to New England from the English press, — the people of Hampton drew up a petition to the General Court, intended to bring out from that body some kindly testimonial in Wheelwright's behalf. It was to be a sort of certificate of restored fellowship and regular standing. Winthrop had now been dead four years, and Endicott had succeeded him as governor. Cotton, too, was dead. Weld and

¹ It was at the time this correspondence between Winthrop and Wheelwright was going on, and the rescinding of the sentence of exile was under advisement, that Weld's *Short Story*, etc., was printed in London. As Winthrop was the author of that pamphlet, and knew better than any one else that the statements contained in it must occasion controversy, he could not but have seen how very desirable it was to secure the complete confession of Wheelwright in advance. The pamphlet could hardly have reached America when the vote of May 20th was recorded. This fact may account for the peculiar wording of that vote. A confession was manufactured in advance by the other party to the controversy, and put on record. None of the public men of that time were above such tricks. The best of them seem to have looked upon low cunning as an admitted feature in statecraft.

Peters, having gone to England years before, were not destined to return. The old controversial fire, in that particular form with which Wheelwright had been concerned, was wholly burned out, and it was also a period during which the local persecuting spirit was comparatively quiet, — resting, indeed, preparatory to its next fierce outburst against the Ranters and Quakers, two years further on. Accordingly, when the petition of the people of Hampton reached the General Court, it presently, in answer thereto, judged “meete to certifie that Mr. Wheelwright hath long since given such satisfaction both to the Court and elders generally as that he is now, and so for many years hath been, an officer in the church at Hampton within our jurisdiction, and that without any offence to any, so far as we know.” The words were somewhat negative in their character, but they were the last in the, so called, Antinomian controversy.

Some two years later than this, towards the close probably of 1658, Wheelwright left Hampton and sailed for England. It then lacked a few months only of being twenty full years since he had first landed in Boston, a man of forty-four, and there rejoined his sister Hutchinson. The retrospect could not have been a pleasant one. He was now sixty-four; the end of all his ambitious dreams had been a banishment, and more than ten years had elapsed since the blood of Anne Hutchinson was poured upon the ground. While he had been languishing under the provincial ban of Massachusetts Bay, his old schoolfellow and familiar friend had become the Lord Protector of England. Nevertheless, the six years he now passed in England — those which saw the end of the Commonwealth and the beginning of the Restoration —

could hardly have been other than the halcyon years of his life. During them he was treated with consideration by eminent men; for not only, it would seem, did he live at Belleau, — the home of Sir Harry Vane, his old friend and protector, who now “greatly noticed him,” — but he was singled out by Cromwell for marks of especial regard; and when he went up to London for a visit “my Lord Protector was pleased to send one of his guard” for him, and gave him an hour’s interview.

Pleasure-trips across the Atlantic were not taken in those days, and the probabilities are that when Wheelwright returned to England in 1656, he proposed to finish his days there. If such was his intention, the course of political events may well have induced him to change it. Cromwell died; and even before the Restoration, Vane had been committed a prisoner to his own house. The old Puritan divine had fallen again upon evil days. On the 4th of June, 1662, Vane was arraigned in the court of King’s Bench, and ten days later he laid his neck on the block upon Tower Hill. Then Wheelwright seems to have shaken from his feet the dust of his native land, though he had passed his seventieth year when, later in the same summer, he next landed in Boston. His pulpit at Hampton had long since been filled, but he now received a call from the neighboring church at Salisbury, where he was formally installed on the 9th of December following his return. This was his last and also his longest settlement, for it continued seventeen years, until his death in 1679. He was then the oldest minister in New England. He had outlived all the contentions of his middle life, and every one of his contemporaries who had taken part in them. He

belonged to a past generation. But priesthoods have long memories. At the time his brethren took no special notice of the patriarch's death, nor does any stone now mark his grave. A portrait, believed on such evidence as is now attainable to be of him,¹ for years hung in the Senate Chamber of Massachusetts, and is now preserved in one of the rooms occupied by the Secretary of State. Painted by an unknown hand in 1677, it represents an aged minister in the sombre Calvinistic garb of the time, — the broad white Geneva bands and black coif, while from under the last straggle thin gray locks. The features, neither large nor harsh, are suggestive of the Shakespeare type of face so common among the English of that time, and in them, though drawn by an unskilled hand and faded now, it yet seems possible to read an expression of sadness and disappointment such as would be not unnatural to a man of eighty-four, so much of whose life had been passed in losing strife and weary exile.

Finally, like most of the Puritan breed, John Wheelwright was far from being a lovable character. His proper place was not the pulpit. He should have been a man of affairs, — a lawyer, a magistrate, possibly a soldier; for he was strong, self-willed, enterprising and courageous. He was ambitious also, naturally craving prominence and taking a grim delight in controversy. Nor did he shrink from conflict with nature, any more than he shrank from it with man. He was not afraid to be alone in a minority, or alone in the woods. A clergyman, he was often engaged in lawsuits; for in matters temporal, as well as in those spiritual, he had the full courage of his convictions and entire faith in himself. That he was an attractive

¹ 250th Anniversary, *First Church, Quincy*, 12, 151-2.

man in domestic life does not seem probable; he leaves the impression of one deeply conscientious, but still rigid, overbearing, and hard to please at home, as everywhere else.

None the less, Wheelwright was essentially a man of mark; and a man who, wherever he might have gone, would have left his mark. It may be mere accident, but those familiar with the subsequent history of the Mount have thought they could detect in it indications of the man's power of thus impressing himself on those about him. As will presently be seen, in 1640 that region was incorporated as a town, under the name of Braintree. Again, in 1792, the north precinct of Braintree, which included Mt. Wollaston, was set off as the town of Quincy. It was in what is now the city of Quincy that Wheelwright ministered, and there is no doubt that his parishioners sympathized fully in his views. The first teacher of the church regularly gathered there, two years later, was one of his disciples, whose name was blotted from the famous Boston remonstrance only so late as May, 1640.¹ In subsequent years the north precinct of Braintree, — both as such, and as the town of Quincy, — always showed a marked leaning towards a liberal theology, the more noticeable from the contrast in this respect offered to the rigid orthodoxy which ever characterized the south precinct, still retaining the original name. During the eighteenth century the two precincts more than once, through their pastors, engaged in sharp controversy, never changing their sides,² — the original leaven apparently continuing to work, as the pastor influenced the people, and the tendency of the people operated back in the selection of pastors,

¹ *Infra*, 003.

² *Infra*, 638, 044.

