

Bk. III. might lurk behind them while he laboured for his bread.

Ch. I. In every part of New England, legends are handed down among the people of the sufferings and the heroism of A. D. 1697. their fathers. Women were known to defend themselves with courage and success, in sudden attacks, when their brothers and husbands were absent from their homes.

Hannah Dustin. The intrepidity of Hannah Dustin surpassed that of Jael and Judith of old; for she, when taken by a party of Indians, succeeded in killing the whole of them with her own hands, in the dead of night, when they were overcome with liquor and sleep.

Hatred and fear of the Indians. Amid such dangers and sufferings were the colonists trained. But Indian hostilities, in spite of the superior strength of the whites, retarded prosperity, and filled the most prosperous settlements with alarm. The mere name of Indian conjured up fear and hatred; and the defenceless and the timid were frightened at the word, even as Saracen mothers once quailed before the name of Richard Cœur de Lion.

Peculiarities of Indian warfare. It is unnecessary to detail the injuries which the Indians inflicted at a subsequent period, until the final conquest of Canada by the English. There is great uniformity in the history of Indian hostilities, marked by treachery, cunning, cruelty, and barbarity. Moreover, Indian warfare, after the colonies were involved in the great contest between England and France, is closely connected with intercolonial wars, and will be further alluded to when these are treated. It is time to consider other events which affected the prosperity and tranquillity of the colonies.

CHAPTER II.

RELIGIOUS DISSENSIONS, DELUSIONS, AND PERSECUTIONS.

It seems odd to prefix a chapter with such a title, when we remember the claims which the colonists, and especially the Puritans, made to intellectual light and religious toleration. It would seem that men with their experience and sufferings, driven away from their homes by persecuting bigots, would be singularly free from the faults which they denounced in others, and would be bound together by the bonds of charity and love. Doubtless there was great affection between those who thought alike on all the great questions of the day; but, unfortunately, they did not all think alike, and, as they were all earnest and ardent in defence of their peculiar views, strife and disunion were inevitable. It is a great infirmity, even in noble minds, to be inclined to religious intolerance. It were a mistake to suppose that antipathy to those who differ from us is ordinarily confined to the narrow and the weak. Intolerance is in human nature itself, and generally displays itself with the most bitterness where there are strong passions and warm feelings. It does not come from the head, but from the heart. There will be no warmth of temper displayed in discussing mathematical truths; for these appeal purely to the reason. But when moral and political questions are discussed, then sentiments of affection or interest are brought out, and this

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Natural inclination to religious intolerance.

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Intolerance
universal. coolness vanishes. Even the strongest minds may exhibit the greatest love or animosity, since strong passions frequently accompany powerful intellectual convictions. Thus Burke could never forgive Fox, with whom he had been in the closest intimacy, when the latter advocated the cause of the French Revolution. Thus, Dr. Johnson could never speak decently of either dissenters or republicans. With both these great men, with all their learning and wisdom, their passions prevented the unbiassed judgment of their reason, because, with them, passion was as strong as their reason. Hence, advocates who are successful and powerful should not be selected as judges, because the same qualities which make them potent pleaders, unfit them for cool and impartial sifters of truth. Passion is one of the grand elements of eloquence; but passion is at war with reason. On this principle it is unwise to take advice from sanguine friends; for they see everything as they wish to have it, through the medium of excited feelings. It is much better to trust to the judgment of cold, calculating, passionless men, who do not enter warmly into our plans.

Ardent feelings of the Puritans. Now, the Puritans, as a body, were men of remarkably strong passions and ardent religious sentiments, which were united with great intellectual strength. They felt strongly on all moral and religious questions which were agitated in their day. They could not be cool and calm, if they would. They were jealous for the glory of God, and the undimmed lustre of their system of truth. Any departure from the principles which they honoured so profoundly, seemed to derogate from the glory of God and the welfare of the Church. Hence, they did not stop to reason coldly when the temple of truth was invaded by audacious and unholy hands. They would drive out the intruders with whips and cords—they would eject them from

