

COLONIAL HISTORY.—CONTINUED.

MINOR EASTERN COLONIES.

CHAPTER XXI.

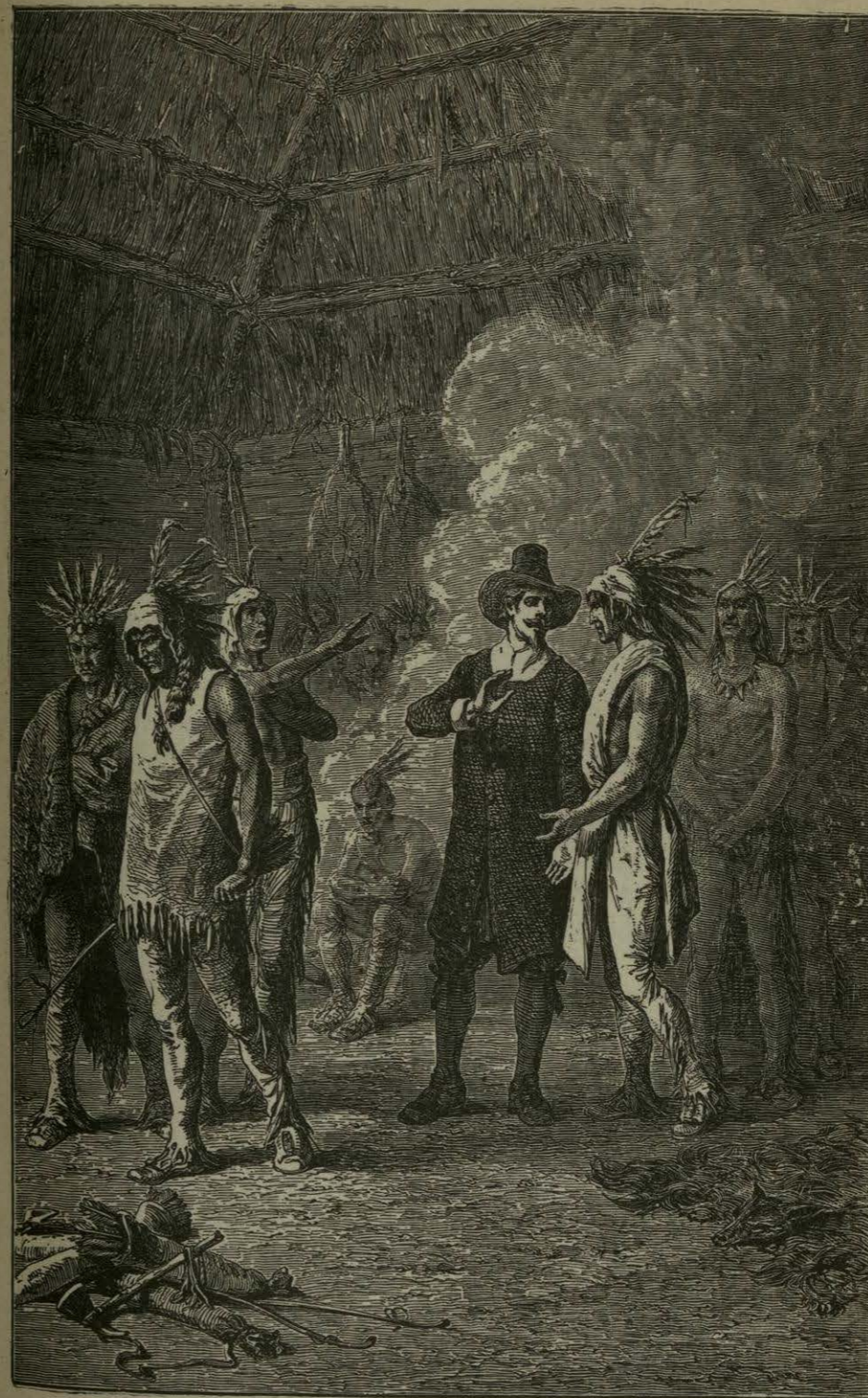
CONNECTICUT.