— until the old order of things passed wholly away. As the twig is bent, the tree inclines; and so it may even be surmised that the seed sown by Wheelwright, in 1637, bore active fruit in the great New England protest, under the lead of Channing, two centuries later, deciding the course then pursued by the descendants in the seventh generation of those who at the Mount had listened to him.

Of the others who shared Mrs. Hutchinson's exile, William Coddington was the most prominent. He seems to have been the immediate successor of Thomas Morton in the ownership of Mt. Wollaston; and, singularly enough, the record of every annual town-meeting of Quincy, so long as Quincy continued to be a town, bore recurring evidence to the fact that he once lived there, and thence went into exile. Since the year 1640, a portion of the extensive grant made to him and to Edmund Quincy, jointly, in December, 1635, has been public property, and is spoken of on the first page of the Braintree records as "The Schoole Lands." Each year, by a formal vote, — the reason of which long since passed into a meaningless tradition, — the town of Quincy, as tenant of the land thus held, appropriated to school purposes a sum of money as a nominal rent.¹ The name of the school in which the children of the district including Mt. Wollaston are taught, and the street upon which its building stands, still perpetuate the name of Coddington.

¹ The record of the process through which this land came into the possession of the original town of Braintree is inexplicably defective; but some facts connected with it lead to a suspicion that Coddington, after going into exile, instead of freely giving the land, was judicially despoiled of it. See communication referred to in the *Proc. Mus. Hist. Soc. Series II. vii. 23.*

The dominant faction dealt with Coddington in much the same arbitrary spirit with which it had dealt with Wheelwright and Anne Hutchinson. He was neither "convented" nor formally banished; but, though a firm, self-asserting man of a business turn of mind and somewhat grasping disposition, the action of those with whom he had been seven years associated offended him, and, as intense religious bigotry has at no time been conducive to social amenities, the private bearing towards him of many of his old friends doubtless aggravated the difficulties of the situation. Even as early as the autumn of 1637, therefore, Coddington thought of removing with a number of others from the Massachusetts jurisdiction, and obtained leave so to do, a year's time being allowed them for the purpose: but, before their plans were matured, the General Court, at its March session of 1638, — at the very time of the excommunication of Mrs. Hutchinson, — took cognizance of the matter on the strength of a rumor that the emigrants proposed only to withdraw themselves "for a season." Their movements were accordingly expedited by a summons commanding them to appear before the next Court, unless, accompanied by their families, they had previously taken themselves off. The next Court was fixed to be held two weeks later. Deeply indignant, but being, as he himself subsequently expressed it, "not willing to live in the fire of contention," Coddington, together with the others designated in the summons, six in number, made their way to Providence within the designated time. It was in the early days of our April that he left his brick house, on the north side of what is now Liberty Square, said to have been the first brick house ever built in Boston, and

he afterwards wrote to Winthrop "what myself and wife and family did endure in that removal, I wish neither you nor yours may ever be put unto." But when, in 1640, — two years later, — he thus expressed himself, his animosities had already passed away; for in yet another letter, written shortly after and likewise to Winthrop, he took occasion to say that he well approved "of a speech of one of note amongst you, that we were in a heate and chafed, and were all of us to blame; in our strife we had forgotten that we were brethren."¹ Though Wheelwright was eight years his senior, Coddington died first, in 1678. His name is still venerated in Rhode Island, as that of Winthrop is in Massachusetts; and, while the portrait of the latter looks down from the walls of the Senate chamber of the State-House in Boston, that of the former hangs in the Council-room at Newport. Through several generations his descendants dwelt in the home he had helped to build up and rule over; but in time they also experienced the decay common to families, and the last of them is reported to have died in the almshouse of the place her ancestor founded, lying on a bed which still showed the armorial bearings of her family.

It will be remembered that when Mrs. Hutchinson left the Boston church, after excommunication, Mary Dyer walked at her side. She was a very proper and comely young woman, the wife of one William Dyer, sometime a citizen of London, and a milliner in the New Exchange; though as Winthrop, to whom we owe these particulars, goes on to say, she and her husband were in Boston "notoriously infected with Mrs. Hutchinson's errors, and very censorious and

¹ *iv. Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. vi. 314, 317.*

troublesome, she being of a very proud spirit, and much addicted to revelations." They both went with the Hutchinsons to Rhode Island. Mary Dyer would seem to have been one of that class, numerous in those days, whose brains were wholly unsettled by their religion. She remained in Rhode Island, in apparently undisturbed enjoyment of her revelations, for many years, becoming a Quaker in the mean while; but at last, in 1659, hearing of the persecution of that sect in Massachusetts, and loathing her place of refuge "for that there they were not opposed by the civil authority, but with all patience and meekness were suffered to say over their pretended revelations and admonitions," — feeling this call to persecution she came to Boston. What she there did does not appear, but she was speedily arrested and brought before the Court in company with three others. She simply said in her own defence that she came from Rhode Island to visit the Quakers, that she was of their religion, and that the light within her was the rule. They were banished, under pain of death if they returned. Mary Dyer and one other "found freedom to depart;" but within a month they were back again, in company with another woman, who brought some linen for the examination of Governor Endicott, intended to be used as the grave-clothes of that magistrate's victims. They were at once all thrown into prison, and then brought again before the Court, which now sentenced them to death. Mary Dyer's son at this time filled the important office of secretary of the province of Rhode Island, and at his earnest solicitation the death-penalty was remitted in the case of his mother, on condition that she should leave Massachusetts within forty-eight hours. Her companions, William

Robinson and Marmaduke Stephenson, were left for execution. When the day fixed for their hanging came, the town had to be put under guard, so great was the sympathy felt for the condemned. Surrounded by a heavy escort, the three prisoners walked together from the jail in Cornhill to the gallows, which had been erected on the Common, Mary Dyer going between the two others and holding a hand of each. She must then have been a woman of middle life, but Edward Nicholson, the marshal, asked her if she was not "ashamed to walk hand in hand, between two young men?" "It is," she answered, "an hour of the greatest joy I can enjoy in this world. No eye can see, no ear can hear, no tongue can speak, no heart can understand, the sweet incomes and refreshings of the Spirit of the Lord which now I enjoy."¹

When her companions were hanged, she sat beneath the gallows with the halter about her neck, calmly looking at the multitude of horrified spectators, whom a hundred armed men of the train-band kept back from the scaffolding; for so great was the throng upon the Common that day, that the draw-bridge over the canal, which then separated the North End from the town, broke down under the weight of those returning home. When her companions were dead Mary Dyer was taken back to prison, and there she first learned of the circumstances of her reprieve. She at once wrote to the governor, repudiating her son's action, and offering her life as a sacrifice. It was necessary to use force to get her out of the jurisdiction. She was at last taken back to Newport, where for a time she seems to have been kept under

¹ *Supra*, 408.

restraint; but in the following spring she succeeded in eluding those having her in charge, and, journeying "secretly and speedily," found her way back to Boston. She was again thrown into prison; and again her family piteously interceded for her. She was sentenced once more to be hanged, but at the gallows her life was offered her if she would keep away from Massachusetts. Her reply was:—"In obedience to the will of the Lord I came; and in his will I abide faithful to the death." She now lies buried in some undistinguished part of Boston Common. Assuredly the fate of those two women, who, side by side, walked forth out of the church on that 22d of March, 1638, was sufficiently tragic,—one murdered by savages, the other put to death by her brethren!