their abodes—from the precincts of the colony itself. Bk. III.
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Puritan intolerance. They would have nothing to do with them; for they sought, as it appeared to them, to bring dishonour on what was most sacred and sublime. Hence, they did not scruple to banish the Baptists and Quakers, in spite of unexceptionable morality and inoffensive lives, because they blended certain doctrines with their system of truth which were regarded as dangerous to the Church of Christ. Hence, they had no reproaches of conscience in awarding to witches the punishments which their age prescribed. They abominated the idea that ignorant and self-sufficient fanatics could be favoured with the special illumination of the Deity, when the Bible was in every hand. They were shocked that any persons could have the audacity to communicate with the agents of Satanic power. They did not stop to reason. They acted, without reasoning, from the prejudices of their age, and from the education they had received. It is no argument against their superior culture, that the people in Virginia, who did not make high pretensions, should have been free from similar delusions and animosities. The Virginians were thinking of other things—of cultivating tobacco, and studying their physical prosperity. Those men who, in our days, are zealously embarked in trade, politics, or pleasure, are not the men who feel strongly and act vigorously respecting dangerous moral innovations. Those who are infinitely their superiors in culture, in genius, and in heart, may exhibit passions and weaknesses of which their inferiors will never be accused.

And these truths should be borne in mind when we discuss the character of great men, or unfold the relations of great events. It is only in this light that the conduct of the Puritans may be palliated for their participation in religious persecution. Let not great historical facts be The Puritans evinced only a natural infirmity.

Bk. III.
Ch. 2. denied. Let them be admitted cheerfully by all. And then let us view acts which derogate from the fame of the good and great in the light of true philosophy and Christian candour, and we shall ordinarily see great palliatives. None are indeed perfect. We are called to lament the follies of those we honour. But, with all their follies and mistakes, we see nevertheless a great difference between them and those who are more faultless, but less glorious.

I have already shown the lamentable delusion which led to the banishment of Roger Williams, and the foundation of Rhode Island. The next marked outburst of popular prejudice, and which can never be justified, was in reference to the Quakers. It commenced in 1656, and extended, at intervals, for many years. It was not confined to Massachusetts, but equally disgraced Virginia and other colonies.

Quakers
persecuted

Allusion has already been made to the celebrated founder of the Society of Friends, and also to their doctrines, which contained some principles for the first time advanced in the world, and which have contributed, in no inconsiderable manner, to the progress of truth and civilization. But there were some ideas of more questionable value, which were advanced with presumptuous audacity, and were exceedingly offensive to the men of their generation. The notion that the Bible was a dead-letter book, unless illuminated by the Inner Light, thus recognizing special divine revelations, and placing them above the authority of the Scriptures, was repugnant to the Puritans, who placed the authority of the Scriptures above all other authority. And when this idea, and other new doctrines equally obnoxious, were advocated with wild enthusiasm, and with a recklessness inconsistent with the respect which seemed due to both rulers and priests, accom-

panied with extravagance and indecorum of manners, yea, even undisguised indecency, hard to be reconciled with the calm and rational deportment of the present followers of Fox, the indignation and disgust of the colonists were excited to the highest degree. For Quakers, male and female, in some instances, not only committed acts which would now, in any civilized country, subject them to imprisonment in the house of correction, but manifested utter contempt for courts of justice, titles of honour, and the ordinary laws of society. Their reputation had preceded them to New England, and, when they arrived, there were such strong prejudices against them, that they were immediately arrested and examined to see whether they bore any bodily marks of witchcraft. And when such indications were not found, they were sent back to Rhode Island, from which colony they came.

A law was passed, sentencing them to fine, imprisonment, and exile. The four associated colonies adopted this law, and urged Rhode Island to do the same. But the Assembly wisely regarded any punishment for religious opinions as inconsistent with their principles, and a violation of their charter. The few Quakers who had come to these distant settlements to propagate their doctrines, were not content to remain in Rhode Island, and were resolved to be martyrs rather than remain in rest and quietude. Accordingly, they soon returned to Massachusetts. There they were joined by Mary Clarke, the "wife of a tailor in London, who announced that she had forsaken her husband and six children in order to convey a message from heaven to the people of New England." They immediately raised their voices to abuse everything especially revered in social life, or in the ordinances of the churches. They were again seized, flogged, and dismissed with yet more severe threats. Still they

Bk. III. returned with increasing numbers, and succeeded in making converts and exciting compassion. The magistrates of Massachusetts, exasperated at the repetition of their extravagances and the influence of their principles, introduced, in 1658, a law into the Assembly denouncing the punishment of death upon all Quakers returning from banishment. Although many opposed this sanguinary and illiberal proposition, it was nevertheless carried, and, in the two following years, four persons were put to death, among whom was Mary Dyer, once a conspicuous disciple of Mrs. Hutchinson.

