



LANE MEMORIAL LIBRARY
2 ACADEMY AVENUE HAMPTON, NH 03842
(603) 926-3368 library@hampton.lib.nh.us

Page updated: April 27, 2010

[Return to Rev. Stephen Bachiler Table of Contents](#)

Stephen Bachiler

An Unforgiven Puritan

By Victor C. Sanborn

Concord, NH

New Hampshire Historical Society -- 1917

The story which I have to tell concerns the biography of one who lived through the years of the most wonderful century of English history, that period from 1560 to 1660. Those years marked the youth and splendor of British achievement in the realm of spiritual awakening, of literary and intellectual development, and of commercial activity, colonization, and world building.

In the hundred years I have mentioned Puritanism made its first successful stand against the English church, which still clung to Romish superstition. They saw, those golden years, the imperishable dramas of Shakespeare unfolded to the world, the lofty verse of Milton, the graceful muse of Jonson, and the brilliant philosophy of Bacon. For them the poetical soul, the chivalrous life and death of Sir Philip Sidney, were current fact, not history and tradition.

In that short century lived and died the great freebooters of the virgin seas, Raleigh and Drake, Frobisher and Hawkins. Less afraid of new worlds than of old creeds, the Pilgrims and the Puritans in that century left their homes in the "haunt of ancient peace," and sought fresh soil wherein to plant the colony which was to grow into our present vast spreading republic. The feeble, pedantic, and pleasure loving Stuarts saw in that century the sceptre snatched from their hands, when Hampden, Cromwell, and Harry Vane turned England from a kingdom into a commonwealth.

In the same period Holland became a Protestant republic in spite of the bloody persecutions of Philip. France turned Huguenot after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the grasp of Spain began to weaken in the old world and the new.

But, while time has thrown on the stage a thousand full length and heroic figures, some there were of lesser note who yet played a part in the life of the age, but whose history has been obscured by time, or darkened by contemporary dislike and slander. From the mass of these smaller men I have selected as a type one who lived the century through not unworthily, as I hope to show.

Two or three years after Elizabeth came to the throne there was born somewhere in southern England one Stephen Bachiler. Just what was his birthplace I do not know, nor what his ancestry. The name was a common one, and whether his parents were of Hampshire or Berkshire does not specially matter. Perhaps, indeed, they came from Protestant France or the Netherlands. To Southampton about 1568 came a small colony of Walloons, driven from their shops and studies by the iron hand of Philip. Among them were a father and son named Bachelier from Tournai in France.¹ The teacher of this little band of Protestants was Adrien de Saravia, that stout champion of Calvin. Adrien was born in Artois, his father a Spaniard, his mother a Fleming, and he was a minister in Antwerp until driven to the Channel Islands in 1560. From there he came to Southampton for a few peaceful years, returned to Leyden in 1582 as professor of divinity, and was again driven back to

Protestant England, where he ended his days. I like to imagine that Stephen Bachiler was a charge of this brave Adrien, and drank in from him that opposition to tyranny and abuse which marked and marred his life.

But, whatever his origin, we first find Bachiler at Oxford in 1581,² a student at St. John's College, then newly founded by the good citizen and London merchant, Sir Thomas White. The college of that time was vastly different from the St. John's of today, with its peaceful gardens, smooth lawns and ancient cedars. The good Sir Thomas, since its foundation, had lost much of his money, and his college was very poor. Not for some years did it receive new foundations and added wealth. But, poor or rich, it was a part of that seat of learning, the great University of Oxford, at that time a very hive of Puritanism. The Regius Professor of Divinity was Lawrence Humphrey, an ardent Lutheran, who was disciplined by Archbishop Grindal for refusing to wear the churchly vestments. John Harmer, the Earl of Leicester's favorite and one of Queen Elizabeth's scholars, was Regius Professor of Greek. The unfortunate Thomas Kingsmill, another Puritan, was head professor in Hebrew. Edward Cradocke was Margaret Professor of Divinity, and the most renowned scholar of the day, an Oxford man, John Rainoldes, was the head and front of the Puritan arm of the church, and the spokesman of the Puritan party. Rainoldes is called by quaint Anthony Wood "a living library and a third university." He declined a bishopric, preferring to remain the President of Corpus Christi College, and from his Oxford study sent forth a mass of treatises in favor of the advanced doctrines. It was he who mainly represented Puritanism at the Hampton Court conference of 1604, and it was at his suggestion and by his aid that the well-meaning but pedantic King James undertook that translation of the Bible which is today mainly used.

¹ See Records of Walloon Church in Southampton, pub. by Huguenot Soc.

² Matriculations at Oxford, pub. by Oxford Hist. Soc.

Indeed, in England generally at this time, 1581-7, the leanings of the wisest were toward Puritanism. Elizabeth was sometimes Puritan and sometimes Prelatic; but her best advisers were of the new religion. Cecil, the great Lord Burghley, who for half a century of troubled life was Prime Minister to the lively and changeable Queen, held firmly to the same persuasion, and so did Walsingham and the unfortunate Davison. Thus we may safely assume that Bachiler's university training was mainly Puritan, and the atmosphere of St. John's was not in the least Prelatical until the time of its later Fellow and President, the ill-fated Laud.

Among the scholars at St. John's during Bachiler's sojourn there was Henry Cromwell, an uncle of the Protector, who was father-in-law of Sir Oliver St. John, Cromwell's Lord Chief Justice, and of whose sisters one was the mother of the patriot, John Hampden, and another was the mother of Edward Whalley, the regicide, later a fugitive in New England.

At Oxford Bachiler continued until February, 1586, when he proceeded B.A.¹ Perhaps he then became a chaplain to Lord Delaware, who presented him in 1587² to the vicarage of Wherwell, Hampshire, a small retired parish on the River Test, whose "troutful stream," celebrated by Isaak Walton, is still a favorite resort of anglers. Here Bachiler preached for twenty years, and here he doubtless hoped to end his days. No more peaceful and beautiful place is to be found in sunny Hampshire, lying as it does in the middle of verdant and fertile meadows. Wherwell was the seat of an ancient abbey, founded in 986 by Queen Aelfrida, the widow of King Edgar. At the Dissolution the abbey was granted to Thomas West, Lord La Warr or Delaware, and it soon became the principal seat of that great family. Here then let us leave Stephen Bachiler to marry and raise a family of his own, while we consider the events that began to crowd thick upon England.

In the very year when Bachiler was made vicar of Wherwell the preparations for the invasion of England by the Invincible Armada were being completed by the "spider of the Escorial." Her eyes blinded by the duplicity of Alexander Farnese, Elizabeth was still dreaming of an alliance with Spain, and was considering seriously the abandonment of that combination with Holland which finally kept Protestant powers the sovereigns of the world. Had it not been for the wisdom of Walsingham and the pugnacity of Drake and Hawkins, England's Protestants and Puritans might have been led in chains to the autos-da-fe of Spanish invaders, and the clock of the world's progress might have been set back another century.

¹ Degrees of Oxford Univ., pub. by Oxford Hist. So.

² Register of Thomas Cooper, Bishop of Winton, 10.

But the alarm had awakened Britain from her slumbers. Preparations were made on sea and shore to resist the Spanish invasion and when the 130 ships of the Invincible Armada appeared off Dover in 1588 a squadron of as many tiny fighting craft was ready. By the seamanship of the discredited Drake the unwieldy galleons of Spain were put to flight, and the tempests of August 15th finished the work of that great freebooter, and forever dispelled the fear that Catholic Spain would conquer Protestant England.