To turn from Mary Dyer to John Underhill is like suddenly passing from the solemnity of a funeral to the buffoonery of a pantomime. Captain John Underhill was a Puritan of that Trusty Tompkins type common enough a few years later on in the armies of the Commonwealth,—a curious mixture of fervor, which was apparently genuine, and of licentiousness which was unquestionably so. He seems to have taken religion, as he would have taken any other epidemic which might have chanced to prevail,—and to have felt it sufficiently, not to prevent his scoffing or indulging the flesh, but to make him extremely uncomfortable after he had done so. As a soldier he had seen some service under Prince Maurice of Nassau in the Low Countries; and he came out with Winthrop in a semi-military capacity in 1630. More recently he had served under Endicott in the latter's inglorious Pequot campaign.

Though Underhill belonged to Mrs. Hutchinson's faction, his more earnest efforts seem to have been put forth in Wheelwright's behalf. After the sentence of the latter he sent a strong appeal to Winthrop not to enforce it,¹ and later on he followed Wheelwright to New Hampshire. When called to account for putting his name to the remonstrance he at first retracted in writing, and put the paper in the Governor's hands; but presently he made up his mind to follow the exiled minister, and petitioned the Court for a grant of land which had been promised him. Hereupon he was questioned as to certain heretical opinions alleged to have been uttered by him some time before to the effect, —

“That we were zealous here, as the Scribes and Pharisees were, and as Paul was before his conversion, &c. Which he denying, they were proved to his face by a sober, godly woman, whom he had seduced in the ship, and drawn to his opinions (but she was afterwards freed again). Among other passages he told her how he came to his assurance, and that was thus: — He had lain under a spirit of bondage and a legal way five years, and could get no assurance; till at length, as he was taking a pipe of tobacco, the Spirit set home an absolute promise of free grace with such assurance and joy, as he never since doubted of his good estate, neither should he though he should fall into sin.”

His answers and explanations were not edifying on doctrinal grounds, and so the matter of his signing the remonstrance was brought in question. His retraction was produced by the Governor and read to the Court, but he now said it applied only to the manner, not to the matter of the paper; in regard to the

¹ *IV. Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.* vii. 171.

latter he was of the same mind still as he was when he affixed his name. When asked for a Scripture "rule by which he might take so much upon him, as publicly to contradict the sentence of the Court, &c., hee alleged the example of Joab his rough speech to David." The precedent thus adduced having been disallowed for causes elaborately specified, he then insisted much "upon the liberty which all States do allow to Military officers, for free speech, &c., and that himself had spoken sometimes as freely to Count Nassau." This argument weighed no more with the Court than the other; so the captain was committed, and the next day he was again sent for and banished.

"The Lord's day following he made a speech in the assembly, shewing that, as the Lord was pleased to convert Paul as he was in persecuting, etc., so he might manifest himself to him as he was taking the moderate use of the creature called tobacco. He professed withal, that he knew not wherein he had deserved the sentence of the Court, and that he was sure that Christ was his, etc. . . .

"The next Lord's day the same Capt. Underhill, having been privately dealt with upon suspicion of incontinency with a neighbor's wife, and not hearkening to it, was publicly questioned, and put under admonition. The matter was, for that the woman being young, and beautiful, and withal of a jovial spirit and behaviour, he did daily frequent her house, and was divers times found there alone with her, the doors being locked on the inside. He confessed it was ill, because it had an appearance of evil in it; but his excuse was, that the woman was in great trouble of mind, and sore temptations, and that he resorted to her to comfort her; and that when the door was found locked upon them, they were in private prayer together. But this practice was clearly condemned also by the elders, affirming, that it had not been of good report for any of them to

have done the like, and that they ought in such case, to have called in some brother or sister, and not to have locked the door, etc.”

In September, 1688, after leaving Boston, Underhill went to New Hampshire. The rest of his ludicrous story loses point when told in other than the unconsciously solemn words in which Winthrop first recorded it:—

“The General Court in September gave order to the Governor to write to them of Pascataquack, to signify to them, that we looked at it as an unneighborly part, that they should encourage and advance such as we had cast out from us for their offences, before they had inquired of us the cause, &c. (The occasion of this letter was, that they had aided Mr. Wheelwright to begin a plantation there, and intended to make Capt. Underhill their governor.) Upon this Mr. Burdet returned a scornful answer, and would not give the governor his title &c. and Capt. Underhill wrote a letter to a young gentleman, who sojourned in the house of our governor, wherein he reviled the governor with reproachful terms and imprecations of vengeance upon us all. This letter being shown to the governor and council, the governor by advice wrote to Edward Hilton. He intimated withal how ill it would relish, if they should advance Capt. Underhill, whom we had thrust out for abusing the Court with feigning a retraction both of his seditious practice and also of his corrupt opinions, and after, denying it again; and for casting reproach upon our churches, &c.: signifying withal, that he was now found to be an unclean person, for he was charged by a godly young woman to have solicited her chastity under pretence of Christian love, and to have confessed to her that he had his will oftentimes of the cooper’s wife, and all out of strength of love; and the church had sent for him, and sent him a license to come and go under the hands of the governor and deputy; but he refused to come, excusing himself, by letters to the elders, that the

license was not sufficient, &c., and, by letters to the Governor, that he had no rule to come and answer to any offence, except his banishment were released. But, to the matter he was charged with he gave no answer, but sought an evasion.

“The Pascataquack men had chosen Captain Underhill their governor before the letter came to them, and it was intercepted and opened by Mr. Burdet and him. The captain was much nettled with this letter, and especially because his adulterous life with the cooper's wife at Boston was now discovered, and the church had called him to come and make answer to it. And upon this he wrote a letter to Mr. Cotton, full of high and threatening words against us; but he wrote another, at the same time, to the governor in very fair terms, entreating an obliterating of all that was past, and a bearing with human infirmities, &c., disavowing all purpose of revenge.