Penal laws.

The fortitude with which these persecuted people met their fate, and the compassion which their sufferings occasioned, alarmed the magistrates; and penal rigours were relaxed, and continued to be relaxed, as the Quakers became more orderly, or their principles were better understood.

1688. When William and Mary were seated on the throne, more liberal views were also embraced in the colonies respecting religious toleration, which was finally extended to all Christians excepting Catholics, whose principles, it was maintained, so openly advocated the suppression of all intellectual independence, that, in self-defence, the Protestants, of nearly every party, felt themselves justified in withholding the privileges which themselves claimed.

Toleration under William and Mary.

1674. The intolerance shown to Catholics, partly the result of traditionary hatred, was most unjust in Maryland. That province had been settled by them, and they had ever exercised the greatest practical liberality. But when dissenters from their faith settled among them, for they were not excluded, and outnumbered them, they subjected the Catholics to persecution, forbade the celebration of the mass in public, 1704, and deprived them of the right of suffrage. These disabilities were at length removed; but,

Intolerance respecting Catholics.

in several States, Catholics, and Catholics alone, of the Christian sects, were ineligible to any high civil office.

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But the most remarkable exhibition of superstitious delusion and hateful severity which disgraced the early colonists, was in reference to witches. It was supposed that certain unhappy people, chiefly old women, had made a covenant with the devil for the tormenting of human souls—a notion, however, not peculiar to New England, but which was common to England and various parts of Europe. Some of the greatest men of the age were firm believers in witchcraft, sorcery, and magic; and severe penal enactments were made against those who were supposed to practise those arts, in every country in Christendom. Henry VIII. made witchcraft a capital offence; and many persons lost their lives for this imputed crime, even during the Commonwealth.

A. D.
1692.
Salem
witches.

The Puritans were not exempt from the superstition of their times, and they also punished witchcraft with death, since they regarded it as a voluntary compact between the devil and evil-minded persons. And the prevailing delusion was stimulated by Increase Mather, and his son Cotton Mather, clergymen of Boston, and greatly distinguished for learning and sanctity, although their piety bore a close resemblance to Catholic asceticism. The latter person even took a child into his house who was supposed to be bewitched, that he might have an opportunity of studying Satanic influences; and the girl made a dupe of him, and furnished him with materials for a book on "Witchcrafts and Possessions," which had great influence on the common mind.

Puritan
horror of
witch-
craft.

The delusion spread from Boston to Salem. Children were seen to perform pranks which could not have happened but for the agency of infernal spirits. The greatest pains were taken to discover those who had bewitched

Bk. III.
Ch. 2. them. Towns appointed committees for the purpose, and magistrates zealously lent their aid. Examinations took place of accused persons in the churches, where were assembled the chief people of the towns. On the most trivial and absurd accusations, respectable people were arrested, tried, found guilty, and executed. The governor of the colony, Phipps, took an active part, 1692, in the prosecutions. And he was sustained by the General Court. So powerful was the delusion, that it was hazardous to express doubts in reference to the accused. The disbelief in witches was itself almost tantamount to an alliance with evil spirits. The calm and wise dared not express their convictions. Those whom the afflicted accused, either in malice or recklessness, were looked upon as damned by the credulous crowd, and those who stimulated their folly; and it was in vain to seek escape, except by confession of the crime. The jails were full of prisoners; new accusations increased, every day; alarm and terror filled all minds. Neither age nor sex was spared. Evil spirits were supposed to hover over the land. Magistrates were even condemned, and a clergyman by the name of Burroughs was executed.

Cruel-
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witches

Reac-
tion. At last, persons of such high character and influence were accused, that the eyes of the community were opened. Clergymen and magistrates of the highest social position and moral worth, became implicated. The General Court was alarmed, as well as the more judicious of the people. A clergyman of Andover had the courage to remonstrate publicly against the prevailing delusion, and the special court which had been established for the trial of accused persons was abrogated. Finally, King William vetoed the witchcraft act, and, by order of the governor, all prisoners were released, 1693, but not until more than twenty innocent persons had been executed, and fifty-five

tortured until an acknowledgment of guilt had been wrung from them.

