

protection.' Mr. Rogers justly points out that if the provisions of the Act of Settlement were repealed the Sovereign might be a professed Roman Catholic or a professed Unitarian, or even a member of the Jewish persuasion.

CHRIST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, IN COLONIAL DAYS.

A SKETCH OF CHURCH AND PARISH HISTORY FOR A HUNDRED YEARS.

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INTRODUCTION.

The story of Christ Church, the founding of which was two centuries ago this very Easter-tide, is so closely connected with the history of the Church in the American colonies for the entire period of its parochial existence, that the annals of the parish touch almost every salient point of our general ecclesiastical history. As we trace the development of this ancient parish, we are brought in close relations to the men,—clergymen and laymen,—who laid broad and deep in this western world the foundations of the American Church. Gratefully may we record the story of the past. It is a chapter in the chronicle of that momentous struggle which, little by little, wrested a continent from the domination of the Latin peoples and the Pope of Rome, and made our history, our laws, our speech, our life, our very ideas of liberty, *English* rather than *Spanish* or *French*; and *Reformed*, though *Catholic*, instead of displaying in belief and practice the imperfect Christianity of the *Roman Obedience*.

In the annals of this prolonged struggle for the possession and supremacy of North America the founders and supporters of Christ Church, Philadelphia, took no unimportant part. Doubtless they "built better than they knew; but, all the same, as they with pains and self-sacrifice worked out the problem of the introduction, and the uplifting to its proper place, of the Church of their baptism and belief in this debatable land which rival races and rival Churches were seeking to possess and rule, their every step becomes important as they advanced with steady progress and not a retrograde movement towards the founding of the city of our God in this land of their adoption and love. To-day, as we enjoy the fruits of their labors and reap the hundred-fold harvests where they have sowed, we may well bless God for the good examples and the noble deeds of these His faithful servants, who two hundred years ago did for us and for all succeeding time so much of good and faithful work, the full estimate of which eternity alone can reveal.

I.

THE CHURCH IN THE COLONIES AT THE CLOSE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

The close of the seventeenth century—the second hundred years of the struggle for the possession of the North American Continent of the Latin peoples and faith, with the English Church and nation—found the Atlantic coast sparsely peopled with the sturdy sons of Anglo Saxon and British sires, and the Church of the mother-land planted in the midst of sectaries of every kind at a number of feeble settlements, from Boston at the north to Charleston, S.C., at the south. On the Pacific coast services had been held and sacraments celebrated during the early summer of A. D. 1579 by Francis Fletcher, priest of the motly crew of Drake's "Golden Hind." But the discovery of *Nova Albion*, with its auriferous soil, and the sojourn of Drake's buccaners for several weeks on the California coast, had not been followed by any attempt at settlement, and the Spaniards speedily obliterated all traces of the presence on the Pacific

shores of these first English sojourners in the new world. On the Atlantic seaboard at Roanoke, in North Carolina, the Indian chieftain, Manteo, who had visited England and had thus been brought in contact with English Christianity and civilization, had been baptized by an English priest, the first fruits of English mission work on American soil; and a little later in this eventful year of grace, 1587, "the first Christian borne in Virginia," the infant Virginia Dare, was also publicly received by baptism into the congregation of Christ's flock. But in the bitter strife with Spain, ending in the Armada's destruction, this little colony of upwards of one hundred men, women and children, disappeared from the sight and knowledge of the world at large, and its fate is still a mystery. In 1607, when the work which Sir Walter Raleigh, "the father of American civilization," had essayed to do and failed, was taken up by the great courtiers, Churchmen and commoners of England, the priest was with his people at the settlements of Jamestown, in Virginia, and at Fort St. George, on the Sagadahoc in Maine. At the founding of church and commonwealth in Virginia, the saintly Robert Hunt ministered the Word and Sacraments in a rude "pen of poles with a sail for a roof, and for a pulpit a bar lashed between two convenient trees" of the primeval forest; and, later, in a somewhat more substantial structure which the faithful priest described as a "homely thing, like a barn set on cratchets, covered with rafters, sods and brush." In the northern colony on the bleak New England shores there arose the first church built by English colonists on American soil. Within its walls the Rev. Richard Seymour officiated to settlers and savages alike during the "hard winter" of 1607-8. A picture of this timber church, with its crossed-topped spire, is still extant. This sketch was found not long since among the archives of the Spanish crown at Simancas as originally transmitted by the ambassador at the English Court to his royal master, Philip of Spain. This picture of the little church was included in a drawing of the Fort St. George itself; and so carefully was it depicted that one can readily reconstruct in mind the style and proportions of this first sanctuary of the English Christianity on the American soil. All this was thirteen years before the coming of the "Pilgrim Fathers" to their New England home, and it is at Sagadahoc, in Maine, rather than on the shores of Massachusetts Bay, that we find the beginnings of the New England Christianity.