“But, instead of coming to Boston to make answer to the church, he procured a new church at Pascataquack of some few loose men to write to our church in his commendation, wherein they style him the right worshipful, their honored governor. All which notwithstanding the church of Boston proceeded with him. After this, Capt. Underhill's courage was abated, for the chiefest in the river fell from him, and the rest little regarded him, so as he wrote letters of retraction to divers. And presently [about a year later] being struck with horror and remorse for his offences, both against the church and civil state, he could have no rest till he had obtained a safe conduct to come and give satisfaction; and accordingly, at a lecture at Boston, (it being the court time,) he made a public confession both of his living in adultery with Faber's wife, and attempting the like with another woman; and also the injury he had done to our state, &c.; and acknowledged the justice of the court in their proceedings against him. Yet all his confessions were mixed with such excuses and extenua-

tions, as did not give satisfaction of the truth of his repentance, so as it seemed to be done rather out of policy, and to pacify the sting of his conscience, than in sincerity. But, however, his offences being so foul and scandalous, the church presently cast him out; which censure he seemed to submit unto, and, for the time he staid in Boston, (being four or five days) he was very much dejected, &c.; but, being gone back, he soon recovered his spirits again, or, at least, gave not that proof of a broken heart, as he gave hope of at Boston."

At Dover — as the New Hampshire settlement presided over by Underhill and Burdet was now called — the captain had other troubles to encounter besides those which his conscience caused him. In fact a species of civil war, of the smallest conceivable proportions, broke out between that town and the adjoining town of Exeter, as a result of which Underhill was deposed and one Roberts chosen president in his place.

Soon after this downfall the ex-governor again went to Boston, trying once more to make his peace with the church. Not being satisfied of his repentance, the church declined to listen to him; and so, after a week's waiting, he went back to New Hampshire, where he seems to have now been in open disgrace. At last, in the course of the spring and summer of 1640, he came to the last act in this drama of colonial life and manners, — the closing, ludicrous scene being again in that meeting-house which a little more than two years before had witnessed the solemn excommunication of Mistress Hutchinson. There is nothing better recorded by Winthrop.

"Captain Underhill being brought, by the blessing of God on this church's censure of excommunication, to re-

morse for his foul sins, obtained, by means of the elders and others of the church of Boston, a safe conduct under the hand of the governor and one of the council to repair to the church. He came at the time of the court of assistants, and upon the lecture day, after sermon, the pastor called him forth and declared the occasion, and then gave him leave to speak. Indeed it was a spectacle which caused many weeping eyes, though it afforded matter for much rejoicing to behold the power of the Lord Jesus in his own ordinances, when they are dispensed in his own way, holding forth the authority of his regal sceptre in the simplicity of the gospel. He came in his worst clothes (being accustomed to take great pride in his bravery and neatness) without a band, in a foul linen cap pulled close to his eyes; and standing upon a form, he did, with many deep sighs and abundance of tears, lay open his wicked course, his adultery, his hypocrisy, his persecution of Gods people here, and especially his pride (as the root of all, which caused God to give him over to his other sinful courses) and contempt of the magistrates. He justified God and the church and the court in all that had been inflicted on him. Indeed he appeared as a man worn out with sorrow, and yet he could find no peace. Therefore he was now come to seek it in this ordinance of God. He spake well, save that his blubbing &c. interrupted him, and all along he discovered a broken and melting heart, and gave good exhortations to take heed of such vanities and beginnings of evil as had occasioned his fall; and in the end he earnestly and humbly besought the church to have compassion on him, and to deliver him out of the hands of Satan.

"So accordingly he was received into the church again; and after, he came into the court (for the General Court began soon after) and made confession of his sin against them, &c. and desired pardon, which the court freely granted him, so far as concerned their private judgment. But for his adultery they would not pardon that for ex-

amples sake; nor would restore him to freedom, though they released his banishment, and declared the former law against adultery to be of no force; so as there was no law now to touch his life, for the new law against adultery was made since his fact committed.

"He confessed also in the congregation, that though he was very familiar with that woman, and had gained her affection, &c., yet she withstood him six months against all his solicitations (which he thought no woman could have resisted) before he could overcome her chastity, but being once overcome she was wholly at his will. And to make his peace the more sound he went to her husband (being a cooper) and fell upon his knees before him in the presence of some of the elders and others, and confessed the wrong he had done him, and besought him to forgive him; which he did very freely, and in testimony thereof he sent the captain's wife a token."¹

¹ It is unnecessary in the present work to follow the Captain's career after he thus made his peace with the church of Boston, the magistrates of Massachusetts Bay and Joseph Faber, cooper. He removed to Stamford in Connecticut, and afterward to Flushing, on Long Island. He performed other military duties; he was a delegate to the Assembly and an under-sheriff, — an altogether respectable and useful man. He was far from being a man of education, and in *rv. Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.* vii. are a number of letters from him, the spelling of which is remarkable. The following is a specimen taken from a letter to "John Wentthrop esquier, Goferner of the Masetuchets baye," and written from the house of Captain Gibbons, where he apparently tarried during his brief and fruitless visit to Boston in April, 1640: —

"A mong the rest of my affickchons, justli imposed by my sinnfull lif and backsliding prodigalliti in my whole corse, this is on that doth and will agrafate my grefe, that I am deprive of that chrisclian liberti I once had, boght by the preschous blud of the Lord Jesus; but I hafe made the blod and deth of Christ of non efeekt, therfor I am justli deprived of liberti to visset you, nor dare I aproch youer presene, tal the Lord mofe you there unto." This queer specimen of one type of Puritan life is supposed to have died at Oyster Bay, L. I., in 1072.

CHAPTER XL.

“AND SHEM AND JAPHETH TOOK A GARMENT AND COVERED THE NAKEDNESS OF THEIR FATHER.”

THE course pursued by those in authority in Massachusetts Bay towards Mrs. Hutchinson and her adherents has ever been, and will probably long remain, one of the hotly contested issues in early New England history. So far as external authority is concerned the verdict has been distinct. The action of the General Court of 1637 has been treated as an unjustifiable persecution, which has left a dark stain on the earliest pages of the history of the Puritan Commonwealth.¹ But, on the other hand, the founders have not lacked champions to extenuate, and even to justify their proceedings.² By these it has been argued that the colonists came to New England with certain great and laudable objects in view; that to the attainment of these objects unity of opinion and effort was clearly desirable, if, indeed, not absolutely essential. Beset as it was with enemies, and regarded with, at best, unfriendly eyes by those in authority at Whitehall, the continued existence of the enterprise often in those early days hung upon a thread. A mere scandal, a rumor even of internal dissensions, might afford the pretext for a fatal exercise of royal authority. This peril, it cannot be denied, was never absent

¹ Doyle, *The English in America; the Puritan Colonies*, i. 186-8.