THE history of Connecticut begins with the year 1630. The first grant of the territory was made by the council of Plymouth to the earl of Warwick; and in March of 1631 the claim was transferred by him to Lord Say-and-Seal, Lord Brooke, John Hampden and others. Before a colony could be planted by the proprietors, the Dutch of New Netherland reached the Connecticut River and built at Hartford their fort, called the House of Good Hope. The people of New Plymouth immediately organized and sent out a force to counteract this movement of their rivals. The territorial claim of the Puritans extended not only over Connecticut, but over New Netherland itself and onward to the west. Should the intruding Dutch colonists of Manhattan be allowed to move eastward and take possession of the finest valley in New England? Certainly not.

The English expedition reached the mouth of the Connecticut and sailed up the river. When the little squadron came opposite the House of Good Hope, the commander of the garrison ordered Captain Holmes, the English officer, to strike his colors; but the order was treated with derision. The Dutch threatened to fire in case the fleet should attempt to pass; but the English defiantly hoisted sails and proceeded up the river. The puny cannons of the House of Good Hope remained cold and silent. At a point just below the mouth of the Farmington, seven miles above Hartford, the Puritans landed and built the block-house of Windsor.

In October of 1635 a colony of sixty persons left Boston, traversed the forests of Central Massachusetts, and settled at Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield. Earlier in the same year the younger Winthrop, a man who in all the virtues of a noble life was a worthy rival of his

(184)



ROGER WILLIAMS OPPOSING THE PEQUOT EMISSARIES.



father, the governor of Massachusetts, arrived in New England. He bore a commission from the proprietors of the Western colony to build a fort at the mouth of the Connecticut River, and to prevent the further encroachments of the Dutch. The fortress was hastily completed and the guns mounted just in time to prevent the entrance of a Dutch trading-vessel which appeared at the mouth of the river. Such was the founding of Saybrook, so named in honor of the proprietors, Lords Say-and-Seal and Brooke. Thus was the most important river of New England brought under the dominion of the Puritans; the solitary Dutch settlement at Hartford was cut off from succor and left to dwindle into insignificance.

To the early annals of Connecticut belongs the sad story of THE PEQUOD WAR. The country west of the Thames was more thickly peopled with savages than any other portion of New England. The haughty and warlike Pequods were alone able to muster seven hundred warriors. The whole effective force of the English colonists did not amount to two hundred men. But the superior numbers of the cunning and revengeful savages were more than balanced by the unflinching courage and destructive weapons of the English.

The first act of violence was committed in the year 1633. The crew of a small trading-vessel were ambushed and murdered on the banks of the Connecticut. An Indian embassy went to Boston to apologize for the crime; the nation was forgiven and received in friendship. A treaty was patched up, the Pequods acknowledging the supremacy of the English and promising to become civilized. The Narragansetts, the hereditary enemies of the Pequods, had already yielded to the authority of Massachusetts and promised obedience to her laws. A reconciliation was thus effected between the two hostile races of savages. But as soon as the Pequods were freed from their old fear of the Narragansetts, they began to violate their recent treaty with the English. Oldham, the worthy captain of a trading-vessel, was murdered near Block Island. A company of militia pursued the perpetrators of the outrage and gave them a bloody punishment. All the slumbering hatred and suppressed rage of the nation burst forth, and the war began in earnest.

In this juncture of affairs the Pequods attempted a piece of dangerous diplomacy. A persistent effort was made to induce the Narragansetts and the Mohegans to join in a war of extermination against the English; and the plot was wellnigh successful. But the heroic Roger Williams, faithful in his misfortunes, sent a letter to Sir Henry Vane, governor of Massachusetts, warned him of the impending danger, and volunteered his services to defeat the conspiracy. The governor replied, urging Williams



to use his utmost endeavors to thwart the threatened alliance. Embarking alone in a frail canoe, the exile left Providence, which he had founded only a month before, and drifted out into Narragansett Bay. Every moment it seemed that the poor little boat with its lonely passenger would be swallowed up; but his courage and skill as an oarsman at last brought him to the shore in safety. Proceeding at once to the house of Canonicus, king of the Narragansetts, he found the painted and bloody ambassadors of the Pequods already there. For three days and nights, at the deadly peril of his life, he pleaded with Canonicus and Miantonomoh to reject the proposals of the hostile tribe, and to stand fast in their allegiance to the English. His noble efforts were successful; the wavering Narragansetts voted to remain at peace, and the disappointed Pequod chiefs were sent away.

