

essential and pivotal; but incompleteness and occasional surface treatment do not mean that the author is careless or slovenly or weak, for there is scarcely a positive misstatement in the book from beginning to end. There are many indications of vigorous and clear thinking; and, for emphasis, one should again speak of the admirable clearness of the style, which never for a moment leaves the reader in a fog, and which proves that in considering every subject the author was not content with less than a clear vision of things face to face.

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*Rhode Island: Its Making and Its Meaning.* By IRVING BERDINE RICHMAN. G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York and London, 1902. — 2 vols., xiv., 266, iv., 295 pp.

IN his *American Commonwealth*, vol. 1, p. 18, the Hon. James Bryce says:

This singular little commonwealth, whose area is 1,085 square miles (less than that of Ayrshire or Antrim), is of all the American States that which has furnished the most abundant analogies to the Greek Republics of antiquity, and which best deserves to have its annals treated by a philosophic historian.

That such an historian has entered this fertile field and worked it effectively is revealed to whoever reads Mr. Richman's work. It is an interesting fact that this first "philosophic historian" of the early history of Rhode Island gained his first impulse in this direction from personal conversations with Mr. Bryce himself. That great liberal teacher is further identified with this work by the introduction which he has written, wherein he points out as the three distinguishing principles in Rhode Island history, the recognition of complete liberty of conscience, the fullest civil liberty of the individual, and the prior right of the Indians to the soil. The last of these was from its nature limited to the early years of the colony. Casting aside the strict chronological order, Mr. Richman groups his facts about the two former principles of Freedom of Conscience and Political Individualism. The interaction of these ideas and their influence upon the political and social life of the colony, is the *motif* of the work.

A full discussion of the controversy between Massachusetts and Williams and the Antinomians leads to the conclusion that it was the time-spirit of toleration at issue with the reactionary spirit of Puritan theocracy. By her systematic course of persecution Massachusetts

was setting herself "squarely antagonistic to the time-spirit, was becoming already at birth an anachronism," while Williams, Vane, Clarke, and perhaps unwittingly Anne Hutchinson, "were the representatives and instruments of the time-spirit — of the spirit of toleration — in America in 1637."

This time-spirit was put to the test when Samuel Gorton, self-styled "Professor of the Mysteries of Christ," appeared upon the scene. His career at Providence and Pawtuxet, before his departure to found the fourth town of the colony at Shawomet, was tumultuous though brief.

To the establishment of such heresy upon her borders Massachusetts lost no opportunity of raising obstacles, whether it was in inducing the Indians and the Pawtuxet men to accept her jurisdiction, in making war upon the settlers at Shawomet, or in sending active emissaries to oppose the patent.

The Quaker invasion of New England gave a further test of the genuineness of religious liberty in Rhode Island, which even Roger Williams could scarcely endure. But when the United Colonies signified their pleasure that Rhode Island should not admit or tolerate Quakers, the words of Governor Arnold rang true:

We have no law whereby to punish any for only declaring by words their minds and understandings concerning the things and ways of God as to Salvation and an eternal condition.

From the beginning the spirit of freedom in religion reacted strongly upon politics. At Aquidneck the autocratic rule of a Judge was soon checked by the institution of quarterly meetings of the corporation. So rapidly did the tide of democracy rise, that the aristocratic element was impelled to separate and found a new town.

The body politic in Providence and in Aquidneck was at first a land-holding corporation, which, while granting lands in freehold to purchasers, granted a freehold which was determinable rather than absolute. In Aquidneck common interests led early to a union of the two towns into one body politic. In the union democracy triumphed over the law of Moses, and connection between proprietorship and citizenship ceased. Though in Providence the original plan was modified by the demand for individual ownership, the complete separation between these did not take place until 1718. At Shawomet the individualism of the inhabitants ran to the extent of denying their own authority to institute any form of government at all without sanction from England.

