

The colony now prospered greatly, and sent home such encouraging letters that more and more people ventured across the ocean. Winthrop sent for his wife, and a minister wrote to his friends that “a sup of New England air is better than a whole draught of Old England’s Ale.”

During the next ten years, more than twenty thousand English-speaking persons came over to New England. There, in time, they formed fifty parishes, or villages, connected by roads and bridges. Some of these settlements were planted far inland, although the Puritans at first declared they would never need more land than what was enclosed in a circle drawn ten miles around Boston.

A governor was elected to rule over the colony, and each town ruled itself. But the people also sent representatives to the General Court, or Assembly, where public matters were discussed and laws were made for the good of the whole colony.

The government being in the hands of the people, and the Puritans wishing their children to be well educated, schools were soon provided in every village, and in 1636 the General Court started the first college. It was located in a spot which was called Cambridge, in honor of the great university town in England. Two years later, a minister named Harvard left his library of about two hundred and fifty books and some money to the new college, which since then has borne his name.



XXXIII. STORIES OF TWO MINISTERS.

AT first, Harvard College had only a very few students, who were to be educated for the ministry. All the colonists contributed to the support of the institution, for those who were too poor to give twelve pence in money were told to bring a measure of corn or some firewood. Four years after the college was founded, the first English printing press was set up there, and began to print books of psalms for the Puritan churches.

While the new college was training missionaries for the Indians, the latter had found a good friend in John Eliot, who came over to America in 1631. While preaching in Boston and Roxbury, Eliot learned the Massachusetts Indian language, and began to translate the Bible into that tongue. It took him nearly thirty years of patient work to do this, in the midst of all his preaching and teaching. But his Bible was the first printed in

America, and many of his “praying Indians,” as the converts were called, learned to read in it.

Eliot was a sweet, simple, and very lovable man. He was so generous that once, in paying him his salary, the parish treasurer tied it up in the good man’s handkerchief with several knots, so that he should not be able to give it all away before reaching home. But Eliot, unable to undo these hard knots when he met a poor woman, gave her handkerchief and all, saying: “Here, my dear, take it; I believe the Lord designs it all for you.”

After years of faithful work among the natives, Eliot, the “Apostle of the Indians,” died, at the age of eighty-six. He tried harder than any other Puritan to convert the Indians, who lost their best friend when he passed away. The Bible he worked so diligently to translate still exists, but as there are no Massachusetts Indians left, it is now of no use, except to remind us of Eliot’s great patience and perseverance.

As the soil was poor, hands few, and the harvests too scanty to supply food for all, the colonists soon began to wonder how they could earn money. Before long, they discovered that by sending fish to England, they could get all the food they wanted. For that reason they fished diligently, and soon used a huge codfish as an emblem for the Massachusetts Bay colony. Next, the colonists built a large ship called the *Blessing of the Bay*, in which they sent lumber to the West Indies. In exchange for timber, they got sugar and molasses, from which they made rum to ship to England. Thus commerce was begun, and, increasing year by year, finally made the Massachusetts Puritans both rich and independent.

The Puritans, as you have seen, left England because they were not allowed to worship there as they pleased. But although they did not like it when the English tried to make them obey the Anglican Church, they now wanted to force all who came among them to think just as they did.

One young man, Roger Williams, came to New England in 1631, and preached for a while at Salem. But as he openly said that the Puritans had no right to punish people for thinking differently about religious matters, or for such trifles as smoking on the street or laughing too loud, he soon displeased some of the colonists.

They sent him away for a while, thinking he would change his mind; but when Williams came back to Salem, he insisted harder than ever that every man had a right to

think just as he pleased, to worship God as his conscience bade him, and to vote whether he went to church or not. He also declared that the land around there belonged to the Indians and not the king of England. These opinions seemed so wicked to the good Puritans that they called him up before their Council to reprove him.

Finding that the Puritans would not let him live in peace in any part of the colony, Williams secretly escaped from Massachusetts, and went to live among the Indians. As



Williams welcomed by the Indians.

he knew their language, and he made friends with them, he spent a very peaceful winter in their camp.

When spring came, Williams wanted to settle at See'konk; but as the Plymouth people claimed that part of the land, he went farther still, to a place which he called Prov'i-dence. Settling there, in 1636, on land he bought from the Indians, Williams was

soon joined by others who shared his opinions, and thus a colony was formed in what is now Rhode Island, where all except Jews were allowed to vote. This was considered very generous in those days, although it now seems unfair to exclude anyone on account of religion.

Because Williams was so much broader-minded than many other people of his time, he has often been called the "Apostle of Toleration"—a word which means letting others alone, or allowing others to do as they please. People of every belief came to settle in Williams' neighborhood before long, and there was soon such a variety of them that it was said if a man had lost his religion he would be sure to find it again in Rhode Island.

