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ROGER WILLIAMS,

Founder of PROVIDENCE CITY, and the State of RHODE ISLAND.

This extraordinary man, whose name and character have been rescued from partial oblivion and undeserved reproach by the meritorious labours of Dr. Knowles, of the Newton Institution, and other recent authors, was born in the principality of Wales, about the year 1599. The exact place of his birth, and the character of his parents, are not known. It appears that he became pious in early life, probably about the age of twelve; for he observes in one of his books, written in 1673—"From my childhood, now above three score years, the Father of light and mercies touched my soul with a love to himself, to his only begotten, the true Lord Jesus." About that period he attracted the attention, and obtained the patronage of the celebrated Lord Chief Justice Coke, who, seeing him at some place of public worship, was struck with the attentive behaviour of one so young, and by his taking notes of the sermon. When the service was over, he sent for young Williams, and desired to see his notes. Finding them very judiciously taken,

he engaged to provide for his education, and sent him to one of the English universities. Having finished his studies, he entered into the ministerial office, and was some years a clergyman in the Established Church of England. He had the charge of a parish, though in what part of the country is not known; and it is stated that his preaching was highly esteemed, and his private character revered.

He afterwards joined the Puritans, and became a zealous non-conformist; but the intolerable oppression of Bishop Laud, and the High-church party, forced him from his native country, when he fled to New England, where he arrived in February, 1630—1, destined to become one of the founders of a great nation, and the first assertor of the genuine principles of religious liberty. He would naturally seek an opportunity of exercising himself in the ministry of the Gospel; and he was soon called by the church at Salem, to be assistant to their pastor, Mr. Samuel Skelton. His settlement was, however, opposed