² Palfrey, i. 488-511.

from the minds of Winthrop and his associates. The whole enterprise, moreover, was a business undertaking, those engaged in which formed a society or partnership by themselves, in which no provision had been made, or was intended to be made, for hostile or antagonistic elements. Massachusetts, within the chartered limits, was to the members of this partnership what his farm or his dwelling is to a freeholder; and they had the same right as the freeholder to expel intruders or dissentients, or persons distasteful to them. Those responsible for the success of the undertaking finally, after careful consideration, were persuaded and fully believed that the expulsion of the more prominent of the so-called Antinomian faction was necessary to peace and prosperity, temporal and spiritual; and, if the whole thing is viewed from the standpoint of the seventeenth century instead of the nineteenth, it will probably be conceded that they were correct in their conclusion.¹ The event certainly vindicated the substantial justice of their course, as a long period of internal tranquillity followed the proceedings of 1638.

This line of argument is plausible, but there are difficulties connected with its acceptance. The analogy of the freeholder may, from a legal point of view, be correct; and yet a freeholder who invited his brethren to come and abide with him and labor on his farm, and who then sternly visited each expression of opinion different from his own with stripes and banishment, would not be regarded as a desirable neighbor or as a judicious man. In its wider scope, also, the same line of argument might equally well be used to palliate the course of those whose persecutions

¹ Lodge, *Short History*, 351.

forced the colonists into exile. In their desire to defend Winthrop, those who reason thus also defend Laud. He, too, as well as his master and Philip II. and Louis XIV., had great public ends in view, the attainment of which was not in his belief consistent with toleration. Even more than Winthrop, Laud might a little later have pointed to terrible civil calamities which had resulted from his inability to carry out a policy of wholesome repression. If, indeed, he had lived only ten years longer he might have cited exultingly the conformity enforced in Massachusetts and the tranquillity resulting therefrom; and then turned to the dissensions which tore England, and have asserted, truly enough, that he only tried to do in his own country, and failed, what Winthrop had tried to do in Massachusetts, and succeeded. He had striven for the peace of absolute conformity. It is well to consider in the discussion the seventeenth century standpoint; but, in the seventeenth century, good public intentions were not confined to the founders of New England. Others, as well as they, had high considerations of state always in view; and a concurrence of opinion to a given end was in the seventeenth century eagerly desired by those who ruled elsewhere as well as by those who ruled in Massachusetts.

In the treatment of doubtful historical points, there are few things which need to be more carefully guarded against than patriotism or filial piety. Admirable in their place, these sentiments have less than nothing to do with that impartiality which should be the historian's aim; and the appeal to them is generally accompanied by some suggestion that the matter in dispute should be viewed, not

according to immutable principles, but from the standpoint of the period or the individual. When viewed in this way, there are few historical events which do not admit of some defence. The door is open wide for sophistry as well as charity. True, it is neither safe nor just to apply the standard of one century to the acts of individuals of another century; but, none the less, the fact of being in advance of one's century constitutes greatness, both in the individual and in the people. If, also, the standards of the period are to be exhumed and adopted, they should be applied with rigorous impartiality. Love of country and piety, whether filial or religious, should not be permitted to intervene in one case, and be excluded in another. Judged in the full light of subsequent events, the protestant, civil or religious, of the seventeenth century was better than the seventeenth century inquisitor and persecutor; but when, circumstances being altered, the protestant himself turned inquisitor and persecutor, it is not easy to see on what judicial principle the historian, who has been exciting sympathy by the ancient tale of wrong, can suddenly put in that plea of altered times for the one, which he has systematically disallowed for the others. To do so may be filial, but it is not rational and it is not fair.

In the controversy of 1637-8 Winthrop and his associates seem to have felt the weakness of their position far more than their modern defenders; and they labored hard to hide it. In England the so-called Antinomian persecution was generally and correctly regarded as a religious one. To deny that it was such is impossible now, and was not easy then. In the face of the record of the Synod at Cambridge,

with its endless list of erroneous opinions and "unsavory speeches," — in the face of the church indictment of Mrs. Hutchinson with its twenty-nine several counts, — it might almost as well have been contended that the issue between Luther and Leo X. was not a religious issue, and that the German reformer was proceeded against simply because his course led directly to sedition and civil strife, — which it unquestionably did. But, for obvious reasons, the fathers of the colony were sensitive on this point. The principles of religious toleration were much better understood at that time, by minorities at least, than modern investigators seem disposed to admit. The Long Parliament had not then met, and Laud was in the full enjoyment of power. The friends of Winthrop and Weld in England were accordingly, in 1636-8, themselves undergoing persecutions, and those in New England were loath to supply the prelates with new examples as well as fresh arguments. Their casuistry was equal to this, as it was equal to all other occasions. They flatly denied that religious considerations had anything to do with their proceedings. Whatever they had done, had been done on civil grounds. They had, it was true, labored and wrestled with their brethren over matters spiritual, but the punishments inflicted had been for temporal mis-carriages.

Thomas Weld, for instance, in a narrative prepared especially for use in England, after referring to the recantation of Cotton, thus stated the case as respected the others: —

"But for the rest, which (notwithstanding all these means of conviction from heaven and earth, and the example of their seduced brethrens returne) yet stood obdurate, yea

more hardened (as we had cause to feare) than before; we conuertened those of them that were members before the churches, and yet laboured once and againe to conuince them, not onely of their errors, but also of sundry exorbitant practices, neglecting to feare the Church, and lying, &c., but after no meanes preuailed, we were driven with sad hearts to give them up to Satan: Yet not simply for their opinions (for which I find we have benee slanderously traduced) but the chiefest cause of their censure was their miscarriages (as have benee said) persisted in with great obstinacy."¹

So when Coggeshall was arraigned before the Court, he had met the charges preferred against him by saying that they amounted to nothing "but matter of different opinion, and that he knew not one example in Scripture that a man was banished for his judgment." To this Winthrop, in the account of the proceedings he prepared for publication in England, says he replied that if the prisoner "had kept his judgment to himself, so as the public peace had not been troubled or endangered by it, we should have left him to himself, for we do not challenge power over mens consciences, but when seditious speeches and practices discover such a corrupt conscience, it is our duty to use authority to reform both."² Cogges-

¹ *Short Story*, xii., xv.