With the passing away of this delusion, which prevailed most extensively in Salem, a decline was also perceptible in the religious ardour of the colonists, and their views were modified respecting a theocratic government. The great peculiarities of Puritanism were no longer seen in their ancient force. Latitudinarianism became prevalent and fashionable. The half-way covenant was adopted. Colman in Boston, and Stoddard in Northampton, even admitted all persons to the communion and the privilege of church membership, who were not immoral in their lives. The ministers no longer pretended to advise and control the executive and legislative governments; and Cambridge itself, much to the mortification of Mather and the members of the old theocratic school, presently passed under the control of the latitudinarian party, which went by the name of Arminian, and which insinuated, if it did not openly profess, a leaning towards Socinianism.

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Ch. 2.

A. D.
1693.

Decline
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distinct-
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tures of
Puritan-
ism.



Oliver Cromwell

CHAPTER III.

ENGLISH COMMERCIAL RESTRICTIONS.

THUS far, we have considered chiefly the internal history of the colonists; their struggles, their contests, their opinions, and their delusions. It is well, now, to turn our eyes to the influence which English legislation had on their prosperity as merchants, manufacturers, and agriculturists. All the colonies recognized, to a greater or less degree, their dependence on the mother country. They were governed by English laws. They yielded homage to English governors. Their charters established a close connection between them and the English government. It was only when they were feeble and insignificant that they escaped the notice of kings and Parliaments, and enjoyed an unrestricted freedom. As they became flourishing they were subjected to the influence of English legislatures, and the more more powerful they became the more they felt the yoke.

Commercial restrictions were imposed as early as the colonies promised to enrich the proprietors. The first were imposed on Virginia, when tobacco became a considerable article of export—during the reign of Charles I. In 1650, the Parliament, after its triumph over the king, passed a law that foreign ships should not enter any of the ports in Barbadoes, Antigua, Bermudas, and Virginia, much to the detriment of the latter colony, which sold great quantities of tobacco to Dutch traders.

Cromwell, still more than Charles I., was induced to

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1640.

Influence of
English legisla-
tion on
the colo-
nies.

Legisla-
tion re-
specting
tobacco.

Bk. III. restrict colonial commerce, in order to confirm the mari-
Ch. 3. time power of his country; and especially when he per-
1651. ceived that Holland was engrossing so large a share of the
trade of the world.

Navigation act. The first navigation act was carried through Parliament
by his influence, 1651, by which the commerce between
England and her colonies, as well as the rest of the world,
was to be conducted by English ships alone. This act
was passed, however, not so much with a view of absorb-
ing the wealth of Virginia, as to cripple the commerce of
the Dutch; in consequence of which a naval war followed
between England and Holland, in which Blake, De Ruyter,
and Von Tromp gained such lasting laurels.

1660. The British merchants, however, were not satisfied with
Navigation act the desire of Cromwell to make England the emporium of
of trade, but also claimed an entire monopoly of colonial
Charles commerce. And, soon after Charles II. was restored to
II. the throne, a new navigation act was passed, 1660, by
Parliament, which gave to them all they desired. It was
decreed that no commodities should be imported into any
British settlement, or exported from thence, but in British
vessels, navigated by English sailors; and that no valu-
able and staple products, the growth of the colonies,
should be shipped thence to any other country than Eng-
land. Nor was it allowed to import into the colonies
any European commodities which were not laden in Eng-
land and transported in English vessels.

Depend- Nothing, it is evident, could be more exclusive than
ence of this act, by which the colonies were kept in a state of
the colo- complete mercantile dependence on the mother country,
nies on and by which England alone was benefited. But Parlia-
Eng- ment was not content with this, but prosecuted a domi-
land. neering policy, and assumed the prerogative of regulating
the trade of the several colonies with each other.