The General Assembly, which, after many delays, met in 1647 to organize the new government, was a popular assembly rather than a

representative body. It declared that the "form of government established in Providence Plantations is Democraticall." The organization of the legislative branch included provisions for a General Assembly of all the people. Laws might be initiated by the united action of town meetings in all the towns, or by a representative General Court. This action, after being reviewed by the other of these two bodies, was to be referred for final approval to the General Assembly of all the people. The President had little executive authority.

The looseness of the bond of union between the towns is betrayed by the readiness with which, at the touch of Coddington's usurping commission, the colony was resolved into its elements, and by the fact that when that commission was revoked, a year and a half elapsed before the individualistic mainland towns could be induced to resume their functions in the united colony.

A distrust of power was the chief underlying cause of Rhode Island's political vicissitudes. This distrust was shown:

as to local affairs by the early enactments at Providence and on Aquidneck in favor of Soul Liberty and Individualism; and as to the affairs of the commonwealth, by the Landesgemeinde provisions of 1647, confirming Magna Charta, subordinating the executive to the legislature, and permitting judicial appeals to the General Assembly; also by the further provisions reserving certain powers to the towns: as of determining the qualifications of voters; of initiating all legislation, either in town or General Court meeting; of apportioning and collecting general as well as local taxes; and of participating, through the town magistrates, in the dispensation of justice by the colony Court of Trials.

But at the same time certain counter-tendencies are to be observed looking toward centralization. For example, all powers of the General Assembly of all the people, except the power of election, was transferred to the representative General Court, as was also finally its name; again, those received as freemen in the towns must, to exercise colony rights, be admitted freemen of the colony; and still further, it was decided that no law of the colony should be nullified under pretence of authority of any town charter.

The Charter of 1663 was the great unifying instrument which, overbearing much that was narrow and individualistic, guaranteed the cherished principles for which the colony stood.

Two chapters the author devotes to two leading questions which stirred the colony for the next fifty years,—the Harris land controversy, growing out of the land system of Providence, and the struggle

for territorial integrity against treason from within and attack from without.

Nothing strikes the reader more forcibly than the contrast between these volumes and the average town or state history. Facts which are but incidents are carefully subordinated, and the movement of the central thought is continuous. It is remarkable that an author unfamiliar with the territory should have made so few geographical errors. In volume 1, p. 30, he says "Seekonk, now Rehoboth." The spot referred to was early included in Rehoboth, afterward in Seekonk, and is now in East Providence. On his maps, for Ponaganset Pond the author has mistaken Barden's reservoir near Ponaganset village.

Perhaps no portion of the work is more valuable than that devoted to Roger Williams in England. Much that is new is brought out, and the intimate relation existing between advanced thinkers of that day in England and America is emphasized. In these chapters and that on "The Harrying of the Gortonists" we are shown that seventeenth century theological discussions possess a humor and interest seldom suspected. Mr. Richman is fortunate in possessing a happy literary style. One quite forgets that he is treating a subject so often conceded to be dreary and uninteresting. The description of the trial of Anne Hutchinson is a masterly bit of dramatic writing. The discussion of the land system gives a glimpse into a field as yet little worked.

Mr. Richman's work is so good that it is to be regretted that another volume was not added in which the logical working out of these individualistic tendencies might have been shown. Their influence upon local institutions might, in such a volume, have been followed farther with profit. The Town Council, for example, with its probate jurisdiction, has no parallel in New England. The minimizing of the executive department to the present day, the centralization of executive power in the hands of the General Assembly, and the retention of appellate jurisdiction in law cases by the General Assembly until 1856, may all be explained by the dominant principles.

FRANK GREENE BATES.

*The Story of the Mormons.* From the Date of their Origin to the Year 1901. By WILLIAM ALEXANDER LINN. New York. The Macmillan Company, 1902. — 618 pp.

No study of the American people is complete if it fails to explain that strange episode in the history of the westward movement which began with the alleged revelations to Joseph Smith and culminated in