Meanwhile in England the Puritan party was disputing the supremacy of the established church. The death of the great Puritan prelate Grindal in 1583 summoned to the primacy John Whitgift, whose "cold mediocrity," as the elder Disraeli called it, was no match for the fiery arguments of the Martin Mar Prelate controversy. In the century and a half which had succeeded the dissolution of the monasteries and the establishment of a Protestant church in England, the same material abuses which had prevailed in the older church showed themselves in the reformed episcopacy. The prelates waxed rich, while the people were overridden. The clergy was corrupt and the rites of the church were abused. Of a sudden a pamphlet ridiculing these abuses ran like wildfire over the land. Whether the first "Mar Prelate" monograph was written by John Penry, by Barrow, or by Job Throckmorton will perhaps never be known, and does not now especially matter. The attack was so sudden, the knife went so deep into the vitals of the establishment, that the surprised and angry bishops retaliated in similar rude and scurrilous pamphlets, and by fines, imprisonments, and persecutions attempted in vain to check the growing wrath of the people towards the prelates. The first categorical answer to the Mar Prelate pamphlets was written by Thomas Cooper, the same bishop of Winchester who had a year before ordained Bachiler vicar of Wherwell. But the established church was forced to attack both Romish priests and Puritan non-conformists, which weakened the force of attempts against either, and popular sympathy was far greater for the Puritan revolt against the establishment. The last years of Elizabeth's reign were marked by persecutions of Recusants and Reformers, with numberless imprisonments and executions. The Puritan faction grew steadily, and when in 1603 James of Scotland came to the throne great was the rejoicing among them, for it seemed that a Scotch King of England augured well for the victory of Presbyter versus Prelate.

During all this time our vicar of Wherwell became, we may imagine, a man of influence. Perhaps the Lord Delaware who succeeded in 1595, and who married a daughter of the Puritan Sir Francis Knollys, favored him with his patronage, listened to his preaching, and agreed with his opinions. In 1596 Bachiler was named as an overseer in the will of William Spencer of Cheriton, a rich Hampshire squire, who had married one of his parishioners. Probably our vicar was one of the thousand English clergymen who sanctioned the millenary petition to King James, which greeted the Scotch monarch on his coming to the English throne,--a petition which urged the King to reform the crying abuses of the established church, and besought him to allow the Puritan pastors to continue their "prophesyings and preachings" undeterred by the persecutions of their bishops.

As a result of this petition King James called the Hampton Court conference in 1604. Four divines represented the Puritan party, John Rainoldes, John Knewstubb, Lawrence Chaderton, and Henry Sparke. Against them were ranged eight English prelates, headed by the next Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Bancroft, their bitter opponent. Lord Delaware was a member of this conference, which resulted badly for the popular party, for on Rainoldes's mentioning the word presbyter King James's wrath was aroused, and he dismissed the conference with bitter reproaches, telling the Puritans that he would "make them conform or harry them out of the land."

The following year was marked by the ejection of hundreds of Puritans, who declined to follow the hated ceremonies of the church. In May, 1605, Archbishop Bancroft held an ecclesiastical court at Winchester, and undoubtedly instructed the willing Thomas Bilson, Bishop of Winchester, to dismiss at once all his non-conforming clergymen. Among these was Stephen Bachiler, who was ejected in August, 1605, from the peaceful riverside parish where he had preached acceptably for eighteen years.

The neighboring dioceses of Winchester and Salisbury were at this time under anti-Puritan rule. At Winchester was Bilson, an ardent champion of the establishment; at Salisbury was Bishop Henry Cotton, of Hampshire descent, who persecuted Puritan and Romanist alike, and of whom the quaint Sir John Harrington says "he had 19 children by one wife, whose name was Patience,"-adding "I have heard of few wives of that name, and none of that quality." When Elizabeth made Henry Cotton Bishop of Salisbury and William Cotton Bishop of Exeter (both persecutors of the sectaries) she observed that she had "well Cottoned the West" and the Salisbury prelate might have said the same of the rich preferments which he bestowed on his numerous family.

The next twenty years offer us but scanty notes of Bachiler's life. Winthrop says he "suffered much at the hands of the Bishops"-2 and family tradition alleges that he fled to Holland like the little band of Separatists from Scrooby, who in 1620 formed the Pilgrim colony at Plymouth. Bachiler was at 45, in the prime of his powers. We may imagine that, fitted by scholarship and by the turn of his mind, he was an ardent, able controversialist. We know that many of his parishioners followed him-3 from the church at Wherwell to his ministrations under Puritan auspices at the adjoining hamlet of Newton Stacy. In 1607 Henry Shipton,⁴ a wealthy tanner of Shawe, across the border in Berkshire, leaves him a small legacy, and in 1616 Edmund Alleyn⁵ of Hatfield Peverell, a rich Essex squire, bequeaths him a similar sum. In 1610 Bachiler's son Stephen was entered at Magdalen College in Oxford,¹ the family college of the Wests, Lords Delaware. In 1621 the diary of Adam Winthrop, father of the Massachusetts Governor, says² that he had "Mr. Bachiler the preacher" to dine with him. That he was not without means is shown by the Hampshire land records,³ which recite, between 1622 and 1630, his purchase and sale of small properies in Newton Stacy. A petition of Sir Robert Payne,⁴ Sheriff of Hampshire in 1632, states that several of his tenants, " having been formerly misled by Stephen Bachiler, a Notorious inconfornist, demolished a chapel at Newton Stacy, and executed many things in contempt of the canons and the bishop."

¹ Register of Thomas Bilson, Bp. of Winton, 18.

² Homer's Winthrop Journal, vol. II, p. 45.

³ Petition of Sir Robert Paine, Dom. Cal. State Paper, 1635.

⁴ Will of Henry Shipton, 1607. Arch. Berk K. fol. 260.

⁵ Will of Edmund Alleyn, 1615. P. C. C. Cope 87.

Thus preaching, persecuted, and adhered to by his former parishioners, Bachiler passed a score of years and reached the age of seventy. His children had grown up and married;⁵ one son had become a chaplain in an English regiment in Holland, and one a merchant in Southampton⁶. One daughter married John Wing, an English Puritan minister at Flushing and The Hague; and another Christopher Hussey, perhaps a relative of the mayor of Winchester of the same name, who married a daughter of the Hampshire Puritan prebendary Renniger; a third daughter married a Hampshire Samborne, probably connected with James Samborne, the Winchester scholar and Oxford graduate, Puritan vicar of Andover and rector of Upper Clatford, neighboring villages to Wherwell.

With the accession of Charles I in 1625 Puritanism received another blow, and many of the English reformers, encouraged by the success of the Plymouth Pilgrims of 1620, decided to seek in the New World a freer atmosphere for their religious opinions. By this time Bachiler had reached an age when most men become weary of struggling, anxious to lay aside contention and strife, and to obtain a few years of rest. Not so our Hampshire Puritan, whose eager spirit outran his years, and who thought he saw in America an Arcadia of religious freedom.

¹ Record of Magdalen College, June, 1610.

² Diary of Adam Winthrop, June 11, 1621.

³ Feet of Fine, Hampshire-Pachal Term, 1622, Pachal Term, 1629.

Michaelma term, 1630.

⁴ Dom. Cal. State Paper 1635.

