

Early Education in New England, as Valued by Baptists.

THE settlers on Massachusetts Bay included many Cambridge graduates. They were picked men, with good advice and good supplies. In 1636, when their earliest difficulties were over, they not only founded grammar schools, but voted money to establish "a schoale or colledge."

The Separatists who had begun the Old Colony in 1620, and the Baptists who started at Rhode Island in 1638, were not highly educated. Yet two Baptist settlers, John Miles and Benjamin Harris, with two settlers who became Baptist, Henry Dunster and Peter Folger, did value education and make contributions to it. These were in school, college, publishing; and they contemplated natives as well as settlers.

The settlers on Massachusetts Bay had definite ideals of education. Fifty years earlier, Cambridge had been a Puritan paradise. Perkins and Whitgift in their different ways were hyper-Calvinist champions; Mildmay had established Emmanuel College as a forcing-house. But into Paradise had entered the Arminian Laud. The Puritans, therefore, looked to Holland, where the Synod of Dort had entrenched Calvinism. They projected an English College at Rotterdam, under William Ames; much as the Catholics had founded an English College at Douai. But Laud persuaded the Dutch authorities to insist on all English residents who did not join the Dutch Reformed Churches conforming to Anglicanism as he was moulding it. Therefore, in 1633, the Puritans decided to get out of his reach, and establish their College in New England. It began modestly three years later, and for fourteen years boys were sent to the new Cambridge, not only from Maryland, Virginia and Bermuda, but from England.

A large party arrived at Boston in 1638, with a complete printing outfit and a Cambridge printer. Next year he issued *The whole Book of Psalmes Translated into English Metre*, perhaps the most uncouth version ever published. The owner of the press, a widow, married Henry Dunster, who arrived in 1640; he managed all the business for many years. He was also appointed head of the new College; his first two pupils were appointed tutors, and by 1650 the General Court gave a charter to Harvard College, under which the great University is still governed. A lodge was built for the president, who moved the press into its outbuildings. On the death of the first printer, he engaged Samuel Green, who in his forty-three years did well for Dunster's step-children, the Glovers. Dunster was asked to

refine the Psalm-Book, and by 1651 the revised edition was printed in a form that made it acceptable for over a century in England as in New England, so that it ran to at least twenty-seven editions. In the revision he was helped by an attendant on one of his pupils, a fact suggestive of the good quality of the colonists. The pupil was son of Sir Henry Mildmay, who had been one of the king's judges; that he should send his son to be trained at Harvard rather than in the college his family had founded at Cambridge, Emmanuel, shows the reputation of Dunster. The fact is that Cambridge showed signs of narrowing into the mere training of ministers; whereas Harvard was chartered for "the advancement of all good literature, artes and Sciences . . . and all other necessary provisions that may conduce to the education of the English and Indian youth of this Country in knowledge: and godliness." Ministers are not mentioned; and from the beginning the college turned out more men for ordinary life.

Dunster appreciated literature; his own 1611 copy of Spenser is now at Yale. He asked for money to get books on law, physicke, philosophy and mathematics; he did get a Euclid, and a more modern geometry, and was practical enough to send a student surveying land in the back blocks. The senior fellow, another minister, aimed at chairs of history, languages, law, mathematics and medicine, expressly to prepare men for keeping school, becoming physicians, acting as magistrates. These ambitions were not fulfilled then; but a good start was made with George Starkey from Bermuda, who graduated in 1646, and after four years went to England, where he practised medicine with success till he died in 1665 from dissecting a plague patient.

Dunster valued the college system, as encouraging mutual criticism and help. So while the Old College was built of lumber for the whites, a brick college rose in the Yard for the natives.

The settlers on the Bay, however, were staunch Pedo-baptists. So when Dunster was scandalised at their persecution of Baptists, studied the points at issue, and avowed himself Baptist, he found it wise to resign in 1654. This checked the progress of education, for the printing-press was transferred to the Indian college, where a student earned his living by actually pressing the lever. Apparently he was the last from his race.

Dunster retired to the Old Colony, where he died within five years, before there was time to quicken a second centre of education. It is not clear if he ever got in touch with Jonathan Brewster, son of the Pilgrim Elder, who tried chemical experiments in a private laboratory. Certainly there is no sign that

he infused any love of learning into either Pilgrims or Baptists.

Meanwhile, the military successes of the Puritans in England had liberated the printing-presses and the Universities. The need of Harvard as a Puritan university was no longer great, and English boys went again to Cambridge. After the Restoration, when New England might have attracted again, Puritan boys were sent chiefly to Holland or Scotland. Massachusetts had shown itself as intolerant as Laud had been. Harvard shrank from a live university with some sixty English from all quarters, into a local College with no more than twenty New Englanders. Among these, no Baptists were welcome.

It was 1670 before the Old Colony followed the example set on the Bay. Then it was voted that the profits from fishing at Cape Cod should be appropriated to establishing free schools for training in literature; and an elementary school was opened at New Plymouth. This was promptly bettered at Swansea, where Baptists had grudgingly been allowed to settle. That town in 1673 established a school "for the teaching of grammar, rhetoric, and arithmetic, and the tongues of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; also to read English and to write." The Baptist minister, John Miles from Swansea in Glamorgan, a graduate of Brasenose, Oxford, was the first schoolmaster.