² In the letter of the Rev. Thomas Shepard, entitled *New England's Lamentations for Old England's Errors*, the distinction suggested here is very clearly drawn:—"We never banished any for their consciences, but for sinning against conscience, after due means of conviction." This is very like Cotton's argument in his reply to Saltonstall, that a magistrate in compelling a man to religious observances does not compel him to sin, "but the sin is in his will that needs to be compelled." (Hutchinson's *State Papers*, 404.) But the statements made for English effect are ludicrously at variance with Winthrop's emphatic laying down of the law at the Hutchinson trial:—"We see not that any should have authority to set up any other exercises besides what authority hath already set up." (Hutchinson, ii. 480.)

hall's offence, it will be remembered, consisted in his saying, from his place in the Legislature, that he approved of a paper presented to a previous Legislature, though his name was not signed to it. It was a case of constructive sedition ; but constructive sedition resulting in banishment is only in degree a lesser outrage than constructive treason resulting in death. Whatever their party or country, zealots are all formed of one material, and Hugh Peters was but Ignatius Loyola under other conditions ; nor can the fact that the founders of Massachusetts did the deed influence the verdict of history. The "conscientiously contentious" John Wheelwright, silenced for opinion's sake, and expelled from his pulpit at Mount Wollaston, was a persecuted man no less than the "conscientiously contentious" John Wheelwright silenced and expelled for the same cause from his vicarage at Bilksby.

By investigators of another class it is argued that these proceedings were reasonable measures of self-preservation. Those holding this view insist that it is impossible to arrive at any correct understanding of the motives which impelled the dominant party in Massachusetts to their rigorous measures without extending the range of vision so as to take into view the general condition of European thought and political and religious movement at that time. They say, and with truth, that the human mind in many countries was then in a condition of violent seething ; the old ligaments which had bound men together were loosened, and the new had not begun to knit. The world was full of crude abominations. The Anabaptists of Munster were but a century gone, and the saints of the Fifth Monarchy were yet to come. The human

mind was sick with *isms* — sick in England and Scotland, sick in France, sick in Germany. For the time all things seemed to tend towards subversion. The startling success of Mrs. Hutchinson in her rôle of a prophetess in Boston, “raised up of God for some great work now at hand,” was significant. It demonstrates at least how thoroughly the Massachusetts community was impregnated with this uneasy spirit, how strongly it sympathized with the morbid tendencies of the age. In and of herself, Mistress Anne Hutchinson was nothing. At any other time she might have come to Boston and criticised each Sunday’s sermons to her heart’s content, — talking her mystical nonsense until she stopped from sheer weariness, — and, while few would have hearkened to her, nobody would have molested her. She would have passed away as thousands like her have before and since, and the most diligent search of the antiquarian would fail to detect any ripple made by her in the great current of events. But Mrs. Hutchinson chanced happily. She thirsted for notoriety, and she struck just the combination of circumstances which secured it to her. The historian of to-day, therefore, sees that her success was a symptom, not a cause. It denoted a condition of the body politic. The clergy were supreme; the people were restless, and she gave voice to their restlessness. Thus the great struggle for New England, between the vague unrest of the time and its conservative forces, chanced to happen over her body. Had the conflict resulted otherwise than it did, — had Mrs. Hutchinson sustained herself and had the clergy been vanquished, — she and Wheelwright and the rest would have been like many others, before and since, who have inaugurated revolution when they fondly sup-

posed they were guiding reform. She would soon have been made to realize that the spirit she had invoked far exceeded her powers of control. She would have disappeared aghast at the excesses and absurdities of those who had once been her followers. Theoretical toleration then meant in practice, what theoretical liberty meant in practice a century and a half later in France, — anarchy, pure and simple. The fault was not in the food: that was as good and strong and nourishing in 1637 and in 1793 as it is now; but the stomach of the body politic was not yet educated up to the point of assimilating it. Thus the battle over Mrs. Hutchinson involved the question whether Massachusetts was to be radical and doctrinaire, or conservative and practical, — a man's home or a fool's paradise. The doctrinaire Vane was wise in principle and wrong in practice; Winthrop, cool and prudent, was wrong in principle but right in practice. Even in his bigotry, he saved Massachusetts.

To this somewhat fanciful and overwrought line of argument, it may be replied, that it is a doubtful expedient to justify persecution on the ground that, but for it, a long train of calamities, which never did happen, might have happened. In the early days of New England the clergy never wearied of reminding their flocks of the evil deeds of the Anabaptists; and they were always predicting a renewal of the horrors of Munster as a certain result of toleration. That picture produced much the same effect on the minds of the timid of those days, as the thought of another Reign of Terror has produced on the well-to-do of Europe throughout the present century. There were alarmists in the seventeenth century just as there are in the nineteenth; but the realities of history and the

imaginings of excited men are two very different things. In 1629 the charge made against the first body of emigrants to Salem in Endicott's company was that "they were Separatists, and would be shortly Anabaptists." In 1637 Winthrop doubtless believed in his heart — what he stated at the trial and spread on the Records of the Province and reiterated in his narrative of the proceedings — that the Covenant of Grace, as taught by Mrs. Hutchinson, and social anarchy, or worse, were convertible terms.¹ It is barely possible that at one stage of the controversy there might have been danger of actual strife; though the presumption — as gathered from the calm, law-abiding tone of the papers which emanated from the minority, and from the submissive way in which they allowed themselves at the close to be disarmed, fined, whipped, disfranchised and banished — is decidedly the other way. There is no evidence of any material in that little community out of which to manufacture revolutions. Certainly Coddington, Coggeshall, Hough, Balston, Hutchinson, Dummer, and even blubbering Captain John Underhill, are strange subjects out of which to conjure up hosts of prophets of Munster, Latter-day Saints, or Fifth Monarchy Men.

But the common-sense view of the controversy of 1637, and its unhappy outcome, would seem to lead the modern investigator to wholly different and more sober-colored conclusions. It was a struggle for civil power and ecclesiastical supremacy in a small village community. As such it naturally — it almost necessarily — resulted in a display of the worst qualities of those engaged in it. It illustrated also with singular force the malign influence apt to be exercised by the

¹ Hutchinson, ii. 514; *Records*, i. 211; *Short Story*, 40.

priest and the woman as active elements in political life. [Stirred by an access of ill-considered popular enthusiasm, the body of the freemen had, at the election of 1636, put a slight upon the time-honored magistrates of the colony, by placing the boyish Vane over their heads, in the office of governor. An ambitious woman, with her head full of Deborahs and the like, and with a genius for making trouble, had then sought to drive from his pulpit, in the chief town, its long-settled pastor, in order to install her own favorite preacher in his place, with her kinsman as that preacher's associate and successor. In her day-dreams she herself probably occupied, in the new order of things she proposed to bring about, the position of a prophetess, — the real guiding-spirit of the whole, — with her husband possibly in the judge's seat. Altogether it was an exhilarating vision, — such a vision as self-conscious and usually unappreciated natures have in every time and most places been wont to revel in. But it did so chance that Mrs. Hutchinson fell into just that combination of circumstances which enabled her to succeed up to a certain point. Her success was indeed marvellous; and it turned her head. Presently she became reckless. She put wanton affronts on the pastor; and when his brethren rallied to his support, she did not hesitate to assail them also. She made enemies of the whole body of the clergy. Vane sympathized with her; Winthrop with them. The contest over the possession of the civil offices came first, and resulted in an easy conservative triumph. Vane made the best fight he could; but the odds were too heavy, and he went helplessly down. Winthrop was reinstated in his old place; and, practically, the struggle was then over.]