⁵ Sanborn Genealogy, pp. 59-60.

⁶ Sanborn Genealogy, pp. 59-60.

In 1630 a small band of London merchants¹, perhaps friends of Bachiler's son Nathaniel, formed a colonizing company, called the " Company of Husbandmen " and obtained from Sir Ferdinando Gorges, the great enemy to New England Puritanism, a patent to some 1600 square miles in his province of New England south of the river Sagadahock. This Company of Husbandmen sent to America in the fall of 1630 a small ship called the "Plough," with a meagre band of colonists to settle on their new patent, probably about where the present city of Portland stands. The grant from Gorges seems to have conflicted with other grants, and the original patent is lost, so that we cannot exactly locate the land, which the Husbandmen thought embraced the seacoast from Cape Porpoise to Cape Elizabeth.

This first little shipload, sent from England six months after Winthrop's well found colony, appears to have landed on their grant in the hard winter of 1631¹, and were much disappointed in the outlook. The upper coast of New England was sterile and forbidding, bare of settlements except for a few scattering fishing stages, and we may imagine the Husbandmen were poorly equipped with the necessaries for colonization. Whether Bachiler was an original member of the company I cannot state, for none of their records have survived that general loss of manuscripts which has occurred in the lapse of four hundred years. Presumably he was, since the first letter-2 from the London managers, dated in March, 1631², and sent to their New England colonists, speaks as though he had for some time been eager in the Company's work. In this letter the London members ask the colonists to remember their duty to return thanks to God who "hath filled the heart of our reverend pastor so full of zeal, of love and of extraordinary affection toward our poor society. Notwithstanding opposition yet he remaineth constant, persuading and exhorting, -- yea and as much as in him lieth-constraining all that love him to join together with us. And seeing the Company is not able to bear his charge over, he hath strained himself to provide provision for himself and his family, and hath done his utmost endeavor to help over as many as he possibly can, for your further strength and encouragement."

¹ Genelogist, vol. XIX, New Series, pp. 272-3.

² Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., 4 Series, vol. VII, pp. 91-4, notes.

For another year, then, or until the spring of 1632, the Plough Company worked in England to secure more colonists and to enlarge their resources. The London members were none of them rich, but all were bound together by some mystical religious fellowship, the exact significance of which has been lost in the ensuing centuries of oblivion. England was, indeed, from 1620 to 1630 a fruitful mother of diverse and complicated sects. The stern rule of Archbishop Bancroft had been followed by the gentler but less forcible Abbot, who was born in the same year as Bachiler, and of whom Lord Clarendon says,--" He considered Christian religion no otherwise than as it abhorred and reviled Popery; and valued those men most who did it most furiously." In the last years of Abbot's primacy he had lost credit with the Court, and had been supplanted by that Bishop of London who was to succeed him, William Laud, the bitter foe of the Puritans. Laud's narrow but determined spirit had quite changed the religious complexion of Oxford; and his promotion to the bishopric of London and to the King's Privy Council inaugurated an era of suppression and severity which aroused and united the hostility of these various sects against the established church. But two letters remain¹, so far as the manuscript records of the 17th century have been printed, to show who were the active members of that illfated and meagre Company of Husbandmen. John Dye, Grace Hardwin, and Thomas Jupe, three London merchants of limited education and narrow resources, were the principal factors. On the first ship came over John Crispe, Bryan Binckes, and John Carman, who seem to have had some authority in the company, but concerning whom the records disclose nothing of note. The loosely knit little company seems to have been organized and kept alive by the strenuous efforts of Bachiler and his kinsmen. A second shipment of goods and colonists was sent out in March, 1632, on two ships, the "William and Francis" and the "Whale." The colonists on the former ship were captained by the stout old Hampshire parson, now over 70, and the party on the "Whale" by his relative, Richard Dummer, also a Hampshire man, who had not joined the religious circle of the Husbandmen, but who was doubtless induced by Bachiler to finance the enterprise to some extent. Dummer was a man of breadth and ability, whose connection must have been of value to the struggling company, though he soon foresaw its failure and identified himself with Winthrop's more permanent enterprise.

¹ Mass. Hist. Soc., Coll., 4 Series, vol. VII, pp. 91-6, note.

While Bachiler, Dummer, and the London members of the Company were thus helping on the enterprise in

England, imagining that the colony of the Sagadahock River was firmly planted in the new soil, that poor-spirited crew had left its northern settlement, aghast at the practical difficulties of colonization, and perhaps torn by some dissension. With their shaky little craft, the Plough, they had drifted down the coast looking for more substantial settlements, and Winthrop's journal of July 6, 1631¹, records their arrival at Watertown as follows: "A small ship of 60 tons arrived at Natascot, Mr. Graves master. She brought ten passengers from London. They came with a patent for Sagadahock, but not liking the place they came hither. Their ship drew ten feet and went up to Watertown but she ran on ground twice by the way." The Husbandmen, with their vague and mysterious religious tenets, were with some reason looked on askance by the compact and intolerant

¹ Hosmer's Winthrop's Journal, vol. I, p 65.

colony of Endicott and Dudley. They had failed in their enterprise, and had come from the neighborhood of those fishing settlements along the north coast, whose rude and lawless members were in bad odor with the magistrates. It is doubtful, however, if they deserved¹ the opprobrium which has clung to them because of a note added later by Winthrop or some other hand-" They most of them proved familists and vanished away." The offensive term of Familist, with its hint of free love tendencies, was applied to many of the settlers who resented and differed from the arbitrary standards of the Massachusetts colony.

Thus in June, 1632, when Bachiler and Dummer arrived with their families and adherents, the ill-fated little venture was already doomed. The earnest letter which Bachiler brought over from the London merchants was addressed to a band already in disorder, and it seems probable that they remained near Boston only long enough to deliver their patent to the new comers, coupled with such gloomy reports of the northern coast as effectually put an end to any further attempt at colonization. The Company of Husbandmen was practically dead², its assets in the hands of the Massachusetts court, and its members scattered; some went back to England and some to Virginia. The L1400 of joint stock was a complete loss, and apparently the patent was seized on by Dummer as some security for his advances. This Plough Patent was for years a source of dispute³, being assigned some time later to one of Cromwell's commanders, Alexander Rigby, whose agent, George Cleeves, disputed the bounds of the royal province of Gorgeana which fell to the heirs of Sir Ferdinando Gorges. The constant quarrels between the two factions existed until Massachusetts, through its agents in England, bought up their claims and established Maine as a dependency of the Bay Colony.

¹ N. E. Hist. Gen. Reg., vol. XLVI, p. 63.

² Mass. Court Rec., pp. 92, 98, 143.

³ Me.H.& G. Rec., vol. II, p. 66 & seq.