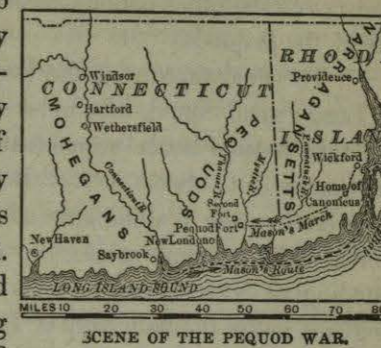
The Mohegans also rejected the proposed alliance. Uncas, the sachem of that nation, not only remained faithful to the whites, but furnished a party of warriors to aid them against the Pequods. In the meantime, repeated acts of violence had roused the colony to vengeance. During the winter of 1636-37 many murders were committed in the neighborhood of Saybrook. In the following April a massacre occurred at Wethersfield, in which nine persons were butchered. On the 1st day of May the three towns of Connecticut declared war. Sixty gallant volunteers—one-third of the whole effective force of the colony—were put under command of Captain John Mason of Hartford. Seventy Mohegans joined the expedition; and the thoughtful Sir Henry Vane sent Captain Underhill with twenty soldiers from Boston.

The descent from Hartford to Saybrook occupied one day. On the 20th of the month the expedition, sailing eastward, passed the mouth of the Thames; here was the principal seat of the Pequod nation. When the savages saw the squadron go by without attempting to land, they set up shouts of exultation, and persuaded themselves that the English were afraid to hazard battle. But the poor natives had sadly mistaken the men with whom they had to deal. The fleet proceeded quietly into Narragansett Bay and anchored in the harbor of Wickford. Here the troops landed and began their march into the country of the Pequods. After one day's advance, Mason reached the cabin of Canonicus and Miantonomoh, sachems of the Narragansetts. There he attempted to persuade to join him against the common enemy; but the wary chieftains, knowing the prowess of the Pequods, and fearing that the English might be defeated, decided to remain neutral.

On the evening of the 25th of May the troops of Connecticut came within hearing of the Pequod fort. The unsuspecting warriors spent

their last night on earth in uproar and jubilee. At two o'clock in the morning the English soldiers rose suddenly from their places of concealment and rushed forward to the fort. A dog ran howling among the wigwams, and the warriors sprang to arms, only to receive a deadly volley from the English muskets. The fearless assailants leaped over the puny palisades and began the work of death; but the savages rose on every side in such numbers that Mason's men were about to be overwhelmed. "Burn them! burn them!" shouted the dauntless captain, seizing a flaming mat and running to the windward of the cabins. "Burn them!" resounded on every side; and in a few minutes the dry wigwams were one sheet of crackling flame. The English and Mohegans hastily withdrew to the ramparts. The yelling savages found themselves begirt with fire. They ran round and round like wild beasts in a burning circus. If one of the wretched creatures burst through the flames, it was only to meet certain death from a broadsword or a musket-ball. The destruction was complete and awful. Only seven warriors escaped; seven others were made prisoners. Six hundred men, women and children perished, nearly all of them being roasted to death in a hideous heap. Before the rising of the sun the pride and glory of the Pequods had passed away for ever. Sassacus, the grand sachem of the tribe, escaped into the forest, fled for protection to the Mohawks, and was murdered. Two of the English soldiers were killed and twenty others wounded in the battle.

In the early morning three hundred Pequods, the remnant of the nation, approached from a second fort in the neighborhood. They had heard the tumult of battle, and supposed their friends victorious. To their utter horror, they found their fortified town in ashes and nearly all their proud tribe lying in one blackened pile of half-burnt flesh and bones. The savage warriors stamped the earth, yelled and tore their hair in desperate rage, and ran howling through the woods. Mason's men returned by way of New London to Saybrook, and thence to Hartford. New troops arrived from Massachusetts. The remnants of the hostile nation were pursued into the swamps and thickets west of Saybrook. Every wigwam of the Pequods was burned, and every field laid waste. The remaining two hundred panting fugitives were hunted to death or captivity. The prisoners were distributed as servants among the Narra-





gansetts and Mohegans; a few were sold as slaves. The first war between the English colonists and the natives had ended in the overthrow and destruction of one of the most powerful tribes of New England. For many years the other nations, when tempted to hostility, remembered the fate of the Pequods.

