

The Puritan settlers increased in numbers rapidly, and continual accessions were made to them. But the rulers of Nova Scotia began to look upon them with a jealous eye. The little junta at Halifax, the irresponsible council that was not responsible to the House of Assembly as the executive government is at the present day, saw in these Puritan settlements a source of danger to them and their power. In the Puritan settlements the old-fashioned custom of town meetings, to which they and their forefathers had been accustomed since the days of the Mayflower, was in full operation. They were told that these town-meetings met not with favor at Halifax among the governing classes, but to the warning they gave no heed. Town-meetings they would hold, and as British subjects they would discuss the affairs of the colony as they had been accustomed in the provinces from which they came. The authorities determined that these town meetings must be put down at all hazards, and the following order is on record in the archives of Nova Scotia: "April 14, 1770, Resolved, by the Governor and Council, that the proceedings of the people in calling meetings for discussing questions relating to law and government, and such purposes, are contrary to law, and if persisted in, it is ordered that the parties be prosecuted by the Attorney General." In spite of the abolition of the town-meetings, new arrivals continued to come from the older provinces, and it is stated that in the year 1772 the population had increased to 19,120, and when the colonies revolted a few years later, it was even still more.

New England and Old England had stood shoulder to shoulder against France; and at length, after a century and a half of war, France resigned, with a few trivial exceptions, all claim upon her North American possessions, including Canada, Acadia, and Newfoundland. There was no longer a common enemy to confront, and soon they began to settle affairs the one with the other. There were jarrings and bickerings for a few years, and then tea was destroyed, blood was shed, and those who had fought side by side against the armies of France, met each other in deadly combat. It is no part of the aim of the writer to justify one side or the other; but he cannot fail to see that had the spirit of the statesmen of the Commonwealth actuated the statesmen of England in the closing quarter of the 18th century, Old England and New England, Old England and all her American colonies, would have been one to-day, and the flag of Old England would have waved as proudly over Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, as it does over Quebec, Halifax, and St. John. Had British power and British liberty gone hand in hand as now, no "Stars and Stripes" would ever have floated in the breeze, and the ships on every sea that carry the American banners would have waving over them the Union Jack of the fatherland. Had Puritanism been as dominant in England in the latter part of the 18th century as it was in the middle of the 17th, England would have been the possessor of all her American colonies still.

But whoever was to blame, there was soon the clashing of steel, the flashing of musketry, and the roar of cannon, might deciding upon the question of right. Brother became arrayed against brother, father against son, friend against friend, and for several years did the contest go forward. The sound of the cannon reached the settlers in their quiet homes in Acadia, and large numbers sympathised with the revolution among all classes of the inhabitants, whether born in the old world or on this side of the water. Martial law was proclaimed, and all intercourse prohibited with the revolted colonies; but this could not stop the exodus. Even ministers of the gospel