It seems possible that the only person who derived a profit from the defunct Plough Company was Richard Dummer¹, who perhaps bought out Bachiler's interest in the patent, and who sold it through Cleeves to Rigby. Bachiler had disposed of his small estate in Hampshire² to provide funds for the colony; had brought over a little company of adherents and his own children and grandchildren; and found himself at 71 stranded in Newtown without a settlement or a pastorate, and equipped with a very moderate sum of money, a library of fair size, and a somewhat legendary coat of arms³, which the fanciful herald, Sylvanus Morgan, says did "appertain to Stephen Bachiler, the first pastor of the church of Ligonias in New England." Bachiler's arrival in the new colony was welcomed. Winthrop mentions it in his journal⁴, and it was undoubtedly a matter of moment that the aged Oxford scholar had chosen to settle in the Bay, with a considerable group of hardy immigrants. A man of education and cultivation, as his letters show him to have been, was no mean addition to Winthrop's settlement. Although contrary to the direct statements of Lewis and Newhall, the historians of Lynn, I do not believe that Bachiler and his little colony immediately established a church at Lynn. Bachiler's own letter to Winthrop⁵ shows his first sojourn was at Newtown, now Cambridge. Here, too, we find the name of John Kerman⁶, one of the Plough Company, as an early settler. My idea is that here the handful of colonists left of the Plough Company set up their first tabernacle, and listened to the prophesyings of Master Bachiler. The arbitrary General Court of Winthrop's colony promptly suppressed the influence of these doctrines, which were perhaps more tolerant, and thus more

acceptable to many of the newly arriving colonists not yet firmly bound to the compact and narrow limits of the oligarchy. Bachiler and his adherents had not joined the church covenant by taking the "freeman's oath." The Court¹ on Oct. 6, 1632, ordered that "Mr. Batchel'r is required to forbear exercising his gifts a a pastor or teacher publiquely in our pattent, unless it be to those he brought with him, for his contempt of authority and till some scandles be removed."

¹ Petition of Jeremiah Dummer to Mass. Gen. Ct. Dec., 1683; see Me.

Hist. coll.

² Feet of Fine Southants, Michaelmas Term, 6 Car. I (1630). ³ Morgan'e "Sphere of Gentry", also Heralds, Coll. "E. D. N. Alphabet of Arms."

⁴ Hosmer's Winthrop's Journal, vol. I, p. 80-1.

⁵ Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., 4th series, vol. VII, p. 101.

⁶ First Records of Cambridge.

Probably after this he moved from Newtown to Saugus (Lynn) and established his church there. Massachusetts was fast filling up with immigrants, and new settlements were being established. These plantations either kept no records of their first years, or, if such there were, they have been lost. Thus the only definite data of these early years are contained in the records of the General Court, and in the fragmentary notes of Winthrop's journal. On March 4, 1633², the inhibition of the Court was removed, and Bachiler was free to preach at will. This I take to be the date of his first ministrations at Saugus. Here he continued some three years, preaching to his own little flock, and gradually attaching others to them until his church numbered a score of families This increase became less coherent as newcomers settled at Saugus, and on March 15, 1635, Winthrop records³ that "divers of the brethren of that church, not liking the proceedings of the pastor and withal making a question whether they were a church or not, did separate from church communion." Bachiler and his followers asked the advice of the other churches, who, wishing to hear both sides, offered to meet at Saugus about it. Bachiler then asked the separatists to put their grievances in writing, which they refused to do. At this Bachiler's quick temper flamed up, and he wrote to the other churches that he was resolved to excommunicate these objectors, and therefore the conference at Saugus was not needed. This hasty proceeding (as Winthrop calls it) met with no approval at the lecture in Boston where Bachiler's letter was read, and the elders at once went to Saugus to pacify the contending parties. After hearing both sides it was agreed that, though not at first regularly constituted as a church, their consent and practice of a church estate had supplied that defect, and so, Winthrop concludes, all were reconciled.

¹Mass. Court Records vol. I. ²Mass. Court Records, vol. I. ³Hosmer's Winthrop's Journal, vol. I, p. 148.

Probably these reconciling elders pointed out to Master Bachiler that he had not yet conformed to their custom and become a "freeman"; and indeed the Lynn church resembled rather the voluntary assemblings of the early Christians than the formal and solemn installations practised in the Bay. At all events, on May 6, 1635,¹ Bachiler yielded to their practice, became a freeman, and thus joined the compact, if inelastic, body of the Puritan colony.

This period was one of extreme danger for the Massachusetts Puritans. The Bay was fast filling up with English settlers from different counties, and each little band was headed by some disestablished or nonconforming clergyman whose dislike for English intolerance was probably equalled by his determination to submit to no arbitrary church government in the new country. Thus, in America the leaders of the Bay Colony were confronted with the opposition of countless involved theological beliefs at variance with their own, while in England the King and Archbishop Laud were determined if possible to suppress the spread of Puritan strength by handicapping the new colony with a Governor-General from England, whose autocracy should be firmly allied with the English church and the Stuart dynasty.

The colony of Winthrop and Dudley was thus attacked from within and from without. Small blame to them

for determining actively to expel the contestants here, and passively to ignore the church-and-state rule of England.

¹ Mass. Bay Colony Record, vol. I, p. 143.

The banishment of Roger Williams marks the first concerted move to stamp out theological division in their own body. In October of 1635 Williams was expelled from Massachusetts, one clergyman alone dissenting. It is believed¹ that this dissenter was our Hampshire Master Bachiler. Indeed, the character of the two men was to some extent similar. Both were theorists, both intolerant of arbitrary rule, but history has magnified the success of one and well nigh obliterated the record of the other. The constructive talents of Roger Williams resulted in the establishment of a province where toleration was the rule of life, while the character of Bachiler, always in opposition to authority, made his life work nugatory.

The same autumn which banished Williams brought young Sir Harry Vane to Massachusetts, and the intricacies of theological disputes found in him an ardent supporter. It is probable, too, that the Boston church, reacting from the stern rule of Dudley, repented their share in the banishment of Williams. At all events that church, under the broader and more spiritual mind of John Cotton, the teacher or assistant, became an active force in favor of toleration in the Bay.

But the task of weeding out the Puritan garden was not to be stopped. The colony must be united and intrenched at home. Each settlement must have as its leader some man whose trend of thought lay with that of the governing oligarchy. At Salem was the arch Puritan, Hugh Peter; at Newtown the somber Thomas Shepherd; at Boston was John Wilson, whose natural benignity was overshadowed by his loyalty to the intolerant tenets he professed; at Roxbury John Eliot and Thomas Welde were in full accord with the narrower beliefs. Saugus, with its venerable and educated pastor Bachiler, was an exception, and here was the next stand made. In January, 1636, Winthrop records²

¹ N. E. H. G. Reg., vol. XLVI, p. 158-9.

² Hosmer's Winthrop's Journal, vol. I, p. 169.

" Mr. Batchellor of Saugus was convented before the magistrates. Coming out of England with a small body of six or seven persons and having since received in many more at Saugus, and contention coming between him and the greatest part of his church, who had with the rest received him for their pastor, he desired dismissal for himself and first members, which being granted upon supposition that he would leave the town (as he had given out), he with the said six or seven persons presently renewed their old covenant, intending to raise another church in Saugus; whereat the most and chief of the town being offended, for that it would cross their intention of calling Mr. Peter or some other minister, they complained to the magistrates, who seeing the distraction which was like to come by this course had forbidden him to proceed in any such church way until the cause were considered by the other ministers. But he refused to desist, whereupon they sent for him, and upon his delay day after day the marshal was sent to fetch him. Upon his appearance and submission and promise to remove out of the town within three months, he was discharged."

Thus another opponent of the oligarchy was disposed of with the strong hand. The church at Saugus was put under the rule of an approved minister, Samuel Whiting, in whose honor the town name was changed to Lynn, and Master Bachiler, disheartened, laid down the ministry and retired to private life. Among his church, however, many besides his own family disliked the change, and several¹ began a new settlement on Cape Cod, among them John Carman, the Plough Company man.

