

FRIENDSHIP AS A FACTOR IN THE SETTLEMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS

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In writing a paper on this subject, one discovers almost immediately that one will have to exercise his sympathetic insight much more than his critical faculty. That is for the very good reason that there is a conspicuous paucity of reference to the sentiments of friendship—or in fact to sentiments of any kind whatever, in the original documents and sources of knowledge concerning the settlement of America. Judging by their memorials, the settlers of America were a decidedly unsentimental collection of men and women. They were robust, and hardy, and above all practical. Doubtless it is true of any race or age that the sentimentalist is not the adventurer, not the pioneer. The sentimentalist stays at home, and indulges himself in the familiar delights of his safe and ordered routine of living, and lets his more rugged brother blaze the trail through trackless wildernesses, or plough the unfurrowed ocean to the shores of new worlds. This is noticeably true of the discovery and colonization of America.

When these Western shores began to be settled by more or less permanent attempts, we find that there are two great motives actuating these efforts at colonization—one is the demand for wealth, the other is the demand for religious liberty. To these we might be tempted to add a third motive—the good, old-fashioned, romantic, high-spirited love of adventure. But while this love of adventure might have sung its irresistible paeon in the breast of a John Smith

or a Miles Standish, and many a reckless devil-may-care, swash-buckler of Jamestown and Merrymount, one can hardly take it into serious account, for it was purely in the nature of a concomitant. In no case did it either actuate the initial enterprise nor inform the subsequent policy of the undertaking. The two great sober motives were the ones already stated—the demand for wealth, as in the trading posts of Jamestown and New Amsterdam, and the demand for Religious Liberty, as in Maryland, Plymouth, and Massachusetts Bay. Both of these motives were practical and unsentimental. The demand for wealth is, of course, purely practical as a motive. The demand for religious liberty, although it reflects infinitely greater credit, in our judgment, upon those who made the demand and suffered the extremes of hardship in order to gratify it, is still seen to be a practical motive when we remember what religion meant to men and women of that time—how seriously they took it, and how urgent an importance they attached to it.

When we turn these old characters and events into nursery tales, and entertain our children with stories of the Dancing Giant of Patagonia, and of El Dorado, and Balboa in his cask, and the Fountain of Perpetual Youth, and Pochahontas, and the fabulous carrying capacity of the Mayflower, and the first Thanksgiving, and the witches and the ducking-stool—we run the risk of forgetting how dead in earnest these men and women were, how tyrannous and peremptory were their motives, how sober and austere were their purposes. It is next to impossible to find any spot where what we call sentiment entered into their considerations. Especially is this true of our Massachusetts settlers. They were men of exceptional force and depth of character. Their natures were fibrous and hardy. They were bred in a hard school, and their self-reliance was of a sort to inhibit the allurements of

any of the tenderer sentiments of life,—friendship among the rest. They were primarily devoted to principle.

If Mr. Lecky is right in saying that the key note of Anglo-Saxon morality is the sense of duty, then we may find in these men striking instances of the truth of his generalization. Their lives were built upon principle and guided by principle, and no other consideration, however natural or appealing, could break their copper-riveted allegiance to principle. They were fashioned after the pattern of the Older Romans, Brutus and Virginius—capable of sacrificing anything to their principles and their sense of duty. And just as John Knox stood before Mary Queen of Scots, wholly unmoved by the sight of feminine beauty in distress, or just as Melville stood before James his King, utterly impervious to the glamour of royalty, so we discover repeatedly in their humbler Puritan brethren of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay the same imperviousness to all forms of impulse, emotion, or sentiment.

Now while it would be unjust to say that such men are incapable of friendships, it is fair I think to say that their friendships played a decidedly secondary part in the harmony of their spiritual organization. Friendship is too exacting a flower to blossom to any profusion in so austere and unexpansive a spiritual soil. They had their friendships no doubt, but they were not dependent upon their friendships. All their dependence was placed upon principle, and friendships were merely incidental to them. They were altogether too self-contained, spiritually and intellectually, to yield to the blandishments of any cordial passion. In fact one detects in them a deep-seated distrust of all the sweet promptings of the heart. This makes them seem almost inhuman to us, but on the whole it is rather fortunate for us that they were so seemingly inhuman, in their cold, quiet, inflexible allegiance to principle.