The final capture of the Pequod fugitives was made at Fairfield, on Long Island Sound, fifty miles south-west from Saybrook. The English thus became better acquainted with the coast west of the mouth of the Connecticut. Some men of Boston were delighted with the beautiful plain between the Wallingford and West Rivers. Here they tarried over winter, building some cabins and exploring the country; such was the founding of NEW HAVEN. Shortly afterward, a Puritan colony from England, under the leadership of Theophilus Eaton and John Davenport, arrived at Boston. Hearing of the beauty of the country on the sound, the new immigrants again set sail, and about the middle of April reached New Haven. On the morning of the first Sabbath after their arrival the colonists assembled for worship under a spreading oak; and Davenport, their minister, preached a touching and appropriate sermon on *THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS*. The next care was to make an honorable purchase of land from the Indians—a policy which was ever afterward faithfully adhered to by the colony. For the first year there was no government except a simple covenant, into which the settlers entered, that all would be obedient to the rules of Scripture.

In June of 1639 the leading men of New Haven held a convention *in a barn*, and formally adopted the Bible as the constitution of the State. Everything was strictly conformed to the religious standard. The government was called the House of Wisdom, of which Eaton, Davenport and five others were the seven Pillars. None but church members were admitted to the rights of citizenship. All offices were to be filled by the votes of the freemen at an annual election. For twenty years consecutively, Mr. Eaton—first and greatest of the pillars—was chosen governor of the colony. Other settlers came, and pleasant villages sprang up on both shores of Long Island Sound.

Civil government began in Connecticut in the year 1639. Until that time the Western colonies had been subject to Massachusetts, and had scarcely thought of independence. But when the soldiers of Hartford returned victorious from the Pequod war, the exulting people began to think of a separate commonwealth. If they could fight their own battles, could they not make their own laws? Delegates from the three towns came together at Hartford, and on the 14th of January a constitution was framed for the colony. The new instrument was one of the most simple

and liberal ever adopted. An oath of allegiance to the State was the only qualification of citizenship. No recognition of the English king or of any foreign authority was required. Different religious opinions were alike tolerated and respected. All the officers of the colony were to be chosen by ballot at an annual election. The law-making power was vested in a general assembly, and the representatives were apportioned among the towns according to population. Neither Saybrook nor New Haven adopted this constitution, by which the other colonies in the valley of the Connecticut were united in a common government.

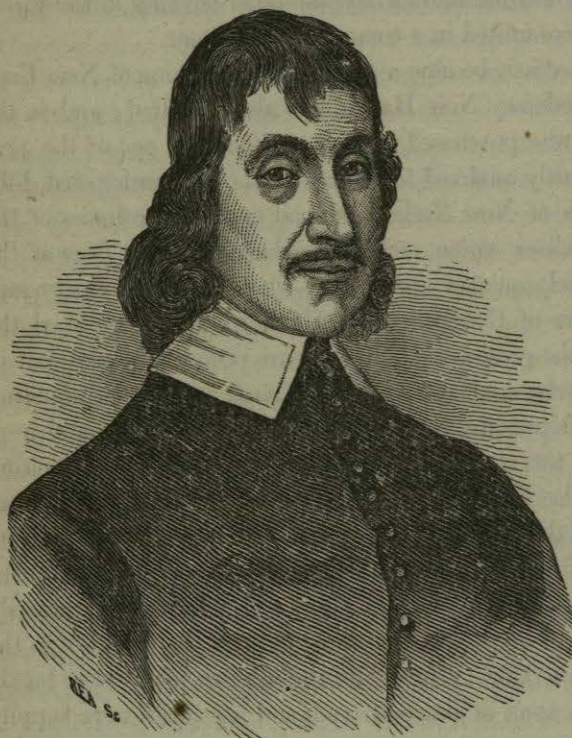
In 1643, Connecticut became a member of the Union of New England. Into this confederacy New Haven was also admitted; and in the next year Saybrook was purchased of George Fenwick, one of the proprietors, and permanently annexed to Connecticut. The anticipated difficulties with the Dutch of New Netherland had made the colonies of the West anxious for a closer union with Massachusetts. The fears of the people were not entirely quieted until 1650, when Governor Stuyvesant met the commissioners of Connecticut at Hartford, and established the western boundary of the province. This measure promised peace; but in 1651 war broke out between England and Holland, and notwithstanding the recent pledges of friendship, New England and New Netherland were wellnigh drawn into the conflict. Stuyvesant was suspected of inciting the Indians against the English; a declaration of war was proposed before the delegates of the united colonies, and was only prevented from passing by the veto of Massachusetts. Left without support, Connecticut and New Haven next sought aid from Cromwell, who entered heartily into the project and sent out a fleet to co-operate with the colonists in the reduction of New Netherland. But while the western towns were busily preparing for war, the news of peace arrived, and hostilities were happily averted.