Bachiler himself is said to have removed² in February, 1636, to Ipswich, where the younger Winthrop had established a settlement. I find no recorded authority for this, and incline to think that he and his son-in-law Hussey followed Richard Dummer to Newbury, where their cousin had taken up a farm of five hundred acres, and where Bachiler and Hussey likewise received extensive grants of land³

¹ Lewis's Hist. of Lynn. Freeman's Cape Cod. Mass. Bay Col.

Rec., vol. I.

² Lewis's Hist. of Lynn. N. E. H. G. Reg., vol. XLVI, p. 159. But see first record of 1639, Ancient Records of Ipswich (ed. Schofield) evidently ref. to Henry Bachelor, from Dover, Kent County, England. See also Batchelder Genealogy, p. 346.

³ Coffin's, Newbury; Currier's Hist. of Newbury.

The tyrannical rule of the New England Puritans met with little favor in Old England, where general sentiment favored toleration, and much disapproved arbitrary self-government in a colony. Mr. Stansby, a silenced Puritan in Norfolk, writing to John Wilson¹, the Boston pastor, in 1637, complains " that many of the ministers are much straited with you: others lay down the ministry and became private members, as Mr. Bachiler, Mr. Jenner and Mr. Nathaniel Ward. You are so strict in admission of members to your church that more than one-half are out of your church in all your congregations: this may do you much hurt." And now the threatened insurrection broke out into a flame. The Fast Day sermon of John Wheelwright arrayed the Massachusetts settlements in two distinct factions, which we may term Antinomians and Arbitrarians. Vane was elected Governor; Cotton as teacher ruled the Boston church; the brilliant, if undisciplined, Ann Hutchinson lent distinction to the party of toleration. To the north lay the fishing settlements of Gorges and Mason, allied with the English church; to the south Roger Williams and his colony of broader views. The Massachusetts Puritans saw no wiser way of treating the spread of these heretical opinions than by suppression. By a political coup worthy of the twentieth century the new election was won for the Arbitrarians; Winthrop and Dudley went back into office, and the Court of Assistants was theirs by an overwhelming majority. The defeated party did what they could by electing Antinomian deputies, but their power was for the moment gone. After some verbal sparring between Winthrop and Vane, the Massachusetts Synod, entirely Arbitrarian, denounced eighty erroneous doctrines, and at the November session of the General Court the iron hand was applied. The leaders of the opposition were banished, disfranchised, or disarmed. Massachusetts presented a stern front against toleration. Wheelwright and his adherents began a settlement beyond the bounds of Massachusetts, at Squamscott (now Exeter, N. H.). Richard Dummer, who was among those disarmed, had too much at stake to abandon his possessions at Newbury, but returned to England and brought back with him in 1638 a small band of relatives and friends who strengthened his hand.

again

¹ Mass. Hist. Soc., Coll., 4th series, VII, p. 10.

Bachiler and Hussey, living quietly at Newbury and having been dealt with the year before, were spared in this dictatorial devastation, but the inaction was not to Bachiler's liking. In the severe winter of 1637-8¹ the venerable Puritan walked on foot through the wilderness to Cape Cod, where he and his little party hoped to begin a settlement near that which had been established a year before by John Carman and the company from Saugus. The rigor of the season and the difficulty of the enterprise discouraged them. Winthrop says: "The undertaker of this (the settlement at Mattakees, now Yarmouth) was one Mr. Batchellor late pastor at Saugus, being about 76 years of age: yet he walked thither on foot in a very hard season. He and his company, being all poor men, finding the difficulty gave it over, and others undertook it."

¹ Hosmer's Winthrop's Journal, vol. I, p. 266.

In England the growing strength of the Massachusetts colony had alarmed the King and Canterbury. Malcontents sent back from the New England Canaan brought to the kingly ear strange stories of arbitrary and independent acts of the trans-Atlantic Puritans. Gorges with unfailing persistency schemed for their overthrow. The Royal patent of 1629, granted or bought with anti-Scriptural bribes, contained privileges undreamed of when it was given.

As early as 1635 the great Council of Plymouth surrendered its charter to the King, and the Attorney-General, Sir John Banks, began quo warranto proceedings to annul the Massachusetts patent. The whole coast line from Sagadahock to Narragansett was parceled out among the eight remaining members. To Gorges was allotted the

northern district, as far south as the Piscataqua. Mason's share adjoined this and ran south to Naumkeag, now

Salem harbor. The coast from there to Narragansett fell to Lord Edward Gorges. Thus a paper division shut out Winthrop's colony from any Royal privileges, and the proposed appointment of their enemy, Sir Ferdinando Gorges, as Governor-General completed the pen-and-ink overthrow of the Bay Puritans.

But paper was all that Charles could give; money and resources he had none, and he was indeed keeping his own coffers barely filled by illegal and unpopular "ship money" and other taxes. With a singular lack of perspective, after sweating his English subjects by these money getting tactics, Charles and Laud added the last straw by attempting to force the Anglican church establishment upon Scotland. The storm which this raised at home quite blotted out all plans for colonial government and extension. Sir Ferdinando was left to his own resources to fit out the ship which should carry the Royal Governor to his happy New England tenantry; and the doughty Elizabethan knight foundered in the attempt, just as his newly launched vessel broke to pieces on her way off the stocks.

Meanwhile the narrow limits of the Massachusetts patent "from the Merrimack to the Charles" began to press hard on Winthrop's expanding colony. Each year new settlers flocked there from England, and new settlements were needed to accommodate them. In 1635 a band of Wiltshire men, headed by Thomas Parker, had planted the Massachusetts flag on the southern bank of the Merrimack at Newbury, and soon the tide overflowed into Salisbury, Haverhill, and Rowley.

Here began the debatable land of Mason's patent of 1629, stretching from the Merrimack to the Piscataqua and joining Gorges's province of Maine. Few and scattering were the settlements. Depositions made by early planters say that in 1631 there were but three houses on all that side of the country adjoining the Piscataqua. Captain Neale was sent out by Mason and Gorges in the same month as Winthrop's fleet, and on June 1, 1630, settled in the stone house built by Thomson, the Scotch trader, in 1623 at Little Harbor. These absentee landlords had large plans, and built a manor house or two, set up sawmills and fishing stages, but their colonies lacked the effective personal element which the Bay Colony possessed, and they came to little.

By the close of 1637 Mason was dead, Gorges was busy in the King's cause, and the vast regions along the Piscataqua contained but a few dismembered plantations. The Antinomian heretics were banished from Massachusetts or disarmed; ship-loads of immigrants friendly to the Bay Colony were arriving, and they must be provided with suitable plantations. The "Lords Brethren" of the Bay scanned their patent and saw that its northern line was the Merrimack. Now that river reaches the sea at Newbury, but its head waters lie far to the North. "The wish was father to the thought." Winthrop and his oligarchy looked the ground over and decided that the King's intention was that their patent should include all the country south of the headwaters. As early as 1636¹ the General Court passed an order that a plantation should be begun at Winnicunnet, some fifteen miles north of Newbury, and that Richard Dummer and John Spencer should press men to build a house there. The exact location of this house, intended to mark possession, but afterwards called the "Bound House," cannot now be definitely determined. It was, says Wheelwright in 1665, "three large miles North of the Merrimack," apparently within the limits of the present town of Seabrook. Just where it was, by whom it was occupied and how long, it is impossible to say. The settlement planned was not completed, and in 1637 the inhabitants of Newbury were by court order allowed to settle there. Except for Nicholas Easton and a Mr. Geoffrey the Newbury settlers did not take up the new grant, and the two mentioned were unwelcome to the Massachusetts authorities, Easton (afterwards Governor of Rhode Island) having been disarmed as an Antinomian.