Maine was thus first colonized by Churchmen, and Richard Seymour, the faithful priest at Sagadahoc in 1607-8, was followed by the Rev. Richard Gibson at Falmouth, and, later, by the Rev. Robert Jordan at Saco, who, despite persecutions, fines and imprisonment, maintained the services and administered the Sacraments of the Church till the iron heel of Puritan intolerance crushed out, for a time, all traces of prelacy or prayer-book in the province of Maine. The first settlers of New Hampshire were loyal Churchmen, and the priest of England's Church, and the Prayer Book services, were first on the ground at Strawberry Bank, where Portsmouth and the Province of New Hampshire had their beginnings. The first ordained ministers of English lineage in all New England were priests of the Established Church of the mother land. Even in Plymouth, in Boston, in Rhode Island, the English priest antedated the coming of a minister of any other religious body or form of belief. There were Churchmen among the first settlers at Plymouth, and the Puritan annalist details with grim humor the futile efforts of these sons of the Mother Church to observe their first Christmastide in the new world somewhat after the manner of the Noel festivities at home. The kindly, though eccentric William Blaxton, first settler of Boston, had "misliked," what he

deemed to be, the tyranny of the Lord Bishops in England. He soon found the tyranny of the Puritan "lords-brethren," who had intruded into his isolated domain and by their presence and petty annoyances had driven him from his home, too great a burden to be borne, and thus it was that the gentle priest, Boston's earliest occupant and founder, went forth into the wilderness where his "canonical coat" would excite no gibes and his moderate Churchmanship occasion no reproof. The roystering Thomas Morton, who loved the outdoor sports of "merry England" and who read the Common Prayer to the settlers and the savages at his home at "Maremount," was dispossessed of his broad acres, held under a royal patent, and his house was burned to the ground before his eyes. Robbed of his property, exiled from his own domain, and treated as a felon, chiefly, as he claims, in consequence of his love for the Common Prayer and his dislike of the gloomy fanaticism of the Plymouth people who were his persecutors to the last. Morton's efforts to secure redress gained for him only prolonged and unjustifiable imprisonment from which death, directly due to the relentless cruelty of his vindictive Puritan foes, alone released him. The Brownes—the one a lawyer and the other a merchant, men of note among the earliest settlers of Salem, Massachusetts Bay,—were banished from the colony for attempting in their own houses the daily use of the Church's Offices and Prayers, and the presumption of these loyal Churchmen in gathering apart from the magistrates and separatist ministers and their followers a little company of like-minded Church folk where "sundry times the Book of Common Prayer was read unto such as resorted thither," was made the occasion of their banishment from the colony and the forfeiture of their goods. These true sons of their "dear mother, the Church of England," as Governor Winthrop had styled the Church of their baptism before he and his followers had been led astray by the contaminating influence of the Plymouth separatists, were thus made to feel that "New England was indeed no place for such as they;" and, for the crime of loyalty to their Church, they were both exiled from their new home and robbed of their share in the pecuniary venture they had been induced to make for the founding of the Massachusetts Bay colony. Surely with these facts, recorded on the page of history, it must have been in excuseless ignorance, if not in bitter irony, that Felicia Hemans wrote of the Puritan settlers of Plymouth, if not of those of the Massachusetts Bay:

"They have left unstained what there they found
Freedom to worship God."

There was no idea whatever of toleration in the minds of the Plymouth settlers or of those of the Massachusetts Bay. In the lawless treatment of Morton by the one, and in the persistent and unsparing persecution of all who differed from them by the authorities of the other colony, there was no "freedom" whatever "to worship God." The magistrates of Massachusetts, urged on by the ministers who dreamed of a theocracy of which they were to be the acknowledged rulers, banished Baptists, fined, imprisoned and exiled Churchmen, and scourged and hung Quakers at their despotic pleasure. It was alone the "King's Missive," the bidding of the profligate King Charles II., that closed the "Bloody Assizes" of Boston and let the Quakers go free.

What has been said as to the presence of Churchmen from the first, in the several New England provinces, is equally true of Connecticut, where there were Church folk clamorous for Church privileges and Sacraments at an early day. It is evident that but for the overthrow of Church and Crown in the Great Rebellion at home, when primate and monarch