

book, "Massachusetts: Its Historians and Its History," Dr. Poole's coigne of vantage being the columns of the *Dial* of this city.

From our modern point of view the pioneers of Massachusetts were guilty of gross inconsistency. Themselves refugees from persecution, their avowed object being to enjoy the freedom of conscience denied them in England, they had much to say in their public utterances in favour of what they termed "liberties of the Gospel in purity and peace." But it must be remembered that the age in which they lived was one of persecution, and that what they really sought were not "liberties," as we of to-day understand them, but the privilege of working out their distinctive idea of the Gospel, unembarrassed by any variations. Had they merely sought toleration for their own theory and practice of religion they would have remained in Holland, where the modern idea of liberty was in vogue.

They came here to enjoy Puritanism and establish it in all singleness. The Society of Friends did not exist when they laid the foundations of their theocracy. George Fox had not begun to preach his sublime doctrine of non-resistance and genuine democracy in distinction from all forms and phases of aristocracy until after Plymouth Rock had become the corner-stone of a new nation. Protestants as well as Catholics were full in the faith that heresy was a crime punishable by human law. Hardly had the Friends become a distinct religious body before they were made the especial victims of persecution throughout England, and the Puritans adopted stringent laws against them before any member of the society had set foot on American soil. In England no less than 4,000 were cast into dungeons, many of whom died of the hardships of their confinement. It is evident that the Puritans had no just conception of the real character of the Quakers, looking upon them as the anarchists of their day.

When a few representatives of this mild and inoffensive sect landed at Boston they were easily recognized by their dress and speech, and at once banished under penalty of death if they returned. A few were actually murdered by process of law, and others whipped or subjected to still worse torture. The only excuse for these persecutions is the spirit of the times. It was a cruel and stupid age, just emerging from the night of mediæval darkness and inhumanity. This is really the only excuse that can be made for the persecutors. It is true that a charge of indecent exposure of their persons was preferred in a few cases, but if true that simply proved that the intensity of religious excitement produced in a few instances insanity. In those days no one seemed to know insanity when he saw it, but attributed its antics to the devil, or to what is now familiarly called "pure cussedness." Hallowell, a historian with a judicial turn of mind, has shown that there were only a few such cases, and those few clearly traceable to insanity. It would take no specific research, however, to convince any candid person that such was the case, for antics of any kind, especially violations of modesty, would be abhorrent to every tenet and precedent of the Friends', a society noted from the days of George Fox to Whittier for abstinence from anything bordering upon immodesty.

It is unphilosophical on Mr. Adams' part to single out the Puritans for special censure, whether in persecuting Quakers or burning witches, because what was done on a very small scale in New England was then being done on a large scale in old England, and was the fault of the times. It is equally out of place to defend the Puritans by seeking justification for their acts. Fortunately for civilization, the spirit of persecution has been very nearly exorcised. It now lingers, if at all, in a faint and feeble sort only. The founders of Massachusetts built better than they knew or could have conceived as possible. Narrowness and bigotry were gradually