¹ Dow's Hist. of Hampton, N. H., vol. I, pp. 6, 7.

The salt marshes and pleasant meadows were well known to Newbury men, and our old friend Bachiler soon descried in them a fit place to establish his little colony, now living with him at Newbury. In the autumn of 1638 the Massachusetts General Court¹ granted the petition of Bachiler and his company to settle at Winnicunnet. The company included the adherents of Bachiler, his son-in-law and his four grandchildren, and with them were also one or two Norfolk men who had settled first in Watertown and then in Newbury. The Court ruled also (perhaps remembering past difficulties with Bachiler) that John Winthrop, Jr., and Mr. Bradstreet should go with the little band of settlers, and no decisive act should be done without the affirmation of these two Massachusetts officials.

A letter from Bachiler to the younger Winthrop² dated Oct. 9, 1638, still extant, shows that the actual date of the trip from Newbury, which was made in a shallop, was October 14th. On this pleasant fall day then, the settlement was made, and our ancient friend probably felt that in this new plantation his remaining days would be spent in peace. The future looked serene. His adherents were united to him, a pleasant and fertile spot had been chosen, and one at the farthest northern end of the Massachusetts patent, if not indeed really outside of its limits. To the west lay Wheelwright and his little colony, farther up the coast were the independent settlements of Strawberry Bank and Cocheco. It looked as though liberty indeed lay before him.

But the true colonizing spirit of the Bay did not end with the beginning of a settlement; the authorities provided the settlers also, and saw to it as best they could that the Bay influence should predominate. With the next spring came a band of Norfolk and Suffolk men to Hampton, and with them came Timothy Dalton, a relative of Winthrop, and a man loyal to the Massachusetts doctrines.

1 Mass. Bay Col. Rec., vol. I, p. 236.

2 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. 4th series, vol. VII, p. 98.

Dalton¹ was a Cambridge graduate, ejected from his Suffolk rectory of Woolverstone for non-conformity, who had come to New England in 1635, settling in the Puritan colony at Dedham. The pastor and teacher, nominally head of the church and assistant, were as far apart as the poles. Bachiler was old, educated, controversial, versed in polemical discussion, and wedded to his own ideas. Dalton was younger, less cultivated, equally obstinate, and determined to uphold the tenets of his cousin and neighbor, Winthrop. Probably dissension began at once; it grew and spread like wildfire. Time has obliterated nearly all traces of the quarrel. The town records contain no reference to it. The church records have disappeared.

An occasional gleam flashed out until in 1641 the dissensions at Hampton culminated in the sorry incident related in Winthrop's journal under date of Nov. 12, 1641². No personal criticism of Stephen Bachiler has up to this date been discovered, no breath of scandal has touched his character. That he was opposed to the arbitrary rule of the Bay oligarchy is unquestioned, but it was left to the "reverend, grave and gracious Mr. Dalton" to defame his character and blacken his memory by the story which Winthrop recites with that gusto with which similar incidents, real or falsified, were treated by early Puritan historians. Winthrop says:

¹ Blake's "English Home of Timothy Dalton" 1899.

² Hosmer's Winthrop's Journal, vol. II, pp. 45-6.

"Mr. Stephen Batchellor, the pastor of the church at Hampton, who had suffered much at the hands of the Bishops and having a lusty comely woman to his wife, did solicit the chastity of his neighbor's wife, who acquainted her husband therewith; whereupon he was dealt with, but denied it, as he had told the woman he would do, and complained to the magistrates against the woman and her husband for slandering him. The church likewise dealing with him, he stiffly denied it, but soon after when the Lord's Supper was to be administered he did voluntarily confess the attempt, and that he did intend to defile her if she had consented. The church being moved by his full confession and tears silently forgave him, and communicated with him; but after finding how scandalous it was they took advice of other elders, and after long debate and much pleading and standing upon the church's forgiving and being reconciled to him in communicating with him after he had confessed it, they proceeded to cast him out. After this he went on again in a variable course, sometimes seeming very penitent, soon after again excusing himself and casting blame upon others, especially his fellow elder Mr. Dalton (who indeed had not carried himself in this cause so well as became him, and was brought to see his failing and acknowledged it to the elders of the other churches who had taken much pains about this matter). So he behaved himself to the elders when they dealt with him. He was off and on for a long time, and when he had seemed most penitent so as the church were ready to have received him in again, he would fall back again and as it were repent of his repentance. In this time his house and near all his substance was consumed by fire. When he had continued excommunicated for near two years, and much agitation had been about the matter, and the church being divided so as he could not be received in, at length the matter was referred to some magistrates and elders, and by their mediation he was released of his excommunication but not received to his pastor's office. Upon occasion of this mediation Mr. Wilson, pastor of Boston, wrote this

letter to him." It is to be regretted that the letter is not extant.

Here, then, is the story as told by Winthrop with some detail, which has for nearly three centuries blackened the memory of our Hampshire Puritan. It were bold to discredit Winthrop, and yet the tale is stamped throughout with improbability. This account is all that remains; the court records, district or general, contain no trace of it, no letters mention the case. A careful search discloses nothing among the Massachusetts archives; church records, local and synodical, are blank concerning it. No published or manuscript record except Winthrop's gives us any facts. Bachiler's age, eighty years, discredits the story. His life up to this time was public, honored and respected. The story apparently comes from his enemy Dalton, whose literary relics afford us nothing, unless we may consider a large bequest to Bachiler's grandson Nathaniel as a tardy attempt at reparation.

It is curious to note that on the shoulders of Dalton¹ and Hugh Peter rests also that slanderous account of Knollys's and Larkham's offenses against decency, perpetuated in Winthrop, but now generally disbelieved. It is almost inconceivable that the ardent and spiritual Knollys, the founder of the Baptist church, could have sullied with that filthy and indelible stain a life otherwise pure. Thomas Larkham's life in England is blameless. The fact is that the settlements north of the Merrimack were looked on by the Bay Puritans as reeking with impurity, and any garbled accounts of misconduct there were of a pleasant savour to the nostrils of Massachusetts.

