

constraint of clerical supervision, and Ethan Allen advertised his farm and stock for sale, expressing his determination at any cost to get out of "this old holy State of Connecticut."

It was but a little while after the close of the war that established American independence that the revolution came which broke up the State Church and gave to every man the liberty of "signing off," as it was called, to any denomination that pleased him. Hence arose through New England churches of all names. The nucleus of the Episcopal Church in any place was generally some two or three old families of ancestral traditions in its favor, who gladly welcomed to their fold any who, for various causes, were discontented with the standing order of things. Then, too, there came to them gentle spirits, cut and bleeding by the sharp crystals of doctrinal statement, and courting the balm of devotional liturgy and the cool shadowy indefiniteness of more æsthetic forms of worship. Also, any one that for any cause had a controversy with the dominant church took comfort in the power of "signing off" to another. In those days, to belong to no church was not respectable, but to sign off to the Episcopal Church was often a compromise that both gratified self-will and saved one's dignity; and, having signed off, the new convert was obliged, for consistency's sake, to