This fact both Vane and Winthrop recognized. They were men trained in public affairs and accustomed to their ways. When beaten, the latter, with a sense and dignity which did him infinite credit, accepted the situation as a man should, and patiently bided his time; the former, when his turn to be defeated came, left the country. The real issue was then decided, and there was no longer anything to quarrel over. Unfortunately there was a woman in the case, and the implacable spirit of theological hate had been aroused. The priesthood demanded a victim; and the victim met the priesthood at least half-way. It now became a struggle, which would have been ludicrous had it not been so earnest and so painful, between the whole body of the clergy and a female enthusiast, politician and tease. Had Winthrop then been in real control and able to assert a policy, the excitement would speedily have worn itself out, as purely factitious excitements always have worn themselves out when left alone, and always will. In six months from his return to office Mrs. Hutchinson would have been a sensation of yesterday; while John Wheelwright for the rest of his life would have quietly ministered to his people at the First Church in Braintree. As for real danger to the existence of the colony, there was none. The strength and permanence of the English settlement of Massachusetts rested on too strong a basis to be jeopardized by a change of magistrates, or a noisy quarrel in a vestry. The success of Charles II. and Strafford and Laud in their schemes in England would have placed the colony in much peril; but in New England its safety lay, not in the fact that Winthrop, or any other man or set of men, held office, but in the oneness, the hard

practical sense, and power of political afterthought and self-restraint, of the twelve or fifteen thousand Englishmen who composed it. They were no sheep, to whom Anne Hutchinson was a ravening wolf and for whom John Winthrop was the only shepherd.

The issue was then finally and completely settled at Cambridge on the $\frac{17^{\text{th}}}{24^{\text{th}}}$ of May, 1637. The whole theory of a continuing danger, to the time when six months later the persecution took place, is without any evidence in its support. The procession of his friends which escorted Vane to the shore, when on the 13th of August he embarked for England, was a final demonstration, — the salvo of musketry which saluted his departing vessel was the volley fired over the grave of a lost cause. The demonstration may under the circumstances have been indiscreet, but it could hardly have excited alarm. The Pequot war had then been brought to a triumphant close; the conservative party was in undisputed control of every branch of the government; the immigration was large; the alien law was in operation. The adherents of Mrs. Hutchinson, the so-called Antinomians, were in a majority in a single town only of the whole province, and their party was so completely broken that its leaders were already seeking a place of refuge outside the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. The struggle with them was no longer for power, but for self-preservation. So far from threatening the safety of the community, they were notoriously unable to protect themselves.

Unfortunately Winthrop's course was not now a free one. It was hampered by the presence of those ecclesiastical allies who had borne him back into power. The clergy verifying in their conduct Milton's asser-

tion that "Presbyter was but Priest writ large," — the clergy insisted on the extirpation of an indefinable heresy. They pointed to the compact of January, two years before, wherein "Mr. Winthrop acknowledged that he was convinced that he had failed in overmuch lenity and remissness, and would endeavor to make a more strict course hereafter." They demanded the letter of the bond. Dudley and Endicott also were there, sitting on his either hand at the council-table: Dudley, to whom a faction among the people had adhered because he carried matters with "more severity;" and Endicott, afterwards the persecutor of the Quakers, and now the mouthpiece of Hugh Peters.¹ The mild-tempered but prudent Win-

¹ That this is the correct explanation of Winthrop's course is, I think, plainly to be inferred from his own language. In May, 1635, he had failed of a reelection as governor, and subsequently, in January, 1636, had been informally arraigned before the clergy on the charge of dealing "too remissly in point of justice." He had made the issue that "justice should be administered with more lenity in the infancy of a plantation than in a settled state." The next morning the ministers had "set down a rule in the case" in favor of "strict discipline." Then Winthrop confessed himself, in the language cited in the text, and promised to err no more on the side of lenity. (Winthrop, i. *178.) Sixteen months later, through the direct interposition of the clergy, he had been again chosen governor, and now as the exponent of their policy. Immediately on his return to office he wrote as follows of the Antinomian controversy: — "Few could see where the difference was; and indeed it seemed so small, as (if men's affections had not been formerly alienated, when the differences were formerly stated as fundamental) they might easily have come to reconciliation." (Ib. *221.) Six months later he records the meeting of the General Court, when its members, "finding upon consultation that two so opposite parties could not contain in the same body, without apparent hazard to the whole, agreed to send away some of the principal." (Ib. *245.) These extracts, with Dudley's and Endicott's interpolations at Mrs. Hutchinson's trial, apparently tell the whole story. Hugh Peters' influence on Endicott, who "as a magistrate did not bear his sword in vain," is set forth in 1. *Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.* vi. 253-5.

throp remembered his promise, and bent to the storm he could not withstand. What followed was a simple ecclesiastical persecution, of the more moderate kind. "Jezebel" was hunted out. With Winthrop, therefore, all the proceedings subsequent to the May election of 1637 were a political necessity. Like many another public man, he found himself driven by the clamor of those behind him further than he wished, or thought it wise to go. There is reason, also, to believe that his own conscience was thereafter ill at ease in regard to the course he then pursued, and that he feared, because of the sufferings and banishments inflicted, God would visit his wrath and sore displeasure upon the land.¹ The recollection of these things even cast a shadow of remorse over the closing hours of his well-spent life; for when, twelve years later, the Father of Massachusetts lay dying in his house in Boston, an order for the expulsion of some religious dissentient was brought to him. Turning from Dudley, ever prone to severity, who pressed him to sign it, the dying magistrate refused, saying, — "Of that work I have done too much already."² As he uttered those words the memory of murdered Anne Hutchinson, upon whose former home, standing opposite his own, his fading vision may at the moment well have rested, must needs have been uppermost in his thoughts.³

The business of the historian is to state facts and conclusions exactly as he sees them. On the one hand it would appear that the Boston movement of 1636-8 — the mis-called Antinomian movement —