But let us see what Bachiler and his friends and neighbors have to say. Himself, writing to Winthrop² in 1643, says:

" I see not how I can depart hence" (that is from Hampton, to accept one of two calls he had received, to Casco and to Exeter), "till I have, or God for me, cleared and vindicated the cause and wrongs I have suffered of the church I yet live in; that is, from the Teacher, who hath done all and been the cause of all the dishonor that hath accrued to God, shame to myself, and grief to all God's people, by his irregular proceedings and abuse of the power of the church in his hands,--by the major part cleaving to him, being his countrymen and acquaintance in old England. Whiles my cause, though looked slightly into by diverse Elders and brethren, could never come to a judicial searching forth of things, and an impartial trial of his allegations and my defence; which, if yet they might, I am confident in God, upon certain knowledge and due proof before yourselves, the Teacher's act of his excommunicating me (such as I am, to say no more of myself), would prove the foulest matter, --both for the cause alleged of that excommunication, and the impulsive cause,--even wroth and revenge. Also the manner of all his proceeding throughout to the very end, and lastly his keeping me still under bonds,--and much worse than here I may mention for divers causes,--which, to bear on my shoulder in going hence, is so uncomfortable that, tho' I can refer it to God's revenging hand and wait on him, yet then I am taught again that such sins endanger the very state of church and commonwealth, for neglecting of the complaints of the afflicted in such a state, wherein Magistrates, Elders, and brethren all are in the sincerest manner set to find out sin, and search into the complaints of the poor,--not knowing father nor mother, church nor Elder. In such a State, I say,--in such a wine-cellar to find such a cockatrice, and not to kill him,--to have such monstrous proceedings passed over, without due justice,--this again stirs up my spirit to seek for a writ ad melius inquirendum. Towards which the enclosed letter tendeth, as you may perceive. Yet if your wisdoms shall judge it more safe and reasonable to refer all my wrongs (conceived) to God's own judgment, I bless the Lord for his grace, if I know mine own heart herein, I can submit myself to be overruled by you. To conclude,--if the Apostle's words be objected, that this is thankworthy, that a man for conscience's sake shall endure grief, suffering wrongfully,-- and therefore I ought in this aforesaid cause of mine to endure the grief thereof in whatsoever I suffer wrongfully, without seeking redress or justice against the offender,--I profess it was more absolutely necessary so to suffer, when the Church had no civil power to seek unto, than in such a land of righteousness as our New England is."

¹ Hosmer's Winthrop's Journal, vol. II, pp. 28, 89.

² Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., 4th series, vol. VII, p. 102.

So far as we know, Bachiler's son-in-law Hussey and his grandchildren, who were by this time prominent among the younger Hampton settlers, stood by the slandered patriarch. While the turmoil was at its height Bachiler was chosen as arbitrator¹ in the important land suit of Cleeve v. Winter. His award was adverse to

Winter, but the Rev. Robert Jordan, writing to his father-in-law Winter in July, 1642, says: " Mr. Stephen Bachiler, the pastor of a church in the Massachusetts Bay, was, I must say, a grave, reverend, and good man; but whether more inclined to justice or mercy, or whether carried aside by secret insinuations, I must refer to your own judgment. Sure I am that Cleeve is well nigh able to disable the wisest brain."

When the five years' struggle at Hampton was over and the Bachiler party defeated, the ancient Puritan minister decided to leave Hampton, and cast about in his mind where to settle. By this time Massachusetts had strengthened its lines, and had reached out to the Piscataqua settlements to take them into its fold. One by one Strawberry Bank, Dover, and Exeter joined the Bay Colony. Wheelwright, the punished heretic, had withdrawn into Maine, and Exeter was without a pastor. The Maine settlements were free from the rule of the Bay, since Alexander Rigby, one of Cromwell's commanders, had bought the Plough patent from Bachiler's Company of Husbandmen, was actively at war with the Gorges heirs over his title, and yet was opposed to the arbitrary encroachments of Winthrop's colony.

Both Exeter and Rigby's settlement sought² to secure Bachiler for their pastor. Both were neighboring plantations to Hampton, and must have heard of the Hampton slander. Apparently they disbelieved it, and certainly they invited him to settle with them. In February, 1644, Bachiler laid the matter before the church at Boston, and the elders apparently advised him merely to remove from Hampton, leaving him to decide between the two calls. In May he decided to accept the call to Exeter; and wrote to Winthrop as an old friend to acquaint him with the decision, asking him to urge " his brother Wilson" to attend the ordination at Exeter, and " make it a progresse of recreation to see his ould friend and thus to do me this laste service save to my buriall."

¹ Me. Hist. Soc. Coll., Trelawny Paper.

² Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., 4th series, vol. VII, pp. 100-108.

But the Boston elders, having apparently advised somewhat against his removing to Casco, now looked with dismay at his gathering a church at Exeter, which the Bay authorities now claimed lay within their patent. The General Court held at Boston¹ May 29, 1644, passed this order:

" Whereas it appears to this Court that some of the inhabitants of Exeter do intend shortly to gather a church and call Mr. Bachiler to be their minister: and forasmuch as the divisions there are judged by this Court to be such as for the present they cannot comfortably proceed in such weighty and sacred affairs, it is therefore ordered that direction shall be sent to defer the gathering of a church or any such proceeding until this court or the Court at Ipswich, upon further satisfaction of their reconciliation and fitness, shall give allowance thereunto."

Winthrop's journal, mentioning this order², adds,--"And besides Mr. Batchellor had been in three places before, and through his means, as was supposed, the churches fell to such divisions as no peace could be till he was removed."

The call to Casco declined, and the gathering of a church at Exeter being forbidden, our stout old Master Bachiler was now quite adrift. In 1644 he was forced to sell his great farm³ at Hampton, and moved soon after to Strawberry Bank, where he lived for some years, preaching to the godless fishermen of that seaside parish. With him went his godchild and grandson, Stephen Samborne⁴, and they settled on the Kittery side of the Piscataqua. At this time, Richard Gibson's Anglican church establishment having been disrupted, and James Parker, that " Godly man and scholar " having gone to the Barbadoes, the missionary at Strawberry Bank had also the cure of souls the hamlet of Kittery and the fishing settlements of the isles of Shoals. Here dwelt a type of men different from the devout colony of Hampton and of Exeter, a rude, lawless race of deep sea fishermen, often also deep drinkers and roisterers. Jenness, in his " Isles of Shoals, " gives us graphic pictures of their lives, as for instance the court record in the case of John Andrews, husband of a local immagant, who sought consolation in the wine cup and was convented therefor, he " swearing by the blood of Christ that he was above ye heavens and ye stars, at which time the record ingenuously comments) ye said Andrews did seem to have drunk too much, and did at that time call the witnesses Doggs, toads, and foule birds."

¹ Mass. Bay Colony Rec.

² Hosmer's Winthrop's Journal, vol. II, p. 179.

³ N. E. H. G. Reg., vol. XLVI, p. 251.

⁴ York Deeds, vol. I, p. II.

In April, 1647, Bachiler gave to the four grandchildren-1 he had brought to New England what remained of his Hampton property. He petitioned the General Court in 1645-2 for some allowance for his six years' pastorate at Hampton, but was referred to the district court. While his case was pending he wrote-3 from Strawberry Bank to Winthrop in May, 1647:

"I can shew a letter of your Worship's occasioned by some letters of mine, craving some help from you in some cases of oppression under which I lay,--and still do,-- wherein also you were pleased to take notice of those oppressions and wrongs; that in case the Lord should give, or open a door of opportunity, you would be ready to do me all the lawful right and Christian service that any cause of mine might require. Which time being, in my conceit, near at hand, all that I would humbly crave is this,--to read this inclosed letter to my two beloved and reverend brothers, your Elders (Cotton and Wilson), and in them to the whole Synod. Wherein you shall fully know my distressed case and condition; and so, as you shall see cause, to join with them in counsel, what best to do for my relief.

1. N. H. Prob. Rec., Miss., vol. XIII, p. 221.
2. Mass. Bay Col. Rec., III.
3. Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., 4th series, vol. VII, pp. 108-109.