Three years later died John Clarke, leader in Rhode Island, doctor, Baptist, an excellent Hebrew scholar. His will left an estate, valued at £530, "for the relief of the poor, or bringing up children into learning." From the very first, this was interpreted most narrowly, and the income was largely appropriated to maintain the Baptist minister.

As early as 1642, Thomas Mayhew settled at the east of Martha's Vineyard in the Old Colony; his son preached to the natives and won many. Peter Folger was employed to teach their children reading and writing, also the principles of religion by catechising; one of his pupils, Japeth, was himself teaching by 1675. By that time Peter had become well-to-do, having practised milling, weaving, blacksmithing and surveying; so that he was appointed keeper of the Nantucket records and clerk of the court, living at Sherborn. His *Looking-glass for the Times, or the Former spirit of New England revived in this generation*, was very dangerous to be printed then, for he declared:

New-England, they are like the Jews,
 As like as like can be;
 They made large Promises to God
 At home and at the Sea:
 They did proclaim free Liberty,
 They cut the Calf in twain,
 They past between the Parts thereof,
 O, this was all in vain.

Exactly what a Baptist felt about the Bay folk; and dared to write it in the Old Colony. If it was printed in 1677 it was effectually suppressed. But his daughter's son was Benjamin Franklin, and it was issued next century.

In the Indian College, the first American edition of *Pilgrim's Progress* was printed during 1681; it does not seem that Bunyan ever heard of this, though he knew of Continental versions. The General Council did not forbid this, though it had stopped preparation for the *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis.

Persecution by James II. sent Benjamin Harris out of England. He was an experienced author, editor and publisher; so he opened a Coffee-House in Boston and set up a press in 1686, where he began with Tulley's *Almanack*, and soon was publishing for fifty authors. He found out how the Court had oppressed Baptists, Emblen's church still living in fear of Damocles' sword; so his coffee-house became an opposition centre, as was his English tradition. When the Revolution came about at home, he transplanted another tradition, and issued in 1690 *Public occurrences, both foreign and domestic*, Vol. I., number 1. The Governor in alarm forbade a second number, But the tyranny of the Court was at an end: the Company was adjudged to have exceeded its powers; the Old Colony and Massachusetts were combined into a Dominion of New England, and a royal governor was sent out. Harris had been a focus for opposition to the Mathers, and now was appointed Printer to his Excellency the Governor and Council. Thus the codes of laws in 1692, 1694, came from a Baptist press. He published also for Robert Calef, another Baptist, a witty attack on Cotton Mather, which led to arranging a meeting at his Coffee-House; as Mather stayed away, it was a sign that the old bigotry was fighting a losing battle.

Harris then struck a gold-mine. There was a dearth of school-books, which were so well thumbed that nothing survives before 1680, except a solitary Primer of 1669. Now Benjamin Keach had won his original fame in 1664 by writing one from a Baptist standpoint, and Harris had printed several editions in England. His latest in 1679 he had named, with reference to the Popish Plot, *The Protestant Tutor*. As there had been four years later *The New England Primer or Milk for Babies*, Harris advertised in 1691 the *Second Impression of the New England Primer enlarged*. It quickly sold 20,000 copies a year; and with many variations kept its place for 150 years, being adopted in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Ohio. While Harris thus rendered this great service to education, the expiration of the Licensing Act in England offered again a field in the land he understood better, and he returned in 1695 for another vivid

career. Boston did indeed print more books every year than Oxford and Cambridge together; but his ground was London.

Pioneer life was hard and dangerous; even to-day we do not find many schools on the frontiers of Australia. It was only by State legislation that the Bay started its college, and the Old Colony started its schools. Rhode Island never had any similar legislation, and never had any public schools till the Revolution. It was markedly backward in education. The General Baptists seldom did betray any interest in this, a coincidence that deserves study and explanation. The defect was so obvious that when the Calvinistic Baptists of Philadelphia decided to promote education, they secured a charter in Rhode Island, and in 1764 launched a college there under Baptist auspices.

Their fathers had been stimulated by a London Baptist, Thomas Hollis. He had often sent them books, but his generosity had been still more marked at Harvard. Here in the early Hanoverian days he had magnanimously overlooked their treatment of Dunster, and had endowed a chair of Divinity with £80 yearly, also another of Mathematics and Philosophy with another £80; besides books, mathematical instruments, Hebrew and Greek types. Recognising too, how backward were his fellow-believers, he founded ten scholarships of £10, primarily for Baptist students. Unhappily the atmosphere of the College was already chilling, and the only Baptist minister known to have profited thus set his face against the evangelism of Whitefield, so that his church was given up as hopeless, and a second was founded at Boston. The incident did not dispel the Baptist suspicion of humane learning; and it was only the work of James Manning from 1764 onwards which at length dispelled their New England lethargy.

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