On the restoration of monarchy in England, Connecticut made haste to recognize King Charles as rightful sovereign. It was as much an act of sound policy as of loyal zeal. The people of the Connecticut valley were eager for a royal charter. They had conquered the Pequods; they had bought the lands of the Mohegans; they had purchased the claims of the earl of Warwick; it only remained to secure all these acquisitions with a patent from the king. The infant republic selected its best and truest man, the scholarly younger Winthrop, and sent him as ambassador to London. He bore with him a charter which had been carefully prepared by the authorities of Hartford; the problem was to induce the king to sign it.

The aged Lord Say-and-Seal, for many years the friend and bene-



factor of the colony, was now an important officer of the Crown. To him Winthrop delivered a letter, unfolded his plans and appealed for help; and the appeal was not in vain. The earl of Manchester, lord chamberlain to the king, was induced to lend his aid. Winthrop easily obtained an audience with the sovereign, and did not fail to show him a ring which Charles I. had given as a pledge of friendship to Winthrop's grandfather. The little token so moved the wayward monarch's feelings



THE YOUNGER WINTHROP.

that in a moment of careless magnanimity he signed the colonial charter without the alteration of a letter. Winthrop returned to the rejoicing colony, bearing a patent the most liberal and ample ever granted by an English monarch. The power of governing themselves was conferred on the people without qualification or restriction. Every right of sovereignty and of independence, except the name, was con-

ceded to the new State. The territory included under the charter extended from the bay and river of the Narragansetts westward to the Pacific. The people who had built the House of Wisdom at New Haven now found themselves the unwilling subjects of the new commonwealth of Connecticut.

For fourteen years the excellent Winthrop was annually chosen governor of the colony. Every year added largely to the population and wealth of the province. The civil and religious institutions were the freest and best in New England. Peace reigned; the husbandman was undisturbed in the field, the workman in his shop. Even during King Philip's War, Connecticut was saved from invasion. Not a war-whoop

was heard, not a hamlet burned, not a life lost, within her borders. Her soldiers made common cause with their brethren of Massachusetts and Rhode Island; but their own homes were saved from the desolations of war.

In July of 1675, Sir Edmund Andros, the governor of New York, arrived with an armed sloop at the mouth of the Connecticut. Orders were sent to Captain Bull, who commanded the fort at Saybrook, to surrender his post; but the brave captain replied by hoisting the flag of England and assuring the bearer of the message that his master would better retire. Andros, however, landed and came to a parley with the officers of the fort. He began to read his commission, but was ordered to stop. In vain did the arrogant magistrate insist that the dominions of the duke of York extended from the Connecticut to the Delaware. "Connecticut has her own charter, signed by His Gracious Majesty King Charles II.," said Captain Bull. "Leave off your reading, or take the consequences!" The argument prevailed, and the red-coated governor, trembling with rage, was escorted to his boat by a company of Saybrook militia.

In 1686, when Andros was made royal governor of New England, Connecticut was again included in his jurisdiction. The first year of his administration was spent in establishing his authority in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire. In the following October he made his famous visit to Hartford. On the day of his arrival he invaded the provincial assembly while in session, seized the book of minutes, and with his own hand wrote FINIS at the bottom of the page. He demanded the immediate surrender of the colonial charter. Governor Treat pleaded long and earnestly for the preservation of the precious document. Andros was inexorable. The shades of evening fell. Joseph Wadsworth found in the gathering darkness an opportunity to conceal the cherished parchment—a deed which has made his own name and the name of a tree immortal. Two years later, when the government of Andros was overthrown, Connecticut made haste to restore her liberties.