This act, in England, was regarded as a masterpiece of Bk. III.
commercial wisdom and political sagacity. In America Ch. 3.
it excited indignation and disgust. It was plainly an inva- A. D.
sion of the rights of the settler. It tended to make them 1668
slaves. It had in it nothing paternal, nothing protective; Its in-
but a cold, calculating, mean way of enriching the mother justice
country at the expense of the colonies. There might be and pe-
some excuse in the policy, so far as it was intended to be pulari-
conducted against foreign nations; for England had a ty.
right, like China, to make its own regulations of trade in
intercourse with foreigners; but the Americans were not
foreigners. They were not regarded as such, but as the
children of Great Britain, exposed to peculiar dangers, and
in peculiar need of indulgence and protection.

In none of the colonies did this tyrannical system exact Resent-
greater resentment than in Virginia, "where the larger ment of
commerce of the people, their pre-eminent loyalty, and Virginia.
and the recent liberal forbearance of Cromwell, made the bur-
den more severe and exasperating." No sooner was the
Navigation Act promulgated in Virginia, than the colo-
nies warmly remonstrated against it as a grievance, and
petitioned for relief. Charles paid no attention to the
state of angry feeling, but rather resolved to enforce the
most vigorous measures, in which he was seconded by the
Parliament. The provincial authorities then evaded the
conditions of the act, and winked at noncompliance; which
called out a royal mandate commanding the provincial
governor to enforce the law.

Although a clandestine intercourse was kept up with Clandestine in-
the Dutch on Hudson River, still the effect of the act ter-
was to depreciate the value of tobacco—the staple of the course
colony, since it was now confined to one market. The
colonists remonstrated, and feebly retaliated. Statutes
were enacted to restrain the culture of tobacco and intro-

Bk. III.
Ch. 3. duce new staples instead, but without success. The great effect of the Navigation Act was to weaken those sentiments of loyalty which the Virginians had ever peculiarly cherished, and prepare the way for future rebellion.

A. D.
1668.

Naviga-
tion Act
particu-
larly in-
jurious
to Virgi-
nia.

The Navigation Act was not so injurious in its effect on the northern colonies as on the southern during the seventeenth century, but ultimately it caused great disaffection from Massachusetts to South Carolina. The colonies, in defence, either imposed export duties on goods shipped in British vessels, or made exceptions in favour of colonial ships, which called out the complaints of British merchants and manufacturers to the Board of Trade, and led to incessant difficulties. It was the constant policy of England to prevent the growth or manufacture of any article in America which formed a staple in the mother country. Wool, for instance, in the seventeenth century, was the great article which was raised by British farmers for purposes of manufacture and foreign trade. Hence

1699. Parliament passed an act in 1699 prohibiting wool, or any manufacture made or mixed with it, which was produced in America, from being transported from even one colony to another, or even to be laden on any ship, vessel, cart, or horse, under any pretence. All manufactures were discouraged which could be furnished by British merchants, which of course reduced the colonies to great dependence, keeping them constantly poor, and in debt to the mother country; for the export of raw materials, such as timber, pitch, and tobacco, never could produce enough to furnish the colonies with any except the coarsest and meanest fabrics, and these only to a limited extent. None but the wealthy could afford to wear silks or fine woollens; and tea, coffee, and other luxuries, were sold at exorbitant prices which amounted to a prohibition, except among favoured individuals. The colonists were obliged to spin

Poverty
and op-
pression
of the
colo-
nists.

and weave their own wool and linen in their own houses, or go imperfectly clad. Even the production of iron, at one time, 1721, was prohibited in the colonies; and this prohibition would have been enforced, had it not been for the serious remonstrance of colonial agents. Not a furnace could be erected in America — not a flock of sheep could be raised — not a ship could be built — hardly a blacksmith's shop could be constructed, without calling forth the doleful complaint of some interested British manufacturer or mechanic to the Board of Trade. The mercantile jealousy which the mother country constantly evinced, was equally sordid and ungenerous.

The colonies, however, in the early period of their history, did not dispute the right of the British Parliament to impose restrictions on their commerce. They merely remonstrated, and, when their remonstrances were of no avail, retaliated in some feeble form, or contented themselves with the expression of displeasure. They looked upon themselves as a part of the British empire, and Parliament as the supreme authority. It was not until Great Britain proceeded to legislate on the government of the colonies, as well as on commerce and industry, that the spirit of independence was awakened, and the great rebellion took place.

Bk. III.
Ch. 3.

A. D.
1721.

Remon-
strances
of the co-
lonists.