"It is no news to certify you that God hath taken from me my dear helper and yokefellow. And whereas, by approbation of the whole plantation of Strawberry Bank, they have assigned an honest neighbor, (a widow) to have some eye and care towards my family, for washing, baking, and other such common services,--it is a world of woes to think what rumors detracting spirits raise up, that I am married to her, or certainly shall be; and cast on her such aspersions without ground or proof, that I see not how possibly I shall subsist in the place, to do them that service from which otherwise they cannot endure to hear I shall depart. The Lord direct and guide us jointly and singularly in all things, to his glory and our rejoicing in the day and at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ! And so, with my humble service to your worship, your blessed and beloved yokefellow, (mine ancient true friend) with blessing on you both, yours and all the people of God with you, I end and rest your Worship's in the Lord to commend."

But "whether at Naushapur of Babylon," whether at Saugus, Hampton, or Strawberry Bank, peace in New England was not to be found by Master Bachiler.

His third venture in the matrimonial lottery was this honest neighbor "Mary surnamed Magdalene," the widow of an obscure seaman named Beetle, whose adultery with a local rascal. George Rogers, was soon detected-1. Rogers was a renegade seaman or servant of Trelawny, who had settled at Kittery, across the river from Strawberry Bank. This ignominious Lotharian adventure with Mary Bachiler was punished in March, 1651-2, by the Court at York, which sentenced Rogers to be flogged, and the erring wife, after her approaching delivery, to be whipped and branded with the letter "A," the "Scarlet Letter" of Hawthorne's romance.

1 York Co. Rec., Court at Gorgeana, Oct. 15, 1650.

2 York Co. Rec., Court at Gorgeana, March 11, 1651.

But before the York court had passed its sentence Bachiler had doubtless discovered the true nature of this obscure Thais, and probably left her and returned to Hampton, applying for a divorce. The district court at Salisbury-1 on April 9, 1650, gave him a judgment against the town of Hampton for L40, "wages detained," and at the same session fined him L10 for not publishing his marriage according to law. It then entered the following atrocious order:

"That Mr. Batchelor and his wife shall live together as man and wife, as in this court they have publicly

professed to do; and if either desert one another, then hereby the court doth order that the marshall shall apprehend both the said Mr. Batchelor and Mary, his wife, and bring them forthwith to Boston, there to be kept till the next Quarter Court of Assistants, that farther consideration thereof may be had, both of them moving for a divorce: Provided, notwithstanding, that if they put in 50 pounds each of them, for their appearance, that then they shall be under their bail to appear at the next court; and in case Mary Batchellor shall live out of the jurisdiction, without mutual consent for a time, then the clerk shall give notice to the magistrate at Boston of her absence, that further order may be taken therein."

By October, 1650, (the next term of court) when the Maine court presented Rogers and Mary Batchellor for adultery, the local justices had probably learned the actual offence and remitted half the fine imposed in April-2. Perhaps they ignored the incomprehensible order referred to, for we hear no more of it; but life in New England had become impossible for the venerable Puritan. Old England seemed a sure haven. There Cromwell and the Parliament had overthrown his ancient foes, the bishops, and there he had grandchildren living in comfort. Sometime in 1654, accompanied by one grandson and his family, he sailed from New England, the Arcadia of his hopes, to England, the land of his earliest struggles. His last act on leaving America was to turn over what remained of his property to Christopher Hussey and his wife " in consideration that the said Hussey had little or nothing from him with his daughter as also that the said son Hussey and his wife had been helpful unto him both formerly and in fitting him for his voyage." This kindly act is the last that we have of authentic record concerning Bachiler, who it may be hoped returned to prosperous and friendly kindred in old England to linger out his last years.

1 Old Norfolk County Court Records (MS.) 2nd mo., 9th day, 1650, Court at Salisbury.

2 Old Norfolk County Records (MS) 8th month, 1st-3rd day, 1651.

Court at Hampton.

The graceless Mary Bachiler was sentenced by the Maine courts-1 for sexual irregularities in 1651,1652, and 1654, and lived to cast one more slander at her aged and deceived victim. She petitioned the Massachusetts General Court in 1656-2, stating:

"Whereas, your petitioner having formerly lived with Mr. Stephen Bachiler in this Colony as his lawful wife (and not unknown to divers of you, as I conceive), and the said Mr. Bachiler, upon some pretended ends of his own, has transported himself into old England, for many years since, and betaken himself to another wife, as your petitioner hath often been credibly informed, and there continues; whereby your petitioner is left destitute not only of a guide to herself and her children, but also made incapable of disposing herself in the way of marriage to any other without a lawful permission. . . . And were she free of her engagement to Mr. Bachiler, might probably so dispose of herself as that she might obtain a meet helper to assist her to procure such means for her livelihood, and the recovery of her children's health, as might keep them from perishing,-- which your petitioner, to her great grief, is much afraid of, if not timely prevented."

This allegation rests on her unsupported and discredited statement, and may be taken as an utter falsehood. A Dover court record-3 of March 26, 1673, seems to indicate that the daughter of Mary Bachiler (born in coverture and therefore legally the daughter of our Hampshire parson, though undoubtedly disowned by him) attempted to secure some part of Bachiler's estate. Her husband, William Richards, was given power of administration to the estate of " Mr. Steven Batchelor dec'd," being also prudently enjoined to bring in an inventory thereof to the next court, and to put up " sufficient security to respond ye estate any yt may make better claim unto it." As no further record exists of this matter, we may conclude this " fishing expedition " resulted in nothing. Tradition states-4 that the ancient Hampshire parson died in England in 1660, having rounded out a century, and that the last six years of his life were spent in tranquility with prosperous descendants in England. The statement that he died in Hackney, near London, rests, I think, on a letter to Increase Mather from William Hooke, who speaks of the death there of a Mr. Bachiler, a preacher, but I think refers to John Bachiler, the licenser of publications mentioned in Edward's "Gangraena." [Later research proved that the Rev. Bachiler was buried on 31 October 1656 in the Allhallows Staining Church cemetery, in London, England. -- N.H. Genealogical Record, 8:1, (1991)]

1 York Co. Records (MS), Court of Dec. 5,1651, Oct. 12,1652, June 9, 1654.

2 Lewis's Hist. of Lynn, pp. 161-2.

3 N. H. Deeds,, vol. 2, p. 194.

4 N. E. H. G. Reg., vol. XII, p. 272.

Whether or not the facts as to Bachiler's life in Old and New England will ever be exactly known, it is difficult to state. New manuscripts are constantly coming to light both in England and America, and it would be a welcome task to clear away authoritatively the opprobrium which has long rested on his memory.

The statements of Winthrop's journal are so diametrically opposed to what we know elsewhere of Bachiler's life, his spirit and his character that, judged by the laws of evidence, his memory may be said to have been cleared. Bachiler's mind, as shown by the scanty light of other contemporary records, shows cultivation in excess of many of his contemporaries, and his few remaining letters evince a gentleness and a courtesy quite at variance with the account given by Winthrop.

Two portraits are offered of him. In one, you may see an erring and disgraced old man, hunted from place to place by his own mistakes, fleeing from England to America, and finally hiding in England from the result of his senile misconduct. I prefer to see in the other a highminded but unsuccessful patriarch, with the defects of his qualities, at variance with the narrow and doomed intent of the Bay oligarchs, spending his life in the vain search for religious freedom, and rebelling at the limitations and prescriptions which time was to show were impossible in a free and gradually enlightened democracy. Driven from place to place by the autocracy first of the English church and then of the Winthrop colony, at last he saw triumphant the principles of social and religious enfranchisement, for which he spent his life, his means, and his best ambitions.

[Return to Rev. Stephen Bachiler Table of Contents](#)