In the autumn of 1693, another attempt was made to subvert the freedom of the colony. Fletcher, the governor of New York, went to Hartford to assume command of the militia of the province. He bore a commission from King William; but by the terms of the charter the right of commanding the troops was vested in the colony itself. The general assembly refused to recognize the authority of Fletcher, who, nevertheless, ordered the soldiers under arms and proceeded to read his commission as colonel. "Beat the drums!" shouted Captain Wadsworth, who stood at the head of the company. "Silence!" said Fletcher; the



drums ceased, and the reading began again. "Drum! drum!" cried Wadsworth; and a second time the voice of the reader was drowned in the uproar. "Silence! silence!" shouted the enraged governor. The dauntless Wadsworth stepped before the ranks and said, "Colonel Fletcher, if I am interrupted again, I will let the sunshine through your body in an instant." That ended the controversy. Benjamin Fletcher thought it better to be a living governor of New York than a dead colonel of the Connecticut militia.

"I give these books for the founding of a college in this colony." Such were the words of ten ministers who, in the year 1700, assembled at the village of Branford, a few miles east of New Haven. Each of the worthy fathers, as he uttered the words, deposited a few volumes on the table around which they were sitting; such was the founding of YALE COLLEGE. In 1702 the school was formally opened at Saybrook, where it continued for fifteen years, and was then removed to New Haven. One of the most liberal patrons of the college was Elihu Yale, from whom the famous institution of learning derived its name. Common schools had existed in almost every village of Connecticut since the planting of the colony. The children of the Pilgrims have never forgotten the cause of education.

The half century preceding the French and Indian war was a period of prosperity to all the western districts of New England. Connecticut was especially favored. Almost unbroken peace reigned throughout her borders. The blessings of a free commonwealth were realized in full measure. The farmer reaped his fields in cheerfulness and hope. The mechanic made glad his dusty shop with anecdote and song. The merchant feared no duty, the villager no taxes. Want was unknown and pauperism unheard of. Wealth was little cared for and crime of rare occurrence among a people with whom intelligence and virtue were the only foundations of nobility. With fewer dark pages in her history, less austerity of manners and greater liberality of sentiment, Connecticut had all the lofty purposes and shining virtues of Massachusetts. The visions of Hooker and Haynes, and the dreams of the quiet Winthrop, were more than realized in the happy homes of the Connecticut valley.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## RHODE ISLAND.

IT was in June of 1636 that the exiled Roger Williams left the country of the Wampanoags and passed down the Seekonk to Narragansett River. His object was to secure a safe retreat beyond the limits of Plymouth colony. He, with his five companions, landed on the western bank, at a place called Moshassuck, purchased the soil of the Narragansett sachems, and laid the foundations of Providence. Other exiles joined the company. New farms were laid out, new fields were ploughed and new houses built; here, at last, was found at PROVIDENCE PLANTATION a refuge for all the distressed and persecuted.

The leader of the new colony was a native of Wales; born in 1606; liberally educated at Cambridge; the pupil of Sir Edward Coke; in after years the friend of Milton; a dissenter; a hater of ceremonies; a disciple of truth in its purest forms; an uncompromising advocate of freedom; exiled to Massachusetts, and now exiled by Massachusetts, he brought to the banks of the Narragansett the great doctrines of perfect religious liberty and the equal rights of men. If the area of Rhode Island had corresponded with the grandeur of the principles on which she was founded, who could have foretold her destiny?

Roger Williams belonged to that most radical body of dissenters called Anabaptists. By them the validity of infant baptism was denied. Williams himself had been baptized in infancy; but his views in regard to the value of the ceremony had undergone a change during his ministry at Salem. Now that he had freed himself from all foreign authority both of Church and State, he conceived it to be his duty to receive a second baptism. But who should perform the ceremony? Ezekiel Holliman, a layman, was selected for the sacred duty. Williams meekly received the rite at the hands of his friend, and then in turn baptized him and ten other exiles of the colony. Such was the organization of THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH in America.

The beginning of civil government in Rhode Island was equally simple and democratic. Mr. Williams was the natural ruler of the little province, but he reserved for himself neither wealth nor privilege. The