¹ *iv. Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. vii. 187.*

² *Hutchinson, i. 151.*

³ *Ellis, Puritan Age, 25.*

was a premature agitation, based on a false issue. The power of the clergy could not then have been successfully assailed in Massachusetts; nor was it desirable that it should be. There was need enough for reform; but, to be useful and healthy, reform had to come more slowly and from another direction. Neither did Anne Hutchinson or her following hold forth any promise of better things. Theirs was no protest against existing abuses. On the contrary, in their religious excesses they outdid even the clergy, — they out-heroded Herod. Their overthrow, accordingly, so far as it was peculiar to themselves and did not involve the overthrow of great principles of religious toleration and political reform, was no matter for regret. Knowingly and intelligently they represented nothing that was religiously good or politically sound. But, unfortunately, their action — as false, premature action is wont to do — brought wiser action and sound principles into disrepute, and seriously retarded progress in Massachusetts. This was conspicuously apparent in the ruthless treatment a subsequent and more deserving reform movement shortly after received at the hands of the party in power; for the fate of Robert Child and his associates in 1646 was a mere political corollary of that of Anne Hutchinson in 1637. At the hands, therefore, of an historian whose intelligence is not mastered by his sympathies, she and her friends, including Governor Vane, are entitled to no consideration. They went on a fool's errand, and they brought great principles into lasting odium.

On the other hand, the way in which the adherents of Vane and Mrs. Hutchinson were suppressed cannot be defended, without including in the defence the

whole system of religious and political intolerance of that time. But why should it be defended? It is impossible to ignore the fact, and worse than useless to deny it, that the New England Puritans were essentially a persecuting race. They could not be otherwise. They believed that they were God's chosen people. As such, they were right; all others were wrong. If, therefore, they failed to bring up their children in the strait and narrow way, and to protect them and all the people from the wiles of the Evil One, God would not hold them guiltless. The Israelites were their models in all things, and the precedents which guided their action were precedents drawn from the books of the Old Testament. "So, by the example of Lot in Abraham's family, and after Hagar and Ishmael, he saw they must be sent away." The Israelites were not an attractive or an amiable or a philosophical race; they were narrow, devout and clannish. No one ever presumed to sophisticate away their cruelties or their persecutions. Yet withal they were a strong and an aggressive people, believing certain things implicitly; and, accordingly, they impressed themselves and their beliefs on the human mind. Their very imperfections were essential elements of their strength. They believed to fanaticism; and it was the strength of their fanaticism which caused their belief to dominate. It was the same with the Puritans of New England. They persecuted as a part of their faith.

It is true that in so doing the Puritan exiles to New England showed that they were not in advance of their times. That they were not, was again an element of their strength; for they were essentially practical men, and not idealists. As such, being of

the seventeenth century, they objected to persecution chiefly as applied to themselves. It was enough for them that their charter and the fundamental principles of their community gave them the right to prescribe who might settle among them, and to expel dissentients and intruders. They exercised that right.

But is there any good reason to suppose that the crushing-out process of 1687 resulted more favorably in Massachusetts than elsewhere? The historians of the New England school have insisted that it did,—that in this case at least, whether harshly and oppressively used or not, persecution was justified by the result.¹ They point to the fact that peace, quiet and safety were by means of it restored, and that a long period of internal tranquillity followed the year 1687. The exiles even, in many cases, made their submission and returned. All this is true. Exiles have usually, in all ages and in all countries, looked fondly back on their old homes, and returned to them as soon as they were permitted so to do. As respects the long period of peace and tranquillity, there can be no question that such a period followed the violent measures of 1687–8. This was well expressed in a tract published in London in 1648, in which the boast was made that, since the banishment of the friends of Mrs. Hutchinson, “not any unsound, unsavourio and giddie fancie have dared to lift up his head, or abide the light amongst us.”² But, though there can be no question that a period of peace and tranquillity did then settle down on Massachusetts, or that it lasted through the lives of six generations of those born on the soil, there may well be great question whether this peace and tran-

¹ Palfrey, i. 500; Lodge, 351.

² 1. *Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.* i. 247.

quillity were good things,—whether, indeed, those blessings were not purchased for Massachusetts, as they have been for other countries, at a heavy price. When Vane, in the December council of 1636, was cowering under the fierce diatribe of Hugh Peters, he showed true insight in exclaiming, “the light of the Gospel brings a sword.”¹ These few words, like a sudden electric flash, revealed the whole situation, laying bare the errors of those with whom he was contending. Then and afterwards, it was in New England as it has been and still is elsewhere: “the spiritual growth of Massachusetts withered under the shadow of dominant orthodoxy; the colony was only saved from atrophy by its vigorous political life,” and the rule of its established church, “so long as it endured, was a rule of terror, not of love; her ways were never ways of pleasantness, her paths were never peace.”²

Yet it has more than once been assumed by the Massachusetts historians, in a sort of matter-of-course way, that the sterile conformity, which for more than a century after the suppressions of 1637–8 prevailed in the Puritan Commonwealth, was desirable,—that magistrates like Stoughton and divines like Mather, and a literature of forgotten theology and unreadable homilies, were fruits indicating a good tree. That what happened then did happen is true; that it naturally resulted from what went before is equally true; but that better things could not have happened is taken for granted. That in time the intellect of Massachusetts—schooled by self-government through a long struggle with nature and against foreign en-

¹ *Supra*, 424.

² Doyle, *Eng. in Am. ; the Puritan Colonies*, i. 187–8.

croachments—did work itself out from under the incubus of superstition, prejudice and narrow conformity imposed upon it by the first generation of magistrates and ministers, cannot be denied; but it is certainly going far to infer therefrom that, in this especial case, superstition, prejudice and narrow conformity were helps instead of obstacles. It is not easy indeed to see how the *post ergo propter* fallacy could be carried further. It is much like arguing, because a child of robust frame and active mind survives stripes and starvation in infancy, and bad instruction and worse discipline in youth,—struggling through to better things in manhood,—that therefore the stripes and starvation, and bad instruction and worse discipline, in his case at least worked well, and were the cause of his subsequent excellence. It is barely possible that New England, contrary to all principle and precedent, may have profited by the harshness and bigotry which for a time suppressed all freedom of thought in Massachusetts; but it is far more likely that the slow results afterwards there achieved came notwithstanding that drawback, rather than in consequence of the discipline it afforded. Certainly the historians who with such confidence set aside all the lessons of human experience—in order to assert that, in the case of their ancestors, whatever was, was right, as well as best—would be slow to apply the same rules or draw similar conclusions in the case of such as persecuted, banished or suppressed those who thought like their ancestors.