Such friendships as they had were based apparently upon mental and not upon emotional congeniality. Agreement in belief, similarity of purpose, like-mindedness, conformity to the supreme ideal—these were the bases of friendship with them, and such friendships are too incidental to be dynamic. It is difficult to find a single instance of a friendship which was able to survive a purely intellectual disagreement, or to subsist independently of this basis of like-mindedness. It is, I think, impossible to find a single instance where any real incompatibility of principle was set aside at the behest of pure friendship, or where any real intellectual disagreement was hushed up, or ignored, or quietly accepted just for the sake of maintaining a relationship of pure friendliness between the disagreeing parties. Friendship was not a factor of primary degree in their processes of motivation. The cement that held them together was not of the heart but of the mind. And no amount of temperamental congeniality could hold them together where there was this radical intellectual disagreement; and on the other hand, no amount of temperamental uncongeniality could hold them apart where there was this essential agreement of mind and purpose.

This fact must be understood before we can do them any sort of justice. It worked both as a blessing and a bane. More than one valuable, upright, able and lovable member was lost to the colony in the Massachusetts Bay simply through this peculiarity. We are told that both Anne Hutchinson and John Wheelright were persons of amiable, winsome dispositions. They were gracious and likable. They had their fair share and perhaps something over, of the natural capacity for friendship. They had a large following of devoted admirers in the Boston church. But both had to go because of purely intellectual disagreements.

The same is true, to a still more conspicuous degree, of Sir Harry Vane, a young, romantic, picturesque, and exceedingly lovable figure, one who might have grown into an invaluable member of the colony—and one whom they did their utmost to keep among them. Yet he found it expedient to return to England, not because he felt himself disliked or underrated, but because he distrusted his ability to entrench himself in their friendship strongly enough to withstand the sundering power of an intellectual disagreement which he foresaw might very soon arise, and which in fact had already cast its shadow across his path. One is inclined to read between the lines, and discern in the tears that he shed upon stating his wish to leave Boston, not so much a grief at having to leave the colony, as a very natural chagrin at his self-confessed inability to cope on anything like equal terms with minds of such ruthless and dispassionate self-consistency. The tragedy of Harry Vane's position lay in the fact that he was too young and too ardent of temper for Massachusetts. He depended upon his ability to win popularity. And when he realized that no amount of mere popularity would make him secure against the attacks which intellectual disagreement would inevitably provoke against him, he very wisely gave it up and returned to England.

These three cases are perhaps the most notorious instances of the impotence of pure friendship to withstand the separation of intellectual incompatibility. On the other hand, I think we can discern in the case of Winthrop and Dudley an instance of the power of essential intellectual agreement to withstand the sundering influence of a purely temperamental uncongeniality, and to close the breach of a purely personal dislike. It seems plain enough that Winthrop and Dudley did not like each other. The basis of their dislike was temperamental. They were the kind of men who would naturally leave

each other severely alone. Perhaps each was a little bit jealous of the other. Perhaps each was a little bit impatient of the other's method of doing things. They rubbed each other the wrong way. And yet this natural antipathy was permanently disguised by the fact of their essential sympathy in matters of intellectual conviction and purpose. Of course it is only fair to add that there was a very tender domestic tie which wrought upon their strong natures. Their children were united in marriage. But that is a side light only. The fact remains that Winthrop and Dudley were reconciled, against the promptings of nature, by their essential harmonies of mind and purpose.

All this lends weight to our proposition that the cement which held these men together was the cement of like-mindedness primarily. They were the exact antithesis of the modern ward politician, who argues with success that if he can get his constituency to like him personally, he can depend upon them to agree with his policies and support his measures. With them just the reverse was true; if they could get into an intellectual agreement, then they could depend upon the friendship and the popularity to follow. Friendship with them was a factor of secondary importance. They were not the kind of folk who could yield to the sweet tyranny and compulsion of friendship. They were men and women of great mental vigor, of profound conviction, of serious purpose, of exceptional force and independency of character. Their lives were guided by principle, and the awful God whom they worshipped revealed His will unto them in these principles which they had accepted, and under the dominion of which they thought and acted and judged and loved and hated.

If then we can make up our minds that considerations of friendship with such men and women constituted at best a minor and decidedly secondary motive force, we may discover a number of instances

where this secondary motive force did come into a certain operation and did exert a certain influence, in the settlement of our own Massachusetts. It is interesting to note that in making their migration to New England, the colonists came over in fairly distinct companies. There was Endicott's company in 1628, Higginson's Company in 1629, Winthrop's Company in 1630, Cotton's Company in 1633, Shepard's Company in 1635, and so forth. It may be that this term "company" owes its origin more to our modern invention than to any warrant of facts in the original cases, yet one cannot resist the temptation to use the term as though justified by those facts, and to see in it, not merely a flocking together of birds of a feather, but a hint of some real bond of friendship and mutual support. It means something surely that in many instances these companies were amalgamated by more than a common Puritanism. They were composed of persons who had lived in the same town or shire, had perhaps worshipped in the same parish church, had become accustomed to the ministrations of the same non-conforming Puritan divine, and had found encouragement and moral support for the unknown hardships of their migration in the comfortable prospect of making the journey together. Surely there is good ground to assume a certain play of friendship, its warmth and support and security, in the organization of these companies. And in one or two cases this assumption is clearly vindicated.

Cotton brought over in 1633 a number of personal admirers and friends, Thomas Leverett who had already found occasion to defend him from persecution in England, and Atherton Hough. Cotton also bespoke for those of his English parish who were still to come over, a cordial and hospitable welcome; and among those who subsequently followed him over was Anne Hutchinson, who, it is well known, made that momentous change because of her ad-

miration and affection for her Pastor. Cotton seems to have led into this new world quite a little following of his St. Botolph parishioners, and we cannot doubt that simple old-fashioned friendship for their pastor had its place in their motives.

Among the reasons that Shepard gives for his migration to New England, he indicated clearly the promptings of friendship. He says: "Divers people in Old England of my dear friends desired me to go to New England, there to live together: and some went before, and writ to me of providing a place for a company of us; one of which was John Bridge; and I saw divers families of my Christian friends who were resolved thither to go with me." It is easy enough to imagine that many a Puritan of Old England, strongly tempted to embark upon this hazardous venture, lacked only the added incentive of a prospect of friendly companionship to tip the scale, and fix his determination. Such a tipping of the scale we can clearly discern in these words of Shepard's. He was a Puritan and a non-conformist—but he was young, and newly married, sensitive to hardships and not free from apprehensions for the future. All he needed was the last argument of friendship—the letter from John Bridge already there, the promise of friends in England that they would follow, the prospect of a little community of congenial spirits living happily together in their new home—this was all he needed to tip the scale and settle the determination. Without that last argument of friendship, Thomas Shepard might never have come to Massachusetts.

And that brings to mind another aspect of the case which, perhaps, may be unwarrantably fanciful, but which I venture to suggest. Those words of Shepard's—"to provide a place for a company of us, there to live together"—seem to indicate in his mind at least a crude, embryonic, community ideal. Are we justified in the surmise that that community

ideal,—the hope of living together as a little social entity, grouped in one plantation, knowing each other, trusting each other, liking and helping and encouraging one another, members of one band, bound together by ties of mutual esteem and affection—are we justified in the surmise that that community ideal was present in more cases than one in their minds and motives? When in 1636 Thomas Hooker led his Cambridge congregation, virtually intact, down to the plantation in the Connecticut valley now known as Hartford, and was speedily followed by the Dorchester and Watertown congregations almost intact to a man, who moved down to Windsor and Wethersfield, we seem to see this community ideal in unmistakable operation. These were not migrations of mere hordes of individuals but of organic communities, keeping unbroken their previous relationships and their organization. Again, when Ezekiel Rogers brought his company over to Quinipiac, was disappointed and dissatisfied with the way the men of Quinipiac had fulfilled, or failed to fulfill, their end of the bargain, and moved his whole company intact, without a single dissentient voice, to Rowley in the Massachusetts Bay, we see still more clearly the existence of this community ideal and community spirit, its cohesion, its organic consistency, and its alluring suggestion of the bond of friendship and interdependence. Obviously this community ideal failed to develop here in Massachusetts. Individualism reasserted itself most flagrantly just as soon as novelty with its terrors had worn off, and growing familiarity with the rigors of this new life had rendered the refuge of the community ideal no longer necessary. But that the community ideal played some temporary part in the settlement of Massachusetts seems pretty well indicated.

Of course the notable instance of the community ideal, is to be found in Plymouth. Our hearts warm to Plymouth. They hung together for a whole

generation, if not longer. Their organic life began in Brewster's manor house in Scrooby; it was strengthened throughout their sojourn in Holland, it reached its sweetest and most touching development on that memorable night in Delfthaven which preceded the departure of the *Speedwell*, and which was spent in loving farewells, in tears and hopes and promises of speedy reunion, between those who were going and those who were staying; it even reached the point of the common purse, the sharing all things in common and defraying all expenses from a common treasury. And during those first three years in New England, what man shall compute the value and the resource of that community spirit; who can say what would have become of that brave little company if they had not stood by each other, not merely as intellectual compatibles, but as generous and patient friends, helping each other, trusting each other, encouraging each other, and sincerely and devotedly loving each other.

Mention has frequently been made of the difference between the Plymouth men and the Massachusetts men. This difference appears at more than one spot, and is of the sort to make more possible the existence and the full play of the sentiment of friendship in the Plymouth men than in the Massachusetts men. The Massachusetts men were men of worldly substance and education. They were drawn from the higher stations in life. They were men accustomed to public responsibility, accustomed to social and political responsibility. Their coming to New England was in no sense a withdrawal from the political and institutional life of Old England. They came to New England as loyal citizens of Old England, and they came with the purpose of building up in New England a purified Church and State to which their like-minded brethren could resort in case the liberties of Old England should be destroyed. They felt themselves to be the torch bearers of a better social order;

the builders of a refuge in the New World. As such they felt that the eyes of England were upon them and that they were answerable not only unto themselves, but unto their solicitous brethren in the Old Country, who looked upon them as the advance guard of a great Puritan Exodus which might very possibly become necessary. With this great sense of responsibility to others resting upon them, we can easily see why the Massachusetts men took themselves so seriously, why they were so rigid in their allegiance to their Puritanical principles, and why the tenderer and more private sentiments of life, such as friendship, were relegated to a secondary place in their scale of values. They were the trustees of a great and holy commission and as such they had no right and no inclination to indulge personal proclivities.

The Plymouth men, on the other hand, were folk of humbler means, humbler attainments, and humbler walk in life. Their sense of civic responsibility was much less vivid. They felt that nobody cared what they did. Their act in leaving England was virtually an act of separation from England. It was avowedly an act of separation from the Church of England. And why should they not separate? Humble and obscure folk as they were, with little or no voice in public affairs, they felt that England cared nothing for their separation, that England would lose nothing by that separation, while they themselves would gain a great deal. Their whole psychology was the psychology of the separatist. They were not responsible to any but their own conscience. They were not objects of a concentrated and solicitous watchfulness. Nobody cared what they did. They were free to shape their own destiny and indulge their own honest and spontaneous personal proclivities. In such an atmosphere the finer sentiments of life found a much warmer hospitality and a much freer expression. Among these finer sentiments of life we rejoice to recognize friendship.

It is to Plymouth rather than to Massachusetts that we must look, therefore, for any considerable part that friendship may have played in the settlement of this Commonwealth. The Massachusetts men felt that they were working out a destiny greater than themselves and it was inevitable that they should give their foremost uninterrupted allegiance to the principles upon which that destiny was built. But the Plymouth men, dwelling contentedly in their little Valley of Humiliation, felt that their destiny held no significance for any but themselves, and while they were men of principle, yet their principles were not of the sort to inhibit the full play of natural self-expressions, among which we may gratefully recognize the mutual dependence and loyalty and support, the helpfulness and the sympathy—in short, the friendship for and with each other, which was both the life and the